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Choice Poetry.

THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

BY J. D. BABBIT.

I am bound to the land of the living—
O, hinder me not on my way;
The sunlight is brightening before me
The flowers that bloom in my pathway
Breathe odors that waft me right on;
They lure me no longer to tarry
But welcome earth's time to be gone.
I am weaned from this land of the dying;
Decay is stamped everywhere;
Earth's pleasures are seeming and fleeting—
My soul has grown weak with its care.
The joy-rays of life are remembered
Like sleep-thoughts that float in the brain,
The flash and the spirit are weaving,
Each striving the mastery to gain.
I am waiting the summons that bids me
No longer a pilgrim to roam,
But, leaving the past in this death-land,
Make the land of the living my home.
The messenger-angel stands waiting
The signal to whisper to me,
That the place is prepared for my dwelling,
And the Master is calling for me.
The land of the living is yonder:
There life to its fullness has grown;
There sin, and temptation, and sorrow,
And sickness, and death are unknown.
There the songs of redemption are chanted
By a holy, harmonious band;
O, when shall I leave this clay-casket,
And fly to my home in this land?

A Good Story.

IRENE ATHERTON.

BY CLARA ELIZABETH.

"'Tis not the fairest form that holds
The mildest, purest soul within."
"Why so sad to-night, pet?" and Judge
Clifford's hand was laid caressingly on his
daughter's dark hair. Mary started, and the
tears trembled on her lashes as she replied,
"I do not know, father; but, after Dinah
dressed me for tea I sat looking out on the
lawn, and all seemed bright and beautiful.—
Suddenly a dark cloud appeared and spread so
rapidly that in a short time the whole landscape
was obscured. Then I felt a strange presen-
timent of evil, which I cannot shake off. The
shadows seem to have entranced my heart. A
frightful precipice seems before me, and I dare
not look into its yawning abyss."
"Stuff and nonsense! Why, is that all?—
Cheer up; we will order lights,—and here
comes the boys."
As he spoke two young men entered—one
with the rich dark beauty of sunny Italy, the
other fairer, with clear hazel eyes and waving
hair. But, while they are recounting the ad-
ventures of the day, we will introduce them
more formally to the reader.
Judge Clifford belonged to one of the first
families in the old dominion. His home was
a stately mansion; his broad lands extended
as far as the eye could reach, while willing
servants waited to do his slightest bidding.—
To all but his daughter the judge was a cold,
stern man; but her glance and smile were the
magic key which unlocked the fountain of
tenderness somewhere down deep in his great
heart.
When Mary was scarcely five summers his
only sister died, leaving her orphan boys to his
care. Through the long years which followed
the judge had been to them as a father. Rich-
ard and Arthur were unlike in everything ex-
cept the love which they possessed for their
cousin, and even here their motives were dif-
ferent. Richard looked upon her as a plain
girl of seventeen, the heiress of his uncle's
immense estate. The other discovered in her
noble qualities of mind and heart, and for these
he loved her with all the strength of his artist
soul. But Mary, looking merely on the sur-
face, preferred Richard, and was now his af-
fected wife. Her life thus far had been very
quiet. From her childhood her education had
been conducted at home, under the charge of
a competent and amiable teacher. But now
Miss Marvin was gone—married to her first
love, a quiet New England clergyman; and to-
night her successor was expected.
Before we interrupt their conversation we
will glance at the new governess, seated in
Judge Clifford's carriage, on her way from the
railroad station to his stately residence. Irene
Atherton was the only child of a poor widow.
When quiet a little girl, attracted by her great
beauty, some wealthy ladies determined to give
her an education, that she might become a
teacher, and thus occupy a station of respecta-
bility and trust. Accordingly they placed her
at an expensive school, and lavished every
kindness upon her.

She proved an apt and brilliant scholar, and
soon distanced all her competitors; but in her
heart there was no gratitude for those who had
so benefited her. God's government, she
said, was unjust; for, one had as much rights
another to fortune's favors. Now leaning back
in the carriage, her red lips curled scornfully,
a fierce light flashed from her blue eyes, all be-
cause she, Irene Atherton, must occupy the
humble station of governess.
As the carriage rolled up the broad avenue
leading to the house, the storm, which had for
some hours been gathering, broke forth with
fury. The rain descended in torrents; the tall
trees bent before the tempest, and red lightning
darted above them. But within all was bright
and cheerful. As Irene stood beneath the
chandelier, her hat and shawl having been re-
moved by the obsequious Dinah, and felt that
she was very beautiful; and, before the even-
ing was half over, each agreed that a noble
soul must inhabit so fair a casket.

Long that night Irene sat by her window,
looking out into the tempest; but she heard
not the thunder's roar, saw not the darkened
sky, rent with the fierce lightning, for visions
of triumphs and splendor arose before her, as
the wife of Judge Clifford, and mistress of
Linden Grove, his beautiful southern home.

CHAPTER II.

The winter passed quietly away. Mary,
young and impulsive, learned to love her beau-
tiful teacher. With her she climbed the dizzy
height of science, and drank deep at the
fountain of wisdom. Yet the same dark cloud
lingered. She even fancied Richard neglected
her for the society of Irene. But, as he still
professed to love her, she repelled the suspicion
as unjust.

One afternoon, having wandered farther than
usual, and seated herself on a high ledge,
overlooking a deep ravine, she was startled by
hearing her name. The voice was Irene's; it
continued—
"Mary is in my way; the foolish old judge
will never make me his wife, but I am sure
Richard loves me. If it were not for her he
would have all the property, for Arthur cares
no more for money than for his cousin's gover-
ness. Yes, I have it! a little poison in her
evening beverage—then all will be as I wish."
And, with a low laugh she passed on. Mary
heard, as one in a dream. The future seemed
to darken around her.

"From the anguish of her spirit came a moan—
A moan of utter dreariness,
A sigh of inward weariness,
Of confidence overthrown."

From a child she had the strange power of
assuming the appearance of death, which had
deceived her most intimate friends; and this
she determined should be the test of Richard's
love, as with a heavy heart she walked home
in the gathering twilight.

Entering her luxurious apartment, she went
directly to a side table, on which was placed a
small silver pitcher, containing her "evening
beverage," clear cold water. With a slight
shudder she dashed its contents from the win-
dow, and then carefully refilled it. Soon after
Irene entered and began to talk with animation
of their studies for the ensuing day.

"I am weary and faint," interrupted Mary;
"will you give me a glass of water?"

Irene started. The color forsook lip and
cheek as she handed the fatal cup. Yet be-
tween her clinched teeth she muttered—"It is
well," as Mary lay before her pale and ap-
parently lifeless—as Arthur knelt by her side
in uncontrolled grief—as the old judge was
borne unconscious from the room.

Slowly the hours passed, until at length
Richard's returning footsteps were heard on
the broad veranda. "Now," Mary thought,
"I shall know that he loves me. The fearful
acting will end, and we shall be happy again."

When he entered her darkened chamber
Irene was by his side. They stood for some
moments gazing on the pale sleeper, when
Richard said—

"She is young to die; but now, Irene, beau-
tiful Irene, you can be my wife. I never loved
my cousin. It was her wealth I sought. Now
that will be mine, and the only wife I could
ever love."

Together they left the room. Mary longed
to follow them, the murderer and deceiver,
but her will had no control over her muscles.
The fearful trance continued. Though perfect-
ly conscious of all that passed around her, she
was unable to speak or move. She knew when
they placed her in the coffin, with white rose
buds on her pillow. When they bore her to
the gray stone church. She heard the low
pealing organ, and her father's sighs; felt his
last kiss on her forehead. But when they

placed her in the family vault beneath the
church this dreadful consciousness gave way
to oblivion.

CHAPTER III.

After the funeral Irene left Linden Grove;
but darker shadows were gathering around it.
Judge Clifford was dying. A brain fever,
brought on by grief and excitement, had done
its work; and the weeping servants gathered
around to see "old massa" die.
Arthur left the vicinity the day following
the funeral of Mary; but, with his hand in
Richard's, the broken-hearted father passed
away. They laid him by his daughter's side,
and Richard Leslie walked the old halls alone.

Spring, summer and autumn came and went.
At Christmas Irene was to become a bride.—
And was Mary forgotten? No. Her young
face often haunted the gallery of memory.—
Once, at the twilight hour, she stood before
him. Richard fancied he dreamt, as her
voice fell on his ear; but the words haunted
him for many a day. They were "beware, be-
ware!" Thus a dark thread was woven in his
golden dreams of happiness.

Again and again the same sad face met his
view. Upon his wedding day, in his stately
southern home, out on the broad Atlantic,
amid ancient ruins, and in the galleries of art,
Irene saw it, too, and day by day the rose faded
from her cheek, the lustre from her eye.

It was sunset in Venice, and the rich mellow
light gilded palace and dome. Seated on a low
balcony, Richard and his young wife gazed up
on a scene of rare beauty. Above them hung
the deep blue heavens, and below floated many
a light gondola.

Irene dreamily touched the strings of a
guitar, but wildly started as a familiar voice
fell upon her ear. It was Mary's, but her only
word was "beware," as she vanished in the
gathering gloom. As soon as she disappeared,
Irene, pale and trembling, exclaimed—
"Richard, I will tell you all. It is of me
she warns you. It was I who put the poison
in her cup;" and, with a piercing shriek she
fell at his feet a helpless maniac.

CHAPTER IV.

When all had left the church, Arthur, im-
pelled by a strange attraction, returned in com-
pany with the gray-haired sexton, to look once
more upon his cousin. As the glass lid of the
coffin was removed, a pale face met his earnest
gaze—

"Pale as a wreath of fallen snow;
While round it, like a silken veil,
Dark silken tresses flow."

Could this be death! Even as Arthur asked
himself the question, he fancied she moved.
Yes, the fatal trance was broken. Slowly her
dark eyes unclosed, and wildly gazed around.
The old sexton fled in affright, nearly upsetting
the lantern in his haste to depart; while Arthur
received the fainting girl in his arms.

"I cannot go home," she murmured; "take
me to cousin Lucy's." Accordingly they bore
her to the nearest plantation, and placed her in
the care of her mother's cousin, a kind judi-
cious woman.

The weeks which followed were a blank to
Mary; a page blotted out from the book of
memory. When the crisis of the fever was
passed, the news of her father's death brought
her again to the verge of the grave; and not
until spring had yielded her flowery sceptre to
summer did she again begin to rally. But
happiness seemed gone forever. Though she
deeply deplored her deception, the past could
not be recalled; and the future, but a few
months ago so bright, now seemed wrapt in
impenetrable gloom.

In affliction, as well as prosperity, Arthur
proved himself the best of friends. Indeed it
seemed quite natural to Mary that the love so
soon rejected by Richard led the beautiful but
unprincipled Irene to the altar.

All this time Arthur had been absent from
Linden Grove, and Mary was believed to be
dead. Of course we need not state that it was
her bodily presence which appeared to Richard
in the library, followed him across the ocean,
tracked his footsteps on the continent, and whis-
pered amid the fading light of that rich Italian
sunset.

Startled by Irene's shriek, Mary returned in
company with her husband, who waited in an
adjoining room. Amid the gathering shadows,
and while the bright stars looked forth one by
one, all was explained. Each felt they had
deeply sinned; but humbly forgave the other,
even as at last they hoped to be forgiven.

Together they returned to Linden Grove,
beautiful Linden Grove. The sun shone as
brightly on the proud ancestral trees; the grass
was as fresh and green, the birds sang as gaily

as when they left it. Yet to the cousins it could
never be the same.

Years passed on, and childish footsteps and
childish laughter echoed through the old house.
Joy and mirth once more became its inmates.
Yet "Uncle Richard" ever moved among them
like a dark shadow of the past. Grieved at
his evident sorrow, they often tried to interest
him in their plans and hopes, and wondered at
his sadness, never dreaming of the darkened
chamber inhabited by his maniac wife, the once
beautiful IRENE ATHERTON.—*Waverley Mag-
azine.*

LETTER FROM THE ARMY.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS,
January 24, 1863.

DEAR PILOT:—Without a doubt, our friends
at home have been speculative and anxious
concerning the issues of the late movement of
the Army of the Potomac. It is over—the
boys once again comfortably domiciled in their
rustic shanties, with pleasant anticipations
based on the probabilities of sojourning there
a fortnight, perhaps a month more. The casu-
alties of this encounter are not so frightful as
those of the recent Fredericksburg disaster,
nor was the repulse occasioned by rebel strata-
gem and valor. *Mud* this time was the author
of our discomfiture! Laurel-crowned *Mud* is
extraordinary! GENERALISSIMO *MUD* our tri-
umphant enemy!! Facts concerning Virginia
mud are incredible, even to eye-witnesses with
their crural extensions, by sad experience,
clotted as high as the *genus flexing point*; and
citizens of Franklin county at home, could
scarcely conceive its positive depth and copi-
ousness. We will just state facts as we saw
them, without comment.

On Tuesday, the 20th instant, the order was
given "to strike tents." About nine, the army
commenced moving; we followed in the even-
ing about four. It was very cloudy, but no
rain had fallen yet. The guard had gone per-
haps a mile, when they met a regiment pitching
tents for the night. The duty of the Provost
Guard, on a march, is to arrest skulkers and
stragglers; hence we could not pass this regi-
ment, as our place is in the rear, and the Cap-
tain (who always has our comfort at heart)
ordered us to "right-about-face," and return
to our old quarters for the night. As we ex-
pected to leave in the morning, we did not take
the ordinary precaution to-night in the adjust-
ing of our "shelters," but simply stretched
the flies horizontally and fastened them to the
opposite bogs. Gathering our corporealities
under this temporary fixture; and assuming as
comfortable a "pish" as possible, we re-
signed ourselves to Morpheus. About midnight
we awoke with rather unpleasant sensations,
and were not a little "rigged" to find our feet
lying in three inches of water, and our blankets
abundantly saturated with the same liquid.—
We hastily arose and "established a base"—
the soldiers term for a big fire, and *dried our-
selves* until day break, when we resumed our
"onward march." The peculiarities of Vir-
ginia soil are such that a little fall makes a big
slush, and by the laws of geometrical ratio
you can have an idea of the effect a *big fall*,
like the present, has on *terra firma* here. We,
of course, "picked our steps" in marching,
and yet actually every succeeding pace sank
our feet at least four inches, and frequently
more. We remember the accounts given by
newspaper correspondents of the "mud and
mire," before Washington last spring, but none
would have done justice to the present state
of "under-foot" in this vicinity. We caught
up with the army in the evening. It had halted
because it could not advance. We never wish
again to see the Army of the Potomac in a
plight, such as we saw it this evening. Sta-
tionary canions were everywhere visible. We
saw sixteen horses attached to one in the vain
endeavor to extricate it. Four more additional
quadrupeds of the long-eared species were at-
tached, and then, by very much yelling, more
lashing and not a small amount of army pro-
fanity, it was eventually drawn out. This is
only one of many similar scenes. Stalled
teams were numberless. Many wagons were
tongueless, and not a few in possession of only
three wheels. Just before we turned in for the
night we saw a squad of artillerymen appropri-
ating several convenient dead horses in the ca-
pacity of a bridge, the better to facilitate the
passage of their pieces over a low place. The
scheme was successful. It rained all day. On
Thursday morning we were ordered back to our
old camp again. It was still raining, and had
been all night. About ten o'clock we com-
menced our journey. We thought we would
play strategem, as strategic moves are all the
go now, and flank GEN. *MUD* by taking a near

road. But lo! he is as ubiquitous as old Stone-
wall himself. We met him in greater force to-
day than yesterday, and it was by dint of very
strenuous exertions and at the expense of feet,
rather *mirabile dictu!* that we once more saw
ourselves at home!

The whole army was ordered back on Thurs-
day, but in consequence of the impossibility of
the roads, its progress was slow. The pioneer
corps was increased by large appointments *pro
tempore*, as much of the way had necessarily to
be well corduroyed before they could succeed
in bringing back the cannon. All obstacles,
however, were successively surmounted, and
the boys once more occupy their old quarters.

We are not militarily schooled sufficiently to
say anything about the *virtue* of the move, or
probable strategem manifested by the Generals
who ordered it; but would modestly state as
our opinion, that it was well planned; and had
not the unfavorableness of the weather prohib-
ited its execution, would likely have placed
the rebel army across the river entirely *hors du
combat*. Hooker, with his grand division,
changed position from the centre to the right.
You remember this General before the Freder-
icksburg battle, wished to cross about the en-
emy's fortifications, and come in on his rear, but
Burnside vetoed the plan. It seems as if this
time he intended carrying out this first idea.—
Recent developments, however, lead us to won-
der whether the whole movement was not a
feint after all; and that the inclement period
(any one could tell from the appearance of the
morning the army moved, that a "storm was
brewed") was chosen in order to make it appear
that the weather prevented its being carried
out. We wonder whether it was not done in
order to prevent suspicions of some probable
future movements. This opinion is strengthen-
ed since report has it that the Army of the Pe-
tomac is broken up—part of it to go to South
Carolina and the rest to Washington.

The rebels have their jests over our ill suc-
cesses. They have, in letters legible, at a
distance, written on a board, nailed to a tele-
graph post—"Yankee Notions, Burnside stuck
in the mud, with pencil sketchings below of an
army hopelessly endeavoring to extricate itself
from deep quagmires. They hailed our pick-
ets, telling them, that if Burnside did not get
himself away soon, they would send "Stone-
wall" with a detail to help him. Another ex-
pressive report comes across the river—they
have there on their hand-boards, instead of so
many miles to Fredericksburg, so many miles
to "The Burnside Slaughter House." We did
not see these rebel puns of which we write.—
Not wishing to bore your readers with a lengthy
letter, we are
Yours, ever,
M. D. R.

TO UNMARRIED LADIES.

The following items of advice to ladies re-
maining in a state of single blessedness are ex-
tracted from the manuscript of an old dowager:
If you have blue eyes, languish.
If black eyes, affect spirit.
If you have pretty feet, wear short petti-
coats.
If you are the least doubtful as to the pet
wear them long.
While you are young, sit with your feet
to the light.
When you are a little advanced sit with
your back to the window.
If you have a bad voice always speak in a
low tone.
If it is acknowledged that you have a fine
voice, never speak in a high one.
If you dance well, dance seldom.
If you dance ill, never dance at all.
If you sing well, like puerile excuse.
If you sing incoherently, hesitate not a mo-
ment, when you are asked, for a few persons
are incompetent judges of singing, but every
one is sensible of a desire to please.
It is always in your power to make a friend
by smiles, what folly to make enemies by
frowns.
If you are envious of another woman never
show it but by allowing her every good quality
of perfection except those which she really
possesses.
If you wish to let the world know you are
in love with a particular man, treat him with
formality, and every one else with ease and
freedom.
If you are disposed to be pettish or insolent,
it is better to exercise your ill-humor on your
dog, or cat, or servant, than your friend.
If you would preserve beauty, rise early.
If you would preserve esteem, be gentle.
If you would obtain power, be condescending.