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## Original Poetry.

For the Erie Observer.

Refresh Me with a Great Thought.

By H. JARECKI.

Oh! give me a thought, that I may  
Refresh my weary soul.

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## Choice Miscellany.

ALICE;  
OR THE DREAM OF LIFE.

Found among the papers of a Student of Medicine.

They tell me I am dying; I know it; I feel that  
life is fast ebbing. They tell me I am dying of  
disappointed love; it is false; I sprang the weakness.

I would not crutch the impulses of a soul  
which my Creator has breathed into me; I would  
not, at the bidding of an idle passion, paralyze  
the energies of a body which was given to me as  
minister to the immortal spirit. No, it is false!

They judge but by their own base conceptions;  
they know that I have given to another that which  
myself have lost; they know not that in imparting  
light and life to an inert soul, I have been  
compelled to borrow from my own Promethean fire.

I am dying; but no vain and selfish desire  
has torn my life away. It is from exhaustion of  
the soul, not from a yearning fever of the heart.  
I will not be thus misunderstood; I will record  
my strange and painful experience—not as a  
warning to others, for my fate is too peculiar to  
be thus useful—but rather to relieve my memory  
from such a charge.

From my boyhood I have been a theorist, and  
my soul wandered over the vague ocean of specu-  
lative philosophy, seeking rest, but finding none  
until weary with psychological researches, I de-  
termined to seek amid physiological demonstra-  
tions, for the minute links which bind the mat-  
ter to the spiritual. My fortune pleased me above  
the necessity of adopting a profession, but I be-  
came, from choice, a student of medicine, and it  
was during the year which I spent in Dublin,  
while in attendance on public lectures, that the  
circumstances occurred which have thus robbed  
me of myself.

It was my habit to spend much of my time in  
the hospital, where the effect of different dis-  
eases upon the various phases of human charac-  
ter, as well as upon the diverse physical constitu-  
tions, afforded me an interesting subject of specu-  
lation. I was one day passing through one of  
the sheltered walks in the garden, when I heard  
a sweet and plaintive voice singing what seemed  
to me to be smatches of old ballads. The sound  
came from a shrubbery in the ground; I approached  
to the luscious patients, and separated from  
the rest of the garden by a high wall. Prompted  
by a feeling which I can now scarcely under-  
stand, I climbed to the top of the wall, and find-  
ing that the thick foliage prevented me from dis-  
covering the singer, I leaped over the enclosure  
and entered the shrubbery. Seated upon a rustic  
bench, with a single ray of sunshine piercing  
the deep shade, and resting like a halo upon her  
tresses, sat a young girl, so fair, so pale, so  
lovely, in the delicate proportions of her figure,  
that I almost feared the image was an illusion of

feacy. Her large blue eyes were wandering rest-  
lessly around while she sang, and before I had  
time to retreat I met her full glance. Instead  
of being alarmed at my intrusion, a sweet smile  
parted her soft lips, and raising finger, she beck-  
oned me to approach.

"You have waited long, beloved, but you have  
come at last," she murmured in low and broken  
tones, as she drew me to a seat beside her; then  
she laid her hand upon my forehead, and her  
eyes, with a look so full of solemn and ear-  
nest tenderness, that my very soul thrilled be-  
neath it.

I soon found that the fair girl's reason was en-  
tirely obscured, and her insanity seemed to have  
obscured the almost hopeless form of imbecility.  
But her pure and beautiful instincts were so fresh  
and powerful as if intellect were still their guide.  
She was tender, gentle, and full of that con-  
fiding innocence which knows no evil and suspects no  
guile. Childlike in her frankness, womanly in  
her sweet tenderness, and withal evincing by ev-  
ery look the intuitive modesty and delicacy which  
characterize the pure minded, she seemed the very  
personification of all that was lovely in her  
sex. The very wanderings of her imagination were—

Like sunshine on the hill—  
Though turned aside 'twas stainless still.

The beauty, the tenderness, the hopelessness of  
this creature interested me exceedingly. My  
sympathies were aroused to a degree positively  
painful, and yet, as I listened to her incoherent  
but sweet words, uttered by the moist lips that  
ever have had kissed, I felt that had her soul been  
awakened while her heart was thus pushing forth,  
earth could have held for me no higher bliss.

When we parted, which I did with a mutual  
promise of again meeting, I retired to my lodgings  
in a state of excitement such as I had rarely  
known, and my first care was to learn something  
of her history. I found that she had been from  
childhood dull and inert of intellect; that it  
had been only with exceeding labor she had been  
taught the elements of knowledge; and that her  
mind seemed to become more obtuse as she grew  
older, until a severe fit of sickness which befell  
her ere she had attained her fifteenth year, com-  
pletely obscured her reason. Upon further in-  
quiry I learned that she had been an affectionate  
and depending creature, always looking for love  
in every eye, and as far as I could learn, never  
finding it. Her family were cold, phlegmatic,  
and commonplace. The strict discipline of reason  
was all they could exercise, and the child had  
grown stupid in proportion as these means had  
been exerted upon her. She had been for  
three years in this state of imbecility, and they  
had not lost all hope of her recovery.

The next day I again found her in the shrub-  
bery, where she was allowed to spend much of  
her time, as the absence of all close constraint  
and vigilance had been found decidedly benefi-  
cial. Her joy on seeing me was unbounded, and  
thanking herself on the turf at my feet, she leau-  
ed upon my knee, and resting her head  
upon them in an attitude of child-like repose, re-  
mained gazing with speechless tenderness upon  
my face. She said little, but I could perceive  
that she was filled with tumultuous emotion, and  
as I beheld the workings of her heart, the idea  
flashed through my brain that her soul might yet  
be awakened. I remembered the story of her  
constant tenderness in childhood, and of her un-  
satisfied thirst; I fancied I could see wherein she  
had been misunderstood, and I could not but  
think that where cold reason had failed, affection  
might be more efficacious. She had passed the  
threshold of girlhood; the instincts of a womanly  
nature had asserted their rights; the fancies of  
her erratic mind had assumed a shape, and the  
anticipation of the coming of one who would re-  
lieve her from loneliness and thralldom, had taken  
the place of her former vague dreams. This  
could account for her warm welcome of me, and a  
thrill of joy pervaded my whole being when  
she thought of me, and I felt that the  
thought suggested itself that it might be my  
destiny to rescue a soul from darkness.

From that moment I determined to make the  
attempt, and without dreading of selfish pas-  
sion, without one spark of unwholy love, I vowed to  
devote all the energies of my nature to the noble  
task of enlightening a clouded spirit. Carefully  
did I begin the work, and tenderly did I guard  
from dangerous excitement the heart of which I  
sought to influence. She was a child, a sweet  
and lovely child to me, and I cherished her as if  
she had been my own sinless sister. Never did  
one tumultuous throbbing stir my heart when I  
beheld robed on my bosom. The awful responsi-  
bility I had incurred, the oppressive sense of  
duty, the dread of failure in my godlike enter-  
prise, seemed to elevate me above all earthly  
feelings.

I cannot now note all the details of my suc-  
cess. I cannot trace all the delicate links that  
chain which conducted my soul into hers,  
through the medium of her affections. I watched  
the liftings of the cloud off her spirit, and saw  
clearly and brief glimpses of sunshine; again the  
shadow would settle with a deeper gloom, and  
again gleams would break forth, giving sweet  
promise of a brighter day. Heaven! what joy  
it was to see those blue eyes light up with intel-  
ligence, to hear those soft lips utter coherent  
words, and to mark the elastic grace of a form  
which but lately wore all the listlessness of  
imbecility!

But the officious interference of those who  
could not comprehend either Alice or myself,  
checked all this growing good. Our frequent  
meetings were discovered, and we were of course  
separated. Alice was taken home by her family,  
and I was denied all access to her presence. For  
a month, a long and dreary month, I never saw  
her; and by my impatient longing to behold her,  
I learned how much my soul had gone out from  
myself. At length I heard that Alice was much  
worse—that she was now a raving maniac, whose  
ungoverned frenzy could only be controlled by  
personal violence. I could not bear this; I went  
to her father, I explained to him my hopes, and  
begged to be permitted to see her for a single  
hour. He was a cold, practical, reasonable man  
and while he gave me full credence for a disin-  
terested desire to benefit his daughter, he evi-  
dently had little faith in my anticipations of suc-  
cess. However he was willing to try the experi-  
ment, and, accompanied by him, I was permit-

ted to see Alice. She was frightfully changed.  
Her eyes glared wildly, her hair tangled and dis-  
hevelled from her incessant restlessness, lung  
in uncessant about her face, and her appearance  
was that of one whose loss of reason had almost  
brutalized. I could have cursed the blind reck-  
lessness which so shattered me. At first she did  
not recognize me, but my voice seemed to awak-  
en the vibration of some chord whose music was  
familiar. She became calmer, her ravings had  
ceased, she approached me, and, carefully ob-  
serving her mood of mind, and almost seated  
herself on a low stool at my feet with the quiet-  
ude of a loving child. It was the first time she  
had been so calm since we parted. From the  
cold beings around her perceived the beneficial  
effects of my presence, and from that moment I  
was allowed to pursue my plan without molesta-  
tion.

I now neglected all things else, and devoted  
myself exclusively to the noble task of re-erecting  
a human soul. I adopted no fixed and settled  
system of enlightening, but, carefully ob-  
serving her mood of mind, governed them by  
adaptation. I watched the current of her  
thoughts, and when I found them broken or con-  
fused, I sought to turn them into some deeper  
channel, where they might flow more smoothly.  
I cultivated her affectionateness of disposition,  
while at the same time I checked all existing  
sentiment. The tie between us I knew must be  
one of abstractions, of attachment, not of pas-  
sion. Beautiful was the slow development of  
her child-like intellect beneath the influence of  
womanly tenderness; and, oh! how exquisite  
was the enjoyment which I found in thus look-  
ing into a perfectly pure nature, as into the  
depths of a crystal lake!

It seemed to me that I had been set apart for  
a solemn task that accorded to my fellow men,  
but I was thus permitted to fill with light the  
darkened chambers of a human soul. A proud  
feeling of power, a consciousness of my high dis-  
tinction, were ever present with me, and life was  
a nobler aspect when I had found no noble  
task to fill. Yet even then did I recognize  
the fearful price that I was destined to pay for  
all this happiness; even then I found my soul  
grew feebler in its energies. There were times  
when the weakness of childhood overcame me,  
and I was as impatient of my absence from Alice,  
as if her sweet words and looks were the ail-  
ment of my existence. Cold hearts might have  
proof of my wild love; but how little they un-  
derstood me! It was but the longing of my  
soul to regain that which it had imparted to  
another. It was the impatient seeking of the  
benevolent and devoted spirit; I was no longer  
sufficient for myself. Alice was necessary to  
my being. Yet it was not love; it was not  
something noble but something far less earthly.

How beautiful she was! how gloriously  
beautiful, with those angelic eyes, and that pure  
of fresh youth on her rounded cheek; how grate-  
ful was the sweet abandon of her attitude; how  
touching the low tones of her musical voice!

Think, ye who find pleasure in watching the  
growth of some frail flower, from its first germ  
to its perfect development in beauty and fragrance,  
how touching the low tones of her musical voice!

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to its perfect development in beauty and fragrance,  
how touching the low tones of her musical voice!

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