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Select Poetry.

THE AFTER LIFE.

BY W. C. BRYANT.

How shall I know thee in the sphere which keeps,
The disembodied spirits of the dead,
When all of thee that time could wither, sleeps
And perishes among the dust we tread?

For I shall feel the sting of ceaseless pain,
If there I meet thy gentle spirit not,
Nor hear the voice I love, or read again
In thy serenest eyes the tender thought.

Wilt not thy own meek heart demand me there?
That heart whose fondest throbs to me were given?
My name on earth was ever in thy prayer,
Shall it be banished from thy tongue in heaven?

In meadows fanned by heaven's life-breathing wind,
In the resplendence of that glorious sphere,
And larger movements of the unuttered mind,
Wilt thou forget the love that joined us here?

The love that lived through all the stormy past,
And meekly with thy harsher nature bore,
And deeper grew, and tender to the last,
Shall it expire with life, and be no more?

A happier lot than mine, and larger light.
Await thee there; for thou hast bowed thy will
In cheerful homage to the rules of right,
And lovest all, and rendest good for ill.

For me the sordid cares in which I dwell
Shrink and consume the heart, as heat the scroll
And wrath hath left its scar—that fire of hell
Has left its frightful scar upon my soul.

Yet, though thou wearest the glory of the sky,
Wilt thou not keep the same beloved name,
The same fair thoughtful brow, and gentle eye,
Lovelier in heaven's sweet climate, yet the same?

Shalt thou not teach me in that calmer home,
The wisdom that I learned so ill in this—
The wisdom which is love—till I become
Thy fit companion in that land of bliss?

Choice Miscellany.

From the Boston Olive Branch

THE BOUQUET OF ROSES.

BY MRS SOPHRONIA CURRIER

"Morning again, and I still alive!" sadly murmured a young girl, as she turned her head languidly on her pillow, and raised her eye to the uncurtained window of the apartment; "still alive, and that pain that so maddened me is gone; and my heart has ceased to beat so wildly! She said I should die; but alas! it is not the young whom grief will kill; to them it brings death only to the soul!"

She started as the thought passed through her mind. "Death to the soul! Will it end in that?" and she clasped her hands, and murmured in tones of deep agony, "And after travelling so long this dark and difficult path, will my eyes at length close to the dangers of the way, and my feet stumble over the obstacles around me?"

The bit of soiled and ragged tapestry which separated the corner serving for a sleeping apartment, from the rest of the room, was cautiously drawn aside; and a woman somewhat advanced in life, stepped to the side of the couch, and bent over the young girl, who, at the sound of her approaching footsteps, had [illegible] she gazed on the sweet countenance, so pale, sorrowful and hopeless, the hard, coarse features of that dark face wore an expression of mingled pity and remorse; but the look passed away, and she laid her hand on the arm of the girl

"Agnes, get up!" she exclaimed rudely; "you are not sleeping, and you are no longer ill: dress yourself quickly, and take a walk down the street; it will quite restore the strength which your foolishness has exhausted. But do not be absent long, for you will have to make up, in a week, the three days you have rested in bed!"

The girl rose quietly from the couch, she did not even raise her eyes to the woman's face, but prepared, as speedily as her feebleness would permit, to obey the directions given her.

"It is very hard for you to toil so, you poor child," continued the woman in a softer tone, and slily but eagerly watching the effect of her words on the girl; "you, so young and beautiful and delicate! you should be living in ease and splendor. There is not a lady in the city, with all her rich clothing, her studied manners, and her great accomplishments, half as beautiful and graceful as you are, and I have heard many good judges say it. The earth is not good enough for such to thread on, nor can it afford luxuries enough to gratify their refined tastes; while you walk on the earth in your rags as if your step was pollution, and with your head bowed, as though Heaven's air and sunlight were too good to fall on you. How very beautiful!" continued the woman, as the girl smoothed with her slender, white fingers, the jet black curls over the broad, fair brow; "and Agnes! such beauty will not long be unknown; I shall soon see rich gems sparkling on that little head!"

The girl made no reply to her words, but having completed her scanty toilet, left the apartment

The dwelling from which she emerged was situated in a narrow lane, in an obscure part of the city, where not a sound greeted the ear, nor an object met the eye, but filled the soul with disgust; but a few minutes' walk brought her to a wide, handsome thoroughfare, bordered with elegant and costly edifices, several of which were surrounded with small, but beautiful gardens—really beautiful now, for a shower during the night had washed the dust from the deep green foliage, and in the light of the early sun, the rich-hued, opening flowers looked doubly bright, seen through the pearly drops around them.

No parterra in the country could have been more fresh and fragrant than those little clumps of shrubbery, and the patches of blossoming plants; and no more sweet, care-free notes could any where be heard, than were issuing from the throats of the little pent-up songsters in the mimic forest of rose-trees, and among the scented vines clambering around the marble pillars of those lordly mansions.

There was scarcely a carriage in the street at this early hour, and very few promenaders were to be seen, except here and there an envied owner of one of these costly dwellings, hurrying away to commence a day of such hard, incessant, wearing toil, as his meanest domestic could not have been hired to perform.

The young girl walked down the almost silent street. The light, playful wind shook down upon her as she passed beneath the clustering branches of the tall trees bordering the street on each hand, the cool, bright drops hidden among the leaves; the fragrant breath of the flowers, the songs of the pet birds, the play of the silvery fountains, and now and then the trill of some youthful, happy voice, mingling with the sweet, though unskilful tones of the piano or harp, saluted her senses, but she could enjoy nothing around her. She moved almost stealthily along, lifting her eyes only at intervals from the pavement, and feeling, in her soul, the wretched outcast which, in all her appearance but that sad, suffering, innocent face, she seemed to be. The beauty and sweetness of everything about her, only deepened the darkness and bitterness of her thoughts.

Why was she the child of poverty?—why had she not been one of the group of young, happy creatures, who, clad in robes of the finest embroidered muslin, danced over the marble steps of the edifice before her, wreathing white roses in their flowing ringlets, and carolling their merry songs, or laughing so gleefully? How full of love for them, and of paternal pride, was that noble-looking gentleman whom they called father; and with what affection did the eye of that fair lady who stood at the open window, follow their light footsteps! How full of enjoyment was life for them; how brimmed with bitterness was the cup of which she must drink! How easy for them to be good; how nearly impossible for her to remain so!

She walked on more rapidly. And why should she make the attempt? thought continued. In all the world there was none to encourage her with a look of approval; there was no dear departed one, whose spirit she could dream was hovering near her—the only relative she had ever known was that drunken, brutal father, now in his grave; and the miserable woman who called herself her stepmother;—and Heaven itself, so the wretched girl at that moment thought, was smiling only on the happy

The tears dried up on the pale cheeks, and the anguished face became very calm. She was thinking of returning home; but still she walked on, passing several avenues which led to it; when, light and graceful as a young fawn, there came bounding down the sidewalk, a child of a dozen years. The gay, sportive creature paused now and then to caroll to a caged mocking-bird, whose loud, clear tones were filling the air with music; and then skipped along to annoy the little clumsy poodle, who strove in vain to keep pace with his young misstress. The straw hat which had covered her head, fell on her shoulders, and there was revealed the prettiest little face in the world, round, rosy and dimpled; the brightest blue eyes, not the softest and most gentle, but loving and playful; and short, shining curls, clustering closely around that fair brow. In her hand the child held a large and beautiful bouquet of choice roses, interspersed with a few other rich and rare exotics. She was evidently very proud of her burden, which she carried with [illegible] attracted her attention.

The wretched, despairing Agnes had paused, as her eyes fell on the light, graceful figure of the child; and she leaned, half fainting from her long walk, against the first support which offered itself, but unable to turn her facinated gaze from the beautiful vision before her.

"Do you not admire my flowers? and did you ever see such a beautiful bouquet before?"

Could it be that sweet smile was intended for her—that any voice could address her in such gentle tones? The child of wealth and pride could not have observed who it was addressing—her second glance would be one of contempt; and the girl was beginning to move from the spot, when the little creature prevented her. There was something in that despairing face which had attracted the child's attention.

"Do you not love flowers?—stay, you shall have the sweetest I have got," she said, running her little fingers over the bouquet. "I know you love them dearly, and you live down in the city where you never see any thing green and blooming, or the sight of these flowers would not make you weep. Papa says every body is good who loves flowers, and"—the child looked earnestly in her listener's face—"the good should always be happy"

"How can they be happy if there is none to love them?" asked Agnes, scarcely conscious that she spoke aloud.

"The Father in Heaven loves the good, and He teaches the good to love each other," said the child, and the beautiful face sobered for an instant. "Papa says the flowers are His smiles; and see what sweet, loving smiles they are!" and she held up the bouquet to the girl. "Take them all; they will be bright for a long time, if you take good care of them."

Agnes attempted to thank the sweet child, but tears came so fast, and such thoughts were crowding through her mind, that she only murmured, as she stooped and pressed her lips to the little hand which bestowed that beautiful gift, "You have saved a soul!"

The child had been gazing with increased wonder and interest on that disturbed countenance, and when those lips touched her hand, she threw her arm around the neck of Agnes, and kissed her pale cheek; and then she turned away, and picking up Fido's ribbons, walked down the street, but at a slower pace than she had passed over it before, for more serious thoughts were occupying her mind than she had ever felt yet. Agnes looked after her till she had disappeared, and then she turned down the avenue which led to her wretched abode.

"And what did Miss Gardner say to the bouquet, Emma?" inquired a lady, as, at the entrance of that fair child into her dressing-room, she raised her eyes from the "fashion plate" she had been very intently studying,—"what did Miss Gardner say?"

"Not one word, mamma," said the child, laughing gaily; and then, with a more thoughtful face, she drew nearer her mother, and began to unwind from their curling papers, her long, jet black hair, and arrange it in ringlets about her face.

"Not a word? You did not see her, then!"—said the lady. "Say, Emma, did you see Miss Gardner? And what are you doing to my hair? I shall not receive callers this morning, and I cannot have it hanging about my face for nothing."

But the lady endeavored in vain to extricate her hair from the child's fingers; Emma continued her labor till it all hung in graceful curls, and then, retreating a few paces, she looked thoughtfully in her mother's face.

"There, how perfectly alike," she said; "how perfectly, only Agnes is so much younger, and she is so pale and sad, and one can look straight into her heart, while mamma is proud, and her cheek is rosy red, and—and—she never lets one look into her heart; do you, mamma?"

"What do you mean by such nonsense?" said the lady, in a displeased tone, though, for some cause or other, her eyes dropped before the earnest gaze of the child "Who are you talking about?"

"The young girl to whom I gave the bouquet, mamma," said Emma. "I did not carry it to Miss Gardner, for I do not love her, and Hugh does not love her, either; I was going to the store to carry it to him, but she—the girl I met—looked so sad and friendless, that I gave her the flowers. I wish you had seen her, mamma, she looks so perfectly like you, and her voice is just as soft and sweet as yours sometimes is, and her smile is as bright and beautiful as is yours when you are not thinking! And besides, her name is like yours—Agnes!"

The lady's cheek grew deadly white. "What is the child talking about?" she exclaimed.—"Agnes! she is not here—she cannot know—How was the girl dressed, Emma? and how old did she seem to be? Pshaw, don't say anything more about her, and remember, child, you must never speak to any one in the street whom you do not know. Your father would be very angry, and so would Hugh, if they knew what you had done this morning; but I shall not tell them, if you will promise never to speak to a stranger again."

"She was very beautiful, mamma, and very unhappy," said Emma, apologetically. "If you had seen that smile when I gave her the flowers, you would not be angry with me. I am glad I made her happy for a moment," added the child. "But, mamma, what is the matter? Why do you look so pale and terrified?"

"Because I am very much displeased with you," returned the lady, struggling to recover her composure; "the pleasure you have conferred has cost me too much. Yesterday, I saw, at Miss Gardner's, a boquet presented to her by little Susan Balcomb; and she was very much pleased with the flowers, and said pleasant things of the child; and the bouquet I designed for her was twice as beautiful as that:—see, I have almost spoiled my choicest plants in cutting it;—and all her friends would have been shown it, and told what a lovely little girl is Emma Darnley."

"And who cares what Miss Gardner says?" said the child, tossing her head contemptuously; "if I had carried her the flowers, I should have [illegible] childs thoughts from the stranger in whom she had been so much interested.

But the thoughts of Mrs Darnley, herself, could not be so easily distracted. The door was not closed on the child before the beautiful boquet was forgotten, though its loss, at another time, would have very much annoyed her; for a thought, an old, but ever-present one, was absorbing her whole soul, and the proud woman was burying her face in the cushions of her lounge to smother the sobs that she could not restrain

Agnes had returned home. She was wearied with her long walk, and the pleasant, hopeful thoughts which had entered her heart as she was retracing her steps, were startled, and strove to fly away, as she approached that wretched abode; but she tightly closed her heart around those strange, timid, light-winged fledglings, and murmured softly and caressingly:

"The Father in Heaven loves the good, and teaches the good to love each other!"

And they folded their wings at length, dressed their disturbed plumage, and cooed lovingly.

It was a long, sultry June day. Through the dusty and smoky air, the sun poured his red, burning beams into that uncertain, vile apartment; and in at the windows, which Mrs. Clemens persisted in keeping open, though the air was thus rendered doubly impure, by the noisome effluvia from crowded cellars and a contiguous dram shop, from which there came a continued volley of low, vulgar slang, cries of distress, and loudly muttered oaths. But Agnes, though the sight of that boquet more than once caused a remark from some rude gazer-in at the window, which brought an indignant flush to that pale cheek, and the smile with which her step-mother regarded the flowers many times caused hot tears to fill her eyes.—Agnes had never passed a day so pleasantly. And never had her toil seemed so light, though it was no easy task she had taken on herself on her return home.

Since she had been old enough to know the use of a needle, Agnes had sewed for a livelihood. The first avails of her labor were scarcely sufficient to furnish her step-mother with tobacco; but her ingenuity taught her to use her needle so swiftly and dexterously, that while still a mere child, her earnings, when she could obtain employment, would have been sufficient to supply the family with comfortable food, had not the miserable father expended her little income at the neighboring dram-shop even before it was earned. While he lived, the child toiled uncomplainingly, for she loved the being, who, in his hours of soberness, clasped her so fondly to his heart, wept, and even prayed over her,—she could not help loving him, though that little delicate form had often been felled to the earth by the drunkard's hand, and, calling her by a name not her own, he had invoked Heaven's bitterest curses upon her; and beside her love for him, there was always in her heart a hope of his reformation. During the last year of his life he had interested himself, more than he had ever before done, in his daughter. Many a day had her work been taken from her hand, and a book or pen placed in it, and the father would sit down a teacher beside her. The task would soon grow wearisome to him, but he would rise from it with the remark, "The time shall come, Agnes, when you will not be the poor ignorant girl you now are! You have borne long and patiently with your father, and you shall be rewarded for all you have done, when this delirium has passed away."

But the delirium did not pass away; he died as he had lived.

It was hard, however, to labor for that step-mother, to whom she owed neither love nor obedience. For months the disappointment—it could not be called grief, his last days were so wretched—which she felt at her father's death, kept her in an apathy from which even the absolute danger of starvation failed to arouse her; and then the vile, miserable step-mother, missing the avails of her labor, resorted to means to awaken her energies that more than once so wounded that heart, which, notwithstanding its wretchedness, she had kept pure and sensitive, that she was thrown into a delirium. Yet, again and again had the poisoned dagger been applied, till the throbbings of the heart, if as agonized as ever, were unseen; whether they might, at length, have become stilled or not, Agnes never after questioned herself, for she had become well nigh desperate

Surely it was the smile of the Great Father, which looked from those beautiful creations of His, which banished that darkness from her mind: it was His spirit which whispered to that fair young child the words she breathed in the ear of the friendless girl.

The long, wearisome June day was nearly at an end, and Agnes' task was completed. Mrs. Clemens, stupified with the fumes of her pipe, had for some time been snooring on her pallet, and Agnes, supplying her flowers with fresh water, sat down to enjoy their beauty more fully than she had before allowed herself time to do; and while she sat beside them, but not too near, lest her breath should mar the beauty of the delicate petals, a daring thought entered the mind of the girl. She strove to banish it, but it came again, it would not be driven away; and through the whole night, till the sun was lighting up the east, did it while away sleep from the eyes which, for the first time since she could remember, felt no weariness

At the close of the second day, Agnes called on a French woman, a very respectable teacher of drawing, for whom she had sometimes sewed, and presented to her, for inspection, a sketch on which she had been laboring with a zeal he had never before felt in any undertaking.

"Has my time been wholly wasted, Madam Dupont?" she asked, tremblingly.

"No, *ma foi*, it is very good—very good!—You have done at once, what it would have taken me a long time to learn you," said the good-natured woman; "come to me in the morning, and I will learn you how to color your flowers."

Very much incensed with her step-daughter, was Mrs. Clemens, for wasting so much time; and she was often well-nigh determined to throw [illegible] strained the conduct of the woman.

A few weeks after the morning on which she had bestowed the boquet of roses on that friendless looking girl, little Emma Darnley, accompanied by a tall, handsome young man, to whom she was earnestly whispering, stepped into a shop where cheap paintings were exposed for sale.—A picture at the window had attracted the child's attention, and at her earnest solicitation, the young man led her into the store to examine it.

"Now you may believe it, Hugh!" the little girl whispered—"that is the boquet mamma wished me to carry to Miss Gardner; don't you see"—pointing to a particular blossom, "that is the rose flower whose slow unfolding we watched so long? And see how the roses are grouped! no one but mamma arranges a bouquet so. Does it not look natural?"

"Natural, sis! You know I cannot tell one flower from another; but do you want me to buy it for you?"

"If you wish to look at paintings, sir!" said the shopkeeper, "I can show you some very handsome ones. That is a miserable affair; I ought not to have suffered it to appear at the window, but the poor thing who brought it here pleaded so earnestly that I would do so. It was her first attempt at anything of the sort, she said, and she wished to know if any one could see in it the least exhibition of talent. She was obliged to toil, she told me, for her daily bread, and if not sure of success in this new undertaking, she would not give it the time so valuable to her. I shall return it to her when she comes in to-night, for though it has been here several days, I think no one has looked at it beside yourself.

Little Emma whispered to her brother, and the young man made some enquiry as to the personal appearance of the girl, and the description of her convinced the child that the artist was that Agnes to whom she had given the bouquet.

While the man was speaking, Hugh stood very intently comparing the painting with some which the merchant had called very choice; but though he was no connoisseur, he could not fail to perceive that the latter fell far short, both in beauty of design, and in execution, of the former; but to Emma's great disapointment, he left the shop without purchasing the painting; and that evening, Agnes Clemens sat weeping over her fruitless labor, and trying to call back to her heart the faith and hope which had sustained her for the few weeks passed.

There seemed nothing before her now but a life of dull incessant toil; no time for mental improvement, no opportunity of escaping, ever, from the sphere in which she was now moving.

"Yet one can be virtuous here as elsewhere," murmured the poor girl, "and I will not forget that "the Father in Heaven smiles on the good!"

As the thought passed through her mind, there was a low rap at her door, and a young man, who introduced himself as Hugh Darnley, entered the apartment. He had called, so he briefly informed her, to request a copy of the painting he had seen at Keeler's shop window. He was himself, no judge of paintings, but his little sister had very much admired the picture, and had no doubt but the work was very meritorious.—Miss Clemens might devote as much time to the painting as she wished; Emma's father would not take into consideration the price of an article which suited the fancy of his daughter.

When the young man left the house, he was determined to interest his mother, who was known to be one of the most benevolent ladies in the city, in the poor girl whom one less competent to judge than himself, would have called endowed by nature with the most desirable qualities of mind and heart, and capable, by education and intercourse with society, of becoming one of its most valued ornaments. But though he had never fully understood its operations, Hugh never placed so high an estimate on his mother's benevolence, as did some other people; and he soon dismissed the idea of introducting the young artist to her notice. His father, whose charities the young man could appreciate, he felt a repugnance to mentioning her to; and finally, after he could think of no way in which he could assist the girl, he laughed at himself for endeavoring to do so.

But, somehow, he could not forget the expression of that beautiful, ingenious countenance; the glance of those deep, thoughtful eyes; nor the tones of that low, sweet voice.

From what a life, a little kindness, properly shown, might save that young and highly-gifted being! The ability to aid her was his, and had he not ingenuity enough to find a way in which he could befriend her, without wounding her feelings!

Very ingenious, indeed, did Mr. Hugh Darnly show himself to be; for scarcely two weeks had passed away, though during that period he had called several times to see how she was progressing in her paintings—scarcely two weeks had passed, when, as he entered her apartment one evening, he found Agnes alone, busied with her needle, he drew a seat near her, and exclaimed abruptly—

"Lay aside that hateful sewing, forever, Miss Clemens, and employ yourself only in cultivating your talent for painting. The best instruction the city can afford shall be within your reach, both in that accomplishment, and in any other you may wish to acquire;" and the unusual pallor of that face, and the weariness of those beautiful eyes made him forget all caution; and pity, mingled with emotion, which, almost unknown, to himself, had been springing up in his breast, caused him to add—"Your life must no longer be one of labor and misery, but full of beauty and enjoyment. Let me help to make it so; let me aid you in this desire you are cherishing to acquire knowledge; as a friend, as a brother, or rather," he added in a lower tone—"as one who is hoping he may, some day, sustain a nearer relation to you than that of consanguinity?"

Very quickly was the little hand he had taken in his, withdrawn, and something like a sob escaped her; but the young man, though she evidently wished it, would not leave her. He had plunged himself too far into a difficulty to escape by flight, and therefore he remained, talking so eloquently and earnestly, that at length, the blush [illegible] young man's that impulsive, but true-hearted words he uttered.

It was but for a moment however, that Agnes would indulge herself in the emotions which the whispered words of him, whom, from his first visit to her, she had regarded as the embodiment of everything noble and good, had given rise to; but Hugh would see none of the obstacles she threw in the way of his wishes. She could not fail to be all he might desire in a wife, she was so already; it was only her gratification he thought of, in his anxiety that her education should be improved: he had a handsome property independent of his father,—the proud and haughty Mrs. Darnley was only his stepmother; his sister was the child who had made Agnes's acquaintance some weeks before; and above everything else, it was the wish of his father to see his son happy. If Agnes preferred it, Mr. Darnley should know of his intentions toward her. Hugh was confident his father would not disapprove of his conduct, when he had become acquainted with her.

"Oh, let him not know, let no one know that you have ever thought of me!" murmured Agnes. "If I have the ability you say I possess, I can, alone, and unassisted, make myself worthy of a connection with a family as refied and intelligent as is yours. I have a stronger incentive to labor now," and her voice sank to the lowest whisper, "than I ever had before; and if you have not forgotten me when the time has come, if it ever does arrive, that I can mingle with the intelligent and refined, you may seek me again, but not till then. Do not urge me to the contrary!" and she released herself from his arms, and opened the street door to admit her miserable stepmother, who, in attempting to pass over the threshold, fell prostrate to the floor, as Agnes and Darnley both thought, in a state of intoxication; and the young man was determined, as he passed out of the dwelling, that not another night should she remain under the roof of that wretched being.

And that was, indeed, the last, for before morning had dawned, Mrs. Clemens was dead. Her interment took place the same day, and Agnes, believing that the course she had decided on, was the only one she ought to pursue, the next evening removed her lodging to another part of the city, where young Darnley would not be likely to find her. The young man had little time for attempting it, for by the management of his mother, he was immediately sent from the city, to make preparations for a voyage to Europe.—She had discovered, through her daughter, the interest Hugh was taking in the poor girl Emma had described to her some few weeks before, and with an eagerness the occasion seemed not to call for, she had pleaded with his father to send his son from home. Her object was attained, but after his departure, Mrs. Darnley fell into a long and lingering illness, from which it was sometimes feared she might never recover; and when at length, strength did come again, her former pride did not return with it.

With the tenderest care did her husband watch over her during her illness, sitting alone by her bedside in her moments of insanity; and with the softest words soothing her disturbed feelings; and when reason and health came, with an eagerness and anxiety she had never manifested before, did she seek to repay that tender care. Yet something was between them now which had never appeared to exist before. The look of the husband was distant and proud, and the eye of the wife sank before his gaze; and when, as was sometimes the case, that pleading face asked that a sorrowing heart might unburden itself to him, the coldness of his regard prevented it.

Eighteen months had passed away, and the return of Hugh to his home was at hand.

"I hope he has formed no attachment during his absence," said Mrs. Darnley to her husband, "I have always felt extremely anxious he should marry Mary Gardner. She is a most estimable young lady, and on Emma's account particularly, a connection with the family would be very desirable."

"I dare say, madam, that Hugh will be quite as mindful of the future welfare and happiness of your daughter, as her mother has shown herself to be!" returned her husband, pointedly.

A deep flush overspread the countenance of Mrs. Darnley, as she raised her eye to his, but as she tremblingly rose from her chair to approach him, he quietly passed out of the room; and during the week which intervened between that time and the evening of Hugh's return, she could find no opportunity to make to him the confession which it seemed impossible longer to delay

The evening of his return at length arrived. Mrs. Darnley had not left her dressing-room.—It was yet too early to expect her guest, though one carriage, unknown to her, had rolled up to the door, and the young lady whom it brought there was very tenderly lifted from it by Mr. Darnley himself, and as soon as the cloak and hood were removed, she was led by him to the chamber of his wife.

Mrs Darnley turned from her mirror, in which, with some of her former pride, she had been surveying her still elegant form, in its rich and costly attire, and the yet beautiful countenance, more animated than it had been for many months, the whiteness of [illegible] fair brow, more pure in contrast with those long, jet black curls which fell over it, and the brilliant rubies flashing among those ringlets, giving to that tinted cheek a still deeper hue,—she turned, and before her stood a lady, whom but for the difference of age, and the style and color, not the richness of costume, was the perfect image of herself. Mrs. Darnley strove to speak, but not a sound escaped her lips, and her husband's arm alone prevented her from falling to the floor.

"Agnes," he said, "calm yourself; I know all—all which for years you concealed from me, but which you have for some time past been anxious to reveal. I know all, but you were very young when you deserted your first husband, and whether he was fairly dealt with or not, the law released you from him. You should have told me this, Agnes! and that you had a child still living; but I can forgive you. You have been a kind mother to my boy, and a good wife to me; I forgive you, freely. And Miss Clemens—Agnes!" he added, addressing the young lady whom he had led into the apartment, "you will forgive your mother."

[illegible] it would have cost her no pang had that wretch[illegible] father! how can I forgive—

"Not for my sake, Agnes? not for the sake of Emma—your sister?" inquired Mr. Darnley.

The young girl pressed her lips to the hand which would have joined her to that of her mother, but Mrs. Darnley interrupted the words she attempted to utter.

"I have wronged you very, very deeply," she said, "but it was not alone from pride, believe me! When I would have cared for you, I could not obtain possession of you; and after that, my love for Emma, and my fear of bringing disgrace on the family with which I had become connected, by holding any correspondence with your father, prevented me from seeking you. But, as Heaven hears me, I never wronged your father, Agnes! though I will bring no accusation against the dead. Will you believe me, my child? and will you call me—"

"Mother!" whispered Agnes, as she yielded to the embrace of Mrs. Darnley.

While this scene was transpiring, Emma Darnley was laughing and crying for joy, in the arms of her brother.

"Oh, Hugh! who do you think papa has just carried up stairs? Come to the library and I will tell you. There, see those paintings, Hugh! Look at this one. Is it not your little Emma, exactly?" and that boquet of roses in her hand! is it not—the whole painting—the most natural thing in the world?"

"Yes, as well as the most beautiful!" returned the young man; "but whose work is it, and who is up stairs? Tell me quckly, sis!"

"Ah, so you have not forgotten dear Agnes; I knew you would not, she is so beautiful and so good. This is all her work, and she is here! stay, Hugh. Agnes is mamma's daughter.—Now don't look so frightened," laughed the sweet girl, "she is no relation of yours, though she is my sister. She is the daughter of mamma's first husband. You know we always said she looked precisely like mamma!"

"And how long has she been here? and what does our father think?" asked Hugh.

"Think of her! why he thinks twice as much of her as he does of me. The day you went away, Hugh—I knew what you was sent away, that Agnes was her daughter—the day you went away, I told papa all I knew about her, for I was very angry; and I showed him that beautiful painting of hers, and told how much she looked like mamma, and how strangely mamma appeared when I spoke of her. I do not think he paid much attention to what I said then, but after mamma became sick he sought out Agnes, and for more than a year past, he has boarded her at one of the best schools in the country, and she has enjoyed every advantage which his money could obtain her. She is here to-night for the first time; papa himself brought her here, and I know it was because you were coming."

"My dear father," stammered the young man, as Mr. Darnly stepped into the library, "I have not merited so much kindness."

"Ah, well, Agnes has!" said the gentleman smilling; and he added, in a lower tone, "she is a most lovely girl, Hugh! I know of no one whom I would so willingly see your wife."

The young man hurriedly grasped his father's hand, and then hastened to find her whom absence had only made dearer to his heart.

"Emma, my child," said Mr. Darnley, taking his daughter on his knee, as the door closed after Hugh, "your sister Agnes has told me to-night, that the present of that bouquet of roses you made her on that fair June morning, the smile with which you gazed on her, and the words of hope you uttered, saved her from a life which had been worse than death. You acted thoughtlessly, then, my child, but remember this, ever, Emma—an act of kindness, however trivial it may seem, a cheering word to the sad and desponding, or a smile of hope and faith for the suffering and neglected, may soften the heart which long grief had indurated; it may be the exorism for despair, the spark to re-kindle the light of Heaven in the soul!"