

BY MISS MARY E. THROPP.

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that reddens to the fall;
And in one heart it calm at all,
If any calm a calm despair.

Calm on the seas, and silvery sleep
And waves that sway them; calm in rest,
And deep calm in that noble breast,
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

—TENSYSON.

It was evening—a beautiful autumn evening. The red leaves yet danced, rejoicing in the mild air; the yellow sunshine yet gilded the hill-tops, and the soft shadows were creeping silently up the valley, as the gentle widow Leedom, with her child in her arms, wending her way homeward.

She was tired, for she had toiled all day in Farmer Wood's kitchen, and though it was Saturday evening, she had not been paid for her labor. The kind-hearted house maid at Farmer Wood's had urged her to wait for her supper, but she thought of her hungry little ones at home, and she could not stay.

She had no eye for the glory of that superb October sunset as she walked wearily on, her tired arms scarcely able to hold the little joyous creature that laughed and crowed, and ever and anon peered into her bonnet, lisping his sweet-toned "Mamma, Mamma!" She thought only of her expectant little ones, and the means of obtaining bread for them to last over Sunday.

As she neared the village she seemed irresolute whether to enter in or pass on; but a vision of her lonely, fasting children rose up before her imagination, and she stopped, her lips moved a moment or two, as if in prayer, and then quickening her step and hurrying on, like one who has served herself to a sudden resolution, she turned into the main street, and was soon standing before the counter of the baker's shop.

The baker was an austere man, but it was not in human nature to resist the widow's pleading tone and touching expression as she falteringly asked him to trust her for a loaf of bread for a day or two. The man handed the loaf reluctantly, and was about to insist on prompt payment, when a glance at the widow's painfully flushed and embarrassed manner deterred him. With scarcely audible thanks, she concealed the loaf under her tattered shawl, and, drawing her babe closer to her bosom, hastened home.

"Mother's come! mother's come!" cried a couple of young, eager voices, as she entered the gate, and her seven-year old Robert and his little sister came running to meet her.

They were pretty children. The little Mary inherited her mother's mild blue eyes and delicate complexion, and the boy his father's handsome face and honest brown eyes. Poor children, they were accustomed to being left alone, for the widow went out to work daily, and the night was always welcome that brought their mother's loved return. They had a thousand things to ask and tell, which fell unheeded this time on the ear of the sad mother, though she instinctively answered them "yes" and "no," as occasion required. She gave the loaf to Robert, and taking little Mary's hand, they entered the house together. The table was already set out by the little, expectant household, but there was nothing on it that could be construed into anything eatable, save a cup of molasses and some salt. The mother cut a slice of bread for each of her half-famishing children, and sat quietly by, nursing the youngest whilst she ate, for she had no heart to eat herself.

She was very sorrowful as she looked at those dependent little beings, and thought of her failing strength; and shading her eyes with her hand, the tears stole silently down her pale patient face, and fell among the bright curls of the little unconscious head pillow so peacefully on her bosom.

She had been sorely afflicted. The husband of her youth had been stricken down by a falling beam while attempting to save a sick child, that had been overlooked in the hurry and panic, from a burning building. The child was saved, but he who periled his life for it, the strong brave-hearted man, had perished.

The fruit of this union, her eldest born, the pride of her heart, the noble boy whose every movement and expression had been as many smiles of his buried father, was a wanderer, she knew not whither.

Years after the boy had left her, when Robert Leedom came often to see her in her loneliness, and ventured to tell her at length how he had loved her from the time they had played together at school, and how he had remained single for her sake, and came back always to the same air, that she breathed, and besought her to let him sustain and shield her, to comfort her in sickness and sorrow, she gladdened the honest sailor's faithful heart by consenting to become his wife.

No wonder the young sailor loved her; she was so neat in her habits, so gentle and industrious, and her calm sweet face and holy eyes shone with the beauty that dwelt in her soul!—She had learned to love her second husband, and had borne him three fair children, when the sad news came that the gallant vessel in which he had sailed was wrecked on the dangerous coast near Absecon, and in his generous efforts to save others, Robert Leedom was lost.

She had been a widow a second time only six months, and now, as she

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thought of her inability to support her fatherless children even in the summer time, and saw no other prospect before her whichever way she looked, and knew that the cold, drear, winter was gradually coming on, her heart failed her utterly and she could only weep.—The wondering little ones tried by each endearing art they could think of to attract the attention, but in vain.

Impressed by their mother's mournful mood, they ate their bread almost in silence, and when they finished, she arose mechanically, laying her babe in its cradle, put them to bed.—She heard them say their prayers, and bade "good night and God bless them" carefully and tenderly as usual, but with that subdued, spiritless tone that emanates from a heart without hope. She continued kneeling by their bedside long after she had prayed and wept. Bitterly she wept, but there was no pitying eye to see now, no tender hand to caress, no loving voice to soothe, as the cry from her overburdened, despairing heart. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" went up over the unconscious sleepers in that hour of agony.

"No pitying eye, did I say? The eye that never slumbers nor sleeps, was there; the loving kindness that has said—"I will be a Father to the fatherless, was about her even then, though she knew it not. In the power of the Spirit, came the blessed assurance, in answer to her despairing cry—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"—and her soul grew calm, all her old trusting faith returned, and she arose from her knees tranquilly, feeling that the Lord is ever present help in time of trouble! She took down the little worn Bible from the mantle, and as she read on through the closing chapters of St. John, an expression of peace ineffable,—the peace that passeth understanding' settled serenely on her sweet face. Putting the Bible reverently back, she took some mending from her basket, and soon the clear tones of a hymn sounded through the stillness of the little cottage; and "How firm a foundation, when pealed from lordly organs, and echoed through vaulted dome, never ascended more acceptable to 'Him who sitteth on the great white throne.'

But other eyes beside the All-seeing had been looking in through the low easement at the lonely sufferer, and now the sweet tones of the holy hymn were interrupted by a knock at the door. The widow opened it, and saw before her a travel-stained man, who asked only for a crust of bread and a cup of water. The widow glanced at the loaf which still lay on the table, and then at her sleeping children, and hesitated but only for a moment; there was something in the tone of the stranger's voice that came gratefully to her soul, as the breath of spring over violets, and she thought of her own beloved boy asking for charity in some distant land, and she hastened to place a chair, and reach him the loaf, trusting to Him Who caused it to rain on the earth where no man is, to satisfy the desolate and waste ground' for her orphans.

"Look at that down trodden man!" cried the female.

I looked at him. He was an able bodied, well dressed, comfortable looking negro. He looked as though might have three or four good meals a day into him without a murmur.

"Look at that down trodden man!" cried the female.

"Who trod on him?" I inquired.
"Villains! despots!"

"Well," said the lan'dor, "why don't you go to the villians about it? Why do you come here tellin us that niggers is our brothers, and brandishing your umbrellas round like a lot of lunatics? Your wuss than the spirit rappers."

"Have you?" said the middle-aged female No. 2, who was a quieter sort of a person, "have you no sentiment—no poetry in your soul—no love for the beautiful! Dost thou never go into the green fields to pull the beautiful flowers?"

"I not only dost," said the lan'dor, in an angry voice, "but I'll bet you five pound you can't bring a man as durst say I dost."

"The little birds," continued the female, "dost thou not love to gaze onto them?"

"I would I were a bird, that I might fly to thou!" I humorously sung, casting a sweet glance at the pretty young woman.

"Don't you look that way at my dawter," said female No. 1, in a violent voice; you are old enough to be her father."

"Twas an innocent look my dear madam," I softly said. You behold in me an emblem of innocence and purity. In fact, I start for Rome to-morrow, to sit as a model to the celebrated artist, who is about to sculpt a statue, to be called sweet innocence. Do you suppose a sculptor would send me for that purpose, unless he well know'd I was overflowing with innocence? Don't make an error about me."

"It is opinin'," said the leadin' female, "that you're a scroffer and a wretch! Your mind is in a wusser beclouded state than the poor negroes we are seeking to aid. You are a groper in the dark cellar of sin. O, sinful man!"

There is a sparkling fount,
Come, O, come and drink.
No, no, sir; you will not come and drink."

"Ye' will, said the lan'dor, "if you'll treat. Jest try him."

"As for you," said the enraged female to the lan'dor, "you are a degraded being, too low and vulgar to talk unto!"

"This is the sparklin' fount for me, dear sister!" cried the lan'dor, drawing and drinking a mug of beer. Having uttered which groan, he gave a low, rumblin' larf and relaxed into silence.

"My colored fren," I said to the ne'er do-well, "what is all about?"

He said they were trying to raise money to send missionaries to the Southern States in America to preach to the vast number of negroes recently made

free there. He said they were without the gospel. He said they were without tracts. I said:

"My fren, this is a seriis matter. I admire you for tryin' to help the race to which you belong, and far be it from me to say anything agin carryin' the gospel among the blacks of the South."

Let the gospel go to them by all means. But I happen to know individually that there are some thousands of liberated blacks in the South who are starvin'. I don't blame anybody for this, but tis a very sat fact. Some are ready to ill to work, some can't get work to do, and others are too foolish to see my necessity for workin'. I was down there last winter, and I observed that this class had plenty of prechin' for their souls, but skurte any vittles for their stummix. Now, if it is proposed to send flour and bacon along with the gospel, the idea is really an excellent one. If on o'ther hand it is proposed to send prechin' alone, all I can say is that it's a hard case for the niggers. If you expect a colored man to be interested in a track when his stomach is empty, you expect too much."

I gave the negro as much as I could afford, and the kind hearted lan'dor did the same. I said—

"Farewell, my colored fren. I wish you well, certailuy. You are now as free as the eagle. But like him and soar. But don't by any means attempt to convert a Etheopean person while he's stummick years for vittles. And you, ladies—I hope you are ready to help the poor and unfortunate abroad."

When they had gone the lan'dor said,

"Come into the garden, Ward." And we went and culled some carrots for dinner.

We heard a laughable anecdote of a man with a big foot! He was a Buffalouian, who must be alive now, for a man with so good a hold upon the ground is not likely to drop off in a hurry. He stepped one day into a small shop of a boot maker in the flourishing capitol of old Erie, and asked Chirispin if he could make him a pair of boots.

Looking at his long splay-pedal extremities, and then glancing at a huge uncouth cow hide that hung on the wall, he said—

"Well, yes, I guess so."

"What time will you have them done? To-day is Monday."

"Well, it'll depend on circumstances; I guess I can have 'em for you by Saturday."

On Saturday, therefore, the man called for his boots.

"Have you got 'em done?" said he, as he entered the little shop.

"No, I havn't—I couldn't; it has rained every day since I took your meas. ure."

"Rained!" exclaimed the astonished patron; "well, what of that?—what had that to do with it?"

"What had that to do with it?" echoed Chirispin; "it had a good deal to do with it. When I make your boots I've got to go out doors, for I havn't room in my shop, and I can't work out of doors in rainy weather!"

WHO CAN IT BE?—The editor of the Brookville Herald relates that as he was "strolling about town the other evening, he picked up the following quoin poem. It was pathetically dedicated to any of the 'female persuasion' who are guilty of the crime of which it treats. Who the audacious, heartless, impudent fellow is, he is at a loss to know, but if he ascertains his name and place of abode, promises to have him tried under the Military Reconstruction Bill, and, if found guilty, smothered in crinoline and such other fixin's:

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He was a Buxom widow in Pennsylvania. He accompanied his declaration with an allusion to two impediments to their union.

"Name them," said the widow.

"The want of means to set up a retail store?" They parted, and the widow sent ample means.

"When they met again the widow had hired and stocked her store, and the smiling fair

one begged to know the other impediment.

"I have another wife," said the notion peddler.

—No statue that the rich man places ostentatiously in his window is to be compared to the little expectant face pressed against the window pane, watching for its father, when his day's labor is done.

—We clip the following queries, from the Erie Observer:—

Pertinent Queries.

MR. EDITOR:—I am not superstitious, but I would like to ask you what the following signs signify:

What sign is it when you see a young man going about shaking hands with every one he meets that he never spoke to before, and kissing all