

Poetry.

THE EVENING HEARTHSTONE

Gladly now we gather round it,  
For the falling day is done,  
And the gray and solemn twilight  
Follows down the golden sun.

What care we for outward seeming?  
Fickle Fortune's frown or smile,  
If we and us love is leaning,  
Love can human life beguile.

Hearts that thrub with eager gladness,  
Hearts that echo to our own,  
While from care and haunting sadness  
Mingle no more in look or tone.

Select Cate.

A STORY OF THE HEART.

"I saw one I love in the hour of youth,  
And both were young, and we were true."  
"How blessed are the beautiful!" she  
murmured by all that is desirable, adorned with  
that is lovely, cherished by a wide circle  
of admirers, with nothing to retard the full  
flow of their enjoyment, we would have had  
but life to them was as calm as the close of  
summer eve, and as unclouded as the mazes  
of childhood's dreams. They are the idols of  
the social circle; for them the singing post  
breathes his fragrant wafts, and the music of the  
enamored swain wafts its sweetness on the  
midnight air; and a dark, laughing eye, and  
an auburn tress, and a blooming cheek com-  
mand applause wherever they are seen. But  
the most interesting of all those who lay  
claim to beauty, is that which is benighted  
with the title of "village belle." Living in  
comparative retirement and seclusion, they are  
untainted by the affectations of the fash-  
ionable world, and combine a sweetness and  
simplicity of character which is irresistibly  
winning. For them the brightest flowers are  
cultured, and the deepest ravines are explored  
by rival and adventurous youths; many are  
the feats of agility and strength which attest  
the fond regard of their suitors; and I can  
conceive no object in nature so interesting  
as a village belle, crowned with a diadem of  
flowers from her native vale, and swaying  
like a gentle monarch the feelings and pas-  
sions of her many admirers.

Such an one was Alice Sinclair. At sev-  
enteen she burst like the opening rose-bud  
into womanhood, yet seemed all unconscious  
of the charms she so eminently possessed.—  
She might have been a despot over the hearts  
which bowed at the shrine of her beauty and  
her virtues, but gazed with indifference on  
the sacrifices she had never demanded. Her  
name was upon every tongue; her praises  
were echoed by every bachelor in his retire-  
ment; and many were the romantic gallants  
who serenaded at midnight beneath her lat-  
tice, pouring forth all that eloquence of song  
which only lovers can appreciate. Indeed,  
she seemed worthy of all this adoration, pos-  
sessed, as she did, the sylph-like form, the  
auburn tress, the blooming cheek, and the  
nameless magic of the dark-blue eye, which  
poets and prosers delight to contemplate.—  
Still, Alice Sinclair had never loved!

If there was anything in which she delig-  
hted, with all the tenderness of a susceptible  
heart, it was music. She would listen eager-  
ly for the faintest note which was borne to  
her ear, and was herself most accomplished  
in all the graces of the heavenly art. When-  
ever in the crowded circle she touched the  
keys of the piano, and warbled one of her  
favorite airs, every ear would be on the alert  
to catch the winning melody. Her window  
overlooked a flower garden which she had  
nurtured with her own hand; and very often  
when the stars were just peeping through  
the mists of twilight, from that window might  
be heard the low warbling of a mellow voice,  
and the faint tinkling of a guitar stealing on  
the ear with a melody whose captivating in-  
fluence no human fortitude could resist. It  
was something too pure, too ethereal for  
earth, and to imagine the dark-eyed girl with  
her ringlets waving in the evening wind, and  
to drink in the melody of her guitar, to inhale  
the dewy sweetness of her favorite bower,  
and to have the scene mellowed by the mag-  
ic light of the evening stars, was a happi-  
ness which can only be exceeded by the bliss  
of heaven.

But there is a crisis in the fate of every  
one. On one occasion, in the hey-day of her  
youth, she met an evening party, and

ever. She entered with a merry heart into  
all the delights of the occasion, and looked  
with indiscriminating favor on the attentions  
of her various suitors. Her heart was buoy-  
ant with the brightest anticipations; her eye  
as brilliant as the gem which sparkled upon  
her brow; and never before, in the eyes of  
her admirers, had her beauty seemed so win-  
ning, or their idol so worthy of their idolatry.  
While her merriment was most boisterous,  
her eye fell easily upon the form of a stran-  
ger who moved amid the assembly with all  
the native ease and polish of a gentleman.  
He stood in a remote corner of the hall, and  
now and then, through the throng which had  
gathered around her, Alice could catch  
glimpses of a tall commanding form, a pale,  
melancholy brow, and a dark eye that beam-  
ed tenderly on the lady who stood beside him.  
For once the village belle saw one whom she  
thought she could love. A strange, indefin-  
able feeling came over her; she heeded not  
the adulations of flattery; the illuminated  
hall and the brilliant array of beauty and  
fashion swam in indistinct images before her;  
and for the first time during a long inter-  
course her suitors were unable to account for  
her neglect of their attentions.

A few moments passed away—to the sen-  
sitive, curious girl, it seemed more like the  
long departure of an hour. The interesting  
stranger was conducted to the piano, and as  
he touched the magic keys, every eye was  
turned upon him in wonder at his rare ac-  
complishments. Alice Sinclair, with an in-  
terest which she did not attempt to conceal,  
traced to each fall on the performer; and  
well did he deserve the interest which so  
many gentle hearts expressed in his favor.—  
After dashing through a hasty prelude, he  
performed a national air with an energy which  
thrilled every patriot bosom in the assembly.  
Commencing with a low and measured strain,  
the heavier could almost fancy he heard the  
martial tread of his country's warriors  
marching to the battle field; and then came  
the charge, the onset, the thundering of the  
cannon, the shout, the buzz of victory—un-  
til the notes gradually died away like the dim  
tones of a muffled drum, sounding faintly  
from the distant vale. The audience was  
wrapt in astonishment and admiration; while  
the musician, after a pause, smiling as if  
conscious of his sway, touched again the  
shrilling keys of the piano. Now it was  
tuned to the softer breathings of the tender  
passion; and, accompanying it with a full,  
mellow voice, he uttered the melody of a fa-  
vorite love song. Alice thought that music  
had never seemed so delightful, so rich, so  
soothing; and for the first time she could  
appreciate the tender sentiment of the love-  
born madrigal.

The stranger at length ceased, amid the  
plaudits of the company; and casting a hur-  
ried glance around him, his eye fell upon  
that of Alice, who was regarding him with a  
new and ill-disguised interest. He paused  
for a moment in admiration of the beautiful  
girl, who felt the warm blood rush to her  
temples, and turned away to hide her confu-  
sion; and when Alice once more ventured to  
look up, the handsome stranger was standing  
with folded arms, apart from the giddy circle  
around him. He seemed to be meditating  
on some all-absorbing theme, perhaps his  
distant home, or the idol whose image was  
recalled by the scene he was witnessing; but  
then his eye would resume the wonted ten-  
derness, while with stolen glance he regard-  
ed the blushing features of the village belle.

The evening at length closed; Alice and  
the stranger exchanged glances, as she hur-  
ried from the scene. She sought her cham-  
ber and her couch, but not to slumber. In  
vain she endeavored to upbraid herself for  
forming an attachment for one she might  
never again behold; and vainly strove to rid-  
dle the thought of giving her heart away  
for a song. She arose and opened her cham-  
ber, that the pure air of heaven might play  
around her brow, and check the excitement  
of her fevered pulse. The breath of the ear-  
ly Spring came laden with the perfumes of  
her flower garden; and Alice thought that  
the stars had never seemed so beautiful as  
at that moment. A hurried step was heard  
beneath her lattice; the light notes of a guitar  
fell softly on her ear, and the manly voice  
of the singer thrilled still more gently on her  
soul. It was the very same voice she had  
heard in the drawing room, and the notes of  
the same tender song were floating up to her  
window. She listened with wrapt attention,  
while strain after strain was wafted to her  
ear; and it was not until the serenade's last  
"Good Night!" had been heard, and his re-  
treating footsteps had ceased to echo, that  
she sought once more her pillow. Then it  
was that a slumber as blissful as that of in-  
fancy gathered about her senses; visions of  
delight danced before her, and can we won-  
der, that amid all her dreams, her eye rested  
on the form of the dark haired stranger, and  
her heart drank in the melody of his midnight

Arthur Beaumont had come from the sun-  
ny land of the south, to complete the course  
of his professional studies. He possessed, to  
an eminent degree, the handsome exterior  
which marks the natives of that sultry clime;  
and was well calculated to excite the admi-  
ration of a young and sensitive girl, though  
the paleness of his brow, the hectic flush up-  
on his cheeks, but too sadly told that con-  
sumption had fixed its hold upon his vitals.  
His physicians had advised a change of air  
to retard the progress of his disease; but  
there was an image of quiet, resigned melan-  
choly upon his brow which too clearly re-  
vealed his forebodings of his early doom.—  
He had not been long in the village when  
Alice first saw him, and had gazed with im-  
partial admiration on the many brilliant eyes  
and blooming cheeks which had shone upon  
him; but the glance which casually fell upon  
Alice Sinclair had won his exclusive ad-  
miration.

But a few days elapsed before they again  
met. At an evening party he sought and  
made her acquaintance. Both strove to seem  
indifferent, and to conceal the feelings which  
they mutually indulged, but beneath all their  
reserve and timidity might be seen the true  
workings of their attachment. They joined  
alike in the seducing labyrinths of the prom-  
enade, and the giddy mazes of the joyous  
dance; and when, at the request of Alice,  
he took his seat at the piano, her whole soul  
was wrapt in the melody that awoke from the  
magic keys of the instrument. Thus they  
gradually progressed in their mutual confi-  
dence and affection; and when they parted  
for the night, both were fully convinced of  
their deep and unquenchable love.

But why pursue a history that all have ex-  
perienced in their own hearts?—why enu-  
merate the alternate doubts and uncertainties,  
the shifting hopes and fears, which each one  
has felt for himself? The history of the emo-  
tions of the heart, though varied by casual  
circumstances, is always the same; and if  
there be one whose eye may rest on the sim-  
ple record, who has never owned the magic  
of a dark eye, or bowed his soul to the shrine  
of beauty, we would remind him that he has  
missed a treasure which no pen can portray,  
and no talisman but love can unfold. The  
lovers met again and again. How delightful  
were the hours that they spent together! How  
heavy the moments when separated! And  
week after week passed away, and Arthur  
still hesitated to reveal the story of his love.  
There is no language by which the heart can  
disclose its warmest, deepest emotions. The  
anxious, melting look, the crimson blush,  
the unbidden sigh, can convey a confession  
of love, far better than all else beside; and  
I would scorn all the eloquence of a lover's  
verbosity, unless there were a glow upon his  
cheek and a fire in his eye, far more thrilling  
than the language he uttered.

For once, indeed, the course of true love  
ran smoothly. The most brilliant prospects  
opened before them; life was to them as un-  
clouded as the summer sky, and hope seemed  
the bright star of their destiny. They look-  
ed only at the present hour, or invested the  
future with greater charms, and gilded it  
with a halo as beautiful and delusive as the  
purple haze on the distant mountain top.—  
Insensibly to others, the deadly disease was  
fastening on the vitals of Arthur. Often did  
he repent his rashness in beguiling the af-  
fections of a young and artless girl, and de-  
termined to draw his own heart from an at-  
tachment which would result in misery to  
both. But the unsuspecting confidence and  
devotion of Alice would win him back to his  
first love; and he feared to make a disclo-  
sure which would blight the anticipations  
which she had indulged. Even the shade of  
melancholy which was coming upon his  
brow, but served to render him more inter-  
esting to the devoted Alice.

For hours would she sit beside him, list-  
ening to the melting strains of his guitar, and  
the melody of his favorite airs; for hours,  
while the shade of twilight gathered over  
them, would she lean upon his arm, and hear  
his eloquent descriptions of his native South.  
And then in the soft accents of love, he would  
tell her of the broad Savannahs where the  
rivulets wandered in melody through the long  
grass—of the wild steers, noble as the cour-  
sers of Araby, that bounded in native freedom  
through the deep forests. He spoke of the  
happy clime where the orange and lemon  
tree bloomed in perennial beauty; where the  
air was calm as the breathings of a fairy's  
slumber; and where every vale and glen was  
vocal with the melody of birds and the mer-  
riment of dark-haired girls. Thus would they  
linger alone, undisturbed by the thousand  
obstructions which so often impede the course  
of true love; and if ever happiness dawned  
upon earth, surely Arthur and Alice were  
doubly blessed. And still he never told his  
love!

But there is a crisis in the fate of every

party assembled at the house of Alice's fath-  
er, and all the beauty and fashion of the vil-  
lage was there. There was a marked con-  
trast between the blooming belle of seven-  
teen and the pale consumptive student, upon  
whose arm she hung in all the confidence of  
youthful love. Yet it was pleasing to wit-  
ness the mutual affection of the two—how  
eagerly she listened to his every word, and  
how fondly and tenderly he gazed upon Al-  
ice. Now and then a shadow would flit over  
his features, as though he had no heart for  
the revelry; and then again he would resume  
his wonted cheerfulness, and feign an inter-  
est which he could not feel.

It was a beautiful night in early Spring.  
Groups of the visitors were strolling through  
the walks of the flower garden which Alice  
had planted with her own hand. The moon  
lit up the scene with all the magic of her  
beams; while through the windows of the  
drawing room, the notes of the piano and the  
sound of merriment swelled out on the ear.  
Let him who would escape the enticements  
of love, beware of music, and moonlight and  
wines! I know not how many of these  
moonlight strollers were in love, nor how  
many vows were whispered in the recesses of  
those garden walks. Fain would I linger to  
tell of the beans and belles who sported their  
holiday attire in the light of the moon, and  
pause to contemplate so much of innocence  
and beauty. But I speak not of them. One  
by one the group retired to the drawing room;  
and at a late hour of the night, on a garden  
bench in the shadow of a bower, Arthur was  
sitting alone with the idol of his love.

It was indeed a holy scene. And the stars  
peeped out like bashful sentinels from the  
sky; and through the opening vistas of the  
vine leaves above them, the struggling moon-  
beams fell in beauty on the lovers. There  
was no one near to hear the plighted faith, save  
the night breeze which wafted its perfumes  
around them, and the humble flower that  
bowed its head beneath their feet.

"And I never told you that I loved you,"  
said Arthur, parting the ringlets from her brow  
and gazing tenderly into the eyes that were  
resting mildly on his own.

"I knew it Arthur, else I could not have  
loved you so tenderly—so devotedly."  
There was a long pause; their feelings  
were too deep, too holy for utterance. Now  
and then a strain of music came gently from  
the distant hall, chiming in delightful ca-  
dences around the moon lit bower, and then  
all would be as hushed as the repose of the  
grave.

"You love this bower with its roses, and  
lilies, and vine leaves—do you not, Alice?"  
"More than any other spot on earth," she  
replied, and her blue eye danced with joy.—  
"It was the pride of my earliest years to tend  
this garden spot and trim the flowers which  
decked it; it has sheltered my favorite sing-  
ing birds from the sunshine and the storm,  
and more than all, it is delightful to recall  
the happy hours which I have spent with  
yourself, Arthur."

"Would you not like to live Alice, where  
the flowers need no culture—where the birds  
are never wearied with singing—where the  
skies are bright as those of Italy—where—"  
"Your father land—is it not?" interrupted  
Alice. "But is it as beautiful as the bower  
which I have nurtured with my own hand?  
could I love it as I do that which has grown  
up with me from my childhood?"

"Far better, believe me, Alice. Why, in  
every valley there is a bower springing un-  
nurtured from the earth; the orange and the  
lemon trees bloom in unfading beauty; and  
the dark eyed girls are more beautiful than  
the clime which they inhabit." How gladly  
would they welcome you to the land of your  
adoption! and I have a sister, too, who would  
gladly claim you as such."

"Is she beautiful?" inquired Alice, in-  
stinctively.  
"Almost as yourself," said Arthur, though  
she has more of the serpent and less of the  
dove in her nature."

"Is she like yourself?" asked Alice.  
"You might guess that we were brother  
and sister," was the reply; "but she has never  
been tossed far from home on the rude  
billows of the cold hearted world; and her  
life has been cherished by those who love her,  
like the exotic flower, exposed to naught but  
the dews and sunshine of Heaven."

"But Arthur, when harassed by the cares  
and vexations of the world—when the novel-  
ty of your conquest is over, and we sit down  
to the simple realities of life, will you not for-  
get the charm which drew my attention to  
you the first night we met?—will you not lay  
aside the piano and guitar, as unworthy the at-  
tention of any but a young and impassioned  
lover?"

"Never while my fingers can touch their  
chords! I will make our arbor just like this  
dearest Alice, where we sit in the recesses of  
the summer evening, and the hills that sparkled from the dis-

which inspired our earliest love, and repeat-  
ing and renewing the vows of this hallowed  
hour."

Alice could not utter all she felt; but she  
looked forward with the gayest anticipations  
to the realization of all the hopes she had in-  
dulged, and felt that the distant clime of  
which her lover had spoken, was just suited  
to her wishes, and with such a heart as Ar-  
thur's to comfort and cherish her, she would  
be happy indeed. Alas! that our hopes  
should often lend but a false enchantment to  
the future, and prove as transient as they are  
captivating.

"Alice, I fear I have deceived you," said  
her lover after a pause. "Have you not ob-  
served my unusual paleness, and the hectic  
flush on my cheek?"

"But you are a student, Arthur."  
"I am an invalid, Alice. I can no longer  
conceal the truth. I have loved you blindly  
and devotedly, and in vain endeavored to  
check a passion which can only end in the  
misery of both. This moment the consump-  
tion is preying on my vitals."

"Oh, speak not thus," exclaimed the fran-  
tic girl. "Do not mar the fondest hopes I  
have ever cherished. Can it be that a wom-  
an's love should call up such gloomy forebod-  
ings in the object of her idolatry?"

"I repent—sorely repent the means I have  
used to win that love," said Arthur. "I  
had hoped that a change of climate and scen-  
ery would remove or mitigate the pangs of  
the disease; but my health is rapidly declin-  
ing. Yes, Alice, though I can never cease  
to love you, from this moment I resign the  
heart and hand you have given me. There  
are many aspirants to the same heavenly  
treasure, who could make you far more bless-  
ed than I might ever hope to do; to such I must  
yield the charge I once hoped to protect.—  
Go back, dearest Alice, to the many hearts  
which have loved you—remain as you have  
ever been, the pride and ornament of your  
native village, and forget that you ever loved  
Arthur Beaumont."

"Never, never!" exclaimed Alice, with all  
the energy of woman. "Can you thus trifle  
with the heart that has given you all its pure-  
st affections? That heart would indeed be  
blighted and desolate, and could never love  
again. It was not thus you spoke, when in  
the silence of the twilight hour, you told me  
of the glories of your native South, and that  
I would be the loveliest flower of that happy  
clime. Oh, Arthur, you know but little of  
a woman's heart, if you deem that ought of care  
or adversity, or sorrow, can chill its love, or  
blight its holiest affections."

"Then you will still be mine?" said the lov-  
er, gazing tenderly on the eye that was beam-  
ing on his own.  
"I will, forever!" said Alice, with all the  
noble warmth of a woman's love. "I will  
gladly participate in your sorrow, if I can  
but share your impassioned heart. I am sure,  
Arthur, that when you breathe the air of  
your native valley, you will be well again."

"Thank Heaven for such love as this!" ex-  
claimed the enthusiastic Arthur. "Already,  
Alice, I feel that new life is breathed into  
my frame, and that we may yet be happy.—  
But the night air is growing chilly; shall we  
return?"

The guests were just departing. The lights  
were growing dim; the shouts of revelry and  
mirth had been hushed, and the transports of  
the giddy dance had passed away. "And the  
plighted lovers parted, but not to slumber.—  
In the still watches of the midnight hour,  
when dewy repose rested on the distant hill,  
and spire and valley, and closed the eye-lids  
of the young and best, their hearts were unit-  
ed in a bond which none but those who love  
can know. Though dreaming of each other,  
how different were their feelings and hopes!  
For the one, with all the enthusiasm of her  
sex, painted the future prospect with all that  
was beautiful and lovely in her own fancy;  
while the other but too well forsook the clouds  
which hovered over all his anticipations.

From the night which seemed to have seal-  
ed his happiness, Arthur's health rapidly de-  
clined. His cheek became paler, his eye  
more haggard, and his frame seemed gradu-  
ally wasting away. But his devotion to Al-  
ice seemed to increase in proportion to his  
weakness. Then it was that, throwing aside  
the reserve of her sex, she visited the sick  
man in his chamber, and smoothed the pil-  
low for him to whom she had plighted her  
hand and her heart. With the true noble-  
ness of a woman's soul, she never despaired  
of his recovery; and whilst her gay compan-  
ions were engaging in the revel and the dance,  
she would steal away from the heartless  
throng, and watch by the couch of the in-  
valid. No wonder that with such treatment,  
Arthur rapidly recovered. And then they  
would sit by his window together, gazing out  
upon the drifting clouds, and the deep blue  
hills, and the hills that sparkled from the dis-

tant mountains, and the hills that sparkled from the dis-

tant mountains, and the hills that sparkled from the dis-