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## IN THE WORKHOUSE.

### The Hospital Ward—Time, 1861.

BY MONCATON MILE.

I.

Seven and sixty years to-day—seven and sixty years;
And all the lilies I know are breaking white through the mere;
Lakes that shimmer and sleep in tremulous golden bars,
Half the water is heaven, and all the lakes are stars.

II.

All through the weary morn the minutes brought me reproof;
I heard the swinging bell, and the lark's voice over the roof;
I saw the dusty sun streams in through the parted doors,
And heard the passing of feet in the ghastly corridors.

III.

The master came and went, a smile on his grisly face,
A nosegay fresh in his coat (Heaven! a flower in this place!);
He fumed, he jabbered, he puffed, moving between the stools,
Raving, as I could guess, of regulations and rules.

IV.

A little thing was beside him, Sarah they call her here,
I could see the round of her cheek—the tip of her pearly ear,
Daily she shook a world of curls, dancing the snow of her neck;
She carried a slate and pen, and wrote at the master's beck.

V.

Who and whence is Sarah?—Ah, how my heart beats wild!
Is she a pauper foundling, or she that Sultan's child?
Does she feed with the rabble, breaking the common bread
On a plattered board, just two feet broad, the matron at the head?

VI.

Would that for your sake, Sarah, I had a mine of wealth,
Would that for your sake, darling, God would bless me with health,
Soon would we fly these dreary wals, leaving them far behind
For sunny fields where cowslips blow, and the violet's in the wind.

VII.

Little one, pass me nearer. Delicate work-house Ruth,
Dainty, beautiful presence, lustrous spirit of youth!
Breathe on me, tender being, whose folded wings are spanned
With vulgar serge and horrible check red with the house-work brand.

VIII.

All thro' the weary morning the lark sang over the roof,
Swang the bell, and the minutes brought me bitter reproof.
Why should I lie here, Sarah, sharing a pauper's dole,
The Union stamped on my coverlid, the Union yoked to my soul?

IX.

I had children as fair as you; tell me where are they gone?
Where is Nelly, my daughter; where is Michael, my son?
Nelly's song would snare the robin; Michael was lithe and tall—
You should see him hurl the bar over the twelve foot wall.

X.

He was the finest fellow that ever wrestled at fair,
Brown he was, and the chestnuts stood clustering in his hair.
Dearly he loved his sister; he almost doated on me;
God be with them this morning, both are over the sea.

XI.

Over the sea, my darling; they could not choose but go;
I saw the great ship setting red in the evening glow;
All her canvass was crimson, and vanishing out of sight,
Straight she sailed right into the sun—wavering shadow and light.

XII.

I never knew how I loved them, never till I returned,
The dying spark of our latest fire in the yellowing shadow burned;
Musing over the embers, I dreamt of perishing ships;
I heard their voices and woke, my heart spent on my lips.

XIII.

'Twas but a querulous fancy; yet I should tremble and rise,
Go to the six paned window, and gaze abroad at the skies.
Deep in the fell there glittered the rivulet's twisted arm,
And the shapeless fog of autumn was rolling over the farm.

XIV.

By-and-by the vapors, lost and shattered and torn,
Streamed like a vast procession between the night and the morn.
They clambered here to a roaring cliff, here to a vast lagoon,
And 'twixt the rock and the water suddenly looked the moon.

XV.

Tell me if Nelly is living; tell me if Michael's dead!
I saw the two, I tell you, as sure as I lie in bed,
Snapped the mist, and their faces broadened out of the gloom,
Swift as a flash, up came the sun and clothed the shadow in bloom.

XVI.

Tell me if Nelly is living; tell me if Michael's dead.
Is it a dream that some one came, and sat by my bed?
Reading a long, long letter, that often mentioned my name,
Spoke of battle and pillage, and cities given to flame?

XVII.

Darling, the past and present with me are so intertwined,
Nothing is clear and lasting—little, dear, is distinct;
There are times when I fancy the gritted floor is a mead,
And the rush of the matron's garments the swish of the tall marsh weed.

XVIII.

Times, when passed the master, I crouch down, holding my breath—
He looks so much a landlord, and a landlord is as like death;
Then I listen for noises, thinking with every sound—
There, they're making a coffin to bury me down in the ground.

XIX.

Bury me—but that letter, I think I remember all;
Didn't it say that Michael was killed by a rebel ball?
Nelly had married Sandy, and both had gone to the West—
He with an axe on his shoulder, she with a babe at her breast.

XX.

They were to send for me, I wonder how long 'twill be;
I tell you, my pretty Sarah, I long to breathe of the sea;
The blast with the salty odor, darling, would do me good,
Quicken my heart and spirit, and quench the fire in my blood.

XXI.

Better for me than doctors, better than roots and wine,
One glimpse of the distant faces for which I hunger and pine;
But I shall never see Michael—he sleeps in the battle sod,
I shall never see Michael, till both of us may see God.

XXII.

I'll not sob for him weakly. Of course, he fell for the right,
Of course 'twas fighting for us—or, in God's name, why should he fight?
There are worse ways to death than dying on fields remote—
Love of home in one's bosom—a sabre-thrust in the throat.

XXIII.

They tell me that I am raving; you heard what the Doctor said—
"Hickey, be still and quiet, you know you're as good as dead."
Suppose that I must die, Sarah, is this the place to fall—
Is this the place where an honest man may turn his face to the wall?

XXIV.

Die, and stand in the dead list as number seventy-five,
That is my number, Sarah, secure as you're alive,
Should Nelly come for my boxes, the clerk may say at the door,
"Perhaps his number is seventy-five, perhaps 'tis seventy-four."

XXV.

What, if they raise another, thinking the white-lie true?
Bear with me kindly, Sarah—Sarah, you must not cry.
What is they dig up seventy-four, and Nelly, with tears and groans,
Should bore it in the old church yard close to my mother's bones?

XXVI.

Surely, a soldier's trench, roughly dug with the spade,
Were far a nobler tomb wherein a man might be laid?
Gashed and hacked with war, 'tis a fearful death, I've read,
But think of a pauper's grave, a funeral over your head!

XXVII.

I shan't die, though they will it—Sarah, why should I die?
All I need is another access, the stars of another sky,
Place me in Nelly's arms—my face to her face in tears;
Place me on Nelly's bosom and I shall live fifty years.

XXVIII.

Only to think, while you and I are talking side by side,
How the wonderful earth is glad and shining outside,
How groups are passing through sunny lanes, how the hawthorne face is white,
How dart the swallows from perch to ledge, a twitter to every flight!

XXIX.

Over many a wicked green, the broad laburnum blows,
Under many a quick set hedge, they's great pansy grows,
Far, through violet haze, the landscape's glimmering dim,
The willows are shaking and making ghosts along the river's brim.

XXX.

Sarah, I'd give my eyes poor as they are, for a look
Down on the foamy glitter of one wild torrent brook,
Sarah, I'd give my heart—darling, well may you smile—
Just to look at our orchard trees over the garden stile.

XXXI.

For, you must know when they left me, comfortless and forlorn,
(Just the time when the pope's fire was quenching in the corn),
Came the summons to quit and go—I cease to light the thatch,
So, for the last, last time, I lifted the friendly latch.

XXXII.

Walked to the dusty road, and turned with aching brows,
There was the house-leek growing full on the eve of the house,
There was the hole on the ivy, and the chimney against the sky;
I tapped the tree on its notted stem, and childlike whispered "good bye."

XXXIII.

All the village gossips had heard of my doom and me,
Some were curious, and some were sad, but let that be.
Down I walked thro' the sunny street, thinking things might be worse,
A branch of crab for a walking stick, and twopence in my purse.

XXXIV.

Came the neighbors around me with welcomes quick and kind,
The women wept, and wept, and wept, my dear, till they were blind.
Hogarth, the smith, cried—"Never fear, we shall be man and wife."
And I got drunk that evening for the first time in my life.

XXXV.

Drinking the stagnant ale, for I could not think of food,
Heating the ugly hate that was sleeping in my blood,
Toasting fouls to the future, freedom, plenty and wealth,
The very straw which I lie on it seems that I drank its health.

XXXVI.

What did I do to live?—well, Sarah, you shall hear. Of course I turned hedge-teacher and taught for a crown a year;
God bless the boys, they liked me, and when the weather was fair
I had two and twenty rebels out in the open air.

XXXVII.

"What is the curse of Europe?" "England," the lads would cry,
"What should we do for Ireland?" "Be ready to do and die,"
"What, if we can not fight?" and then the black crows heard,
Blown thro' their dusky rookeries, the answer, "Be prepared."

XXXVIII.

So it was well and good while pupils were in the land;
Evil days! and they vanished like rain from the desert sand,
In tens, in twelves, in thirties, they fled to the reeking ships,
Each with a flow in his brain, each with a curse on his lips.

XXXIX.

So here I lie in the workhouse, keeping despair at bay,
Here I lie like a felon that waits yet leans the day,
Sarah, the doctor may be right (there's a fiend in his eye),
And it may be, though I hope not, I shall have soon to die.

XL.

You must kiss Nelly for me, even if I'm alive,
Keep it close to your breast, my number is seventy-five,
See it written down plain in case that Nellie should come
And lift the bones that shall be at peace out of a pauper's tomb.

XLI.

Tell me if Nelly's living, tell me if Michael's dead!
What was that in the letter? Something of me was said,
Send the priest to me, Sarah, there are singings in the air;
Send the priest to me, darling. I long for rest and prayer.

## BILLY'S WIFE.

### Two Smart Women and Two Foolish Men—As Told by One of the Women.

Don't know Billy? Then allow me to introduce you "an Irishman by trade, and a mechanic by the grace of God;" a perfect pet among the girls, as handsome as the day is long, and as good as he is handsome. That is Billy, or rather was Billy when I first knew him. He was the youngest of the squad of carpenters that worked on our new building, and altogether the most active and efficient of the party. They sent him to all the exposed positions, and he risked his life gayly every day. "There is a special Providence for fools and children," said he, "and I claim protection under the first clause of that law."

I was watching him one day at work on top of the house, when his foot slipped, and he started head foremost for terra firma. When within ten feet of the bottom he touched some scaffolding with his hands, "swapped ends," and lighted on his feet, like the tumbler in a circus, made me an elaborate salaam, and climbed up again to his eyrie, full forty feet above my head.

Billy had not worked long for us when it became apparent there was something on his mind. The jolliest of fellows among the men, he yet strove to get away from them in his leisure hours, and passed the greater part of Sunday out in the meadows or under the trees. Even in the house he was addicted to reverie, and his absent minded replies to remarks made to him gave rise to many a laugh. The query went round: "What's the matter with Billy?" but found no solution until I guessed it.

He was in love. The neighboring girls, laughing-eyed, dimple-cheeked, rustic beauties who came to visit me, could make no impression on his faithful heart. Being myself a motherly individual of that type which Byron describes as "fair, fat and forty," Billy took to me as naturally as ducks to water, and before long he told me all about it.

"The prettiest girl in all the world, Mrs. Brown," he said; "but that would be nothing if it wasn't for her goodness. To be sure she is two years older than I, but why should I care? She is so truthful and innocent, you can look clear down through her blue eyes into her very soul. She's a big girl; she weighs a hundred and fifty pounds." I judged it to be nearer one hundred and eighty. "But then you are big, you know, and the boss certainly made a ten-strike when he got you. I like big girls myself. If they are sweet and good you can't have too much of 'em. I am like a Chinaman buying boots, I want the biggest I can get for the money. Then Alice is smart, I tell you; in fact she is too smart to be tied to such a numskull as I am, and I can't tell what she sees in me to love; but there is no accounting for taste. She does love me, anyhow, in spite of my ignorance and awkwardness. God bless her! And I am wholly grateful to her for it. Yes, I am. The thought of it bring tears to my eyes often, though I wouldn't take me for such a granny."

And away he went, singing in a rich, clear voice, "I'm lonely to-night, love, without you," and I passed in out of the moonlight to put little Pickie to bed, thinking all the time of Billy, and hoping his girl would be as good and true as he believed. But somehow, without any particular reason, I felt sorry for him. I have a sort of old-fashioned pity for men, anyhow, thinking of my own good husband, and how he struggled to support me and the children, until care and anxiety have furrowed his dear face and blanched his hair, while I have been so sheltered and protected that time has left me almost untouched. "About as young as when I married you, Liz, and a heap better looking," he said, last Sunday, when I had on my new blue and white calico for the first time.

Before long Billy got leave of absence, and went to Sacramento, whence he soon returned, bringing his wife. She was willing—even anxious—to help me with the house work; and soon, with a big-hearted tyranny, she monopolized it all. Of course I could not rest in my easy chair, feeling all the time that I was imposing upon her kindness, and so, after conferring with my husband, it was decided to pay her fair wages for her work.

She was a remarkably handsome woman, with a "head-piece" on her. Fifteen years older than Billy at least, for she called it, but he was young in years and in the machinations of our charming sex, and took her word on all subjects. I never saw a man so much in love in all my life, and though he made no effort to conceal it, there was nothing maudlin or sentimental in his exhibition of it. It was a love so trusting, so beautiful and honest that it seemed to lift him out of the common meanness and insincerities of humanity. Alice had been a widow—of that type which Philosopher Somebody advises a man to marry, her husband was in the State prison for life. According to Philosopher Somebody, he should have been hanged; but in either case the object is attained, namely: to render it difficult to approach No. 1 with the contrasted excellencies of No. 1.

About six weeks after she came our boy brought out the mail and handed Billy a letter. Without glancing at the superscription, he opened it and read nearly a page, when he took up the envelope and looked at it.

"Alice," he said, "this is your letter. I opened it by mistake; but it is so queer I should like to read it if you don't object. Here, you read it first and see what you can make of it."

"I don't understand it at all," she said, after glancing hastily through it. "It reads like a love letter, and the signature is new to me. 'George Thorndike'—I really don't know any one of that name." Then she went to the stove and raised the gridiron on which the meat was broiling. In doing so she held the letter in such a position that the flames caught it and sprang up round her hand so that she was forced to drop it into the fire. Was it an accident? She said it was and uttered many regretful exclamations.

But three week after there was another letter in the same hand. It was given to Billy as before; but after looking at the address he brought it to her.

"You'll let me read that one, won't you, Alice?" he said. "If any one chooses to persecute you with unwelcome letters, I ought to know it."

She opened the letter and read aloud the first few lines, and then closing it, she told Billy that supper was just ready to put on the table, and that he should see the note before bed time.

"All right," he said; "but don't let it get burned this time, will you?"

She promised him, and he went to the table with the other men. As soon as he sat down, she lit a candle and went to her room. She was only gone a short time, but when she returned she burned the letter unobserved by her husband.

After supper, when the men had all gone, he asked her to read the letter to him.

"Why, Billy," she said innocently, "I burned it up; but I saved the signature, as you told me, and here it is."

Billy burst out into a tempest of suspicious anger and disappointment. "Why didn't you read that letter to me, Alice?" he said. "Your conduct convicts you of complicity with this fellow. I know now that you answered his last letter, that you know perfectly well all about the man who wrote it."

"Why, Billy," she said, "I read the letter to you, and you told me to save the signature, which I have done."

"Alice," he cried, turning as white as a sheet, and trembling all over, "my God, how you have deceived me! You are telling me a lie, and you know it. Oh, Alice! to think how I trusted you, and now—"

He sat down from very faintness, and wiped his cold face and shaded his eyes with a hand that looked palsied and dead.

I went to him and touched his curly hair caressingly. "She can explain it, Billy, no doubt," I suggested.

"Explain it," he groaned bitterly. "She can explain hell away, and darkness, and all the sin and hypocrisy of this miserable world. O, you don't know how this little thing throws light upon so many other things that were a mystery to me before. But I trusted her so; I took all for granted. I would have been ashamed to insult her by a suspicious question."

Pretty soon my husband came in and tried to comfort him. His confidence in Alice was unbounded, though I must confess that I had become distrustful of her honesty. That she was cognizant of my mistrust she betrayed in many ways, but chiefly in the desire she manifested to dodge my eyes when they were fixed upon her. I had told Mr. Brown how I felt toward her, and he blamed me severely for it. "You women are always so unjust to each other," he said. Like most good men, he yielded in a great degree to that supercilious charm of manner that women of extraordinary tact acquire by association with many men, and, without knowing it, he was evidently just a little infatuated.

"I know there is a plausible explanation of this," he said to Billy; "I am sure you have not been deceived in Alice. If she isn't a good, true-hearted woman, I don't know of any." He should have said, "If she isn't a good looking woman," etc., but she had spun a web about him out of her graces and her beauties, and he saw through it but dimly.

All this time Alice had not offered to explain, but stood like a statue by the dish-pan, and waited, as I supposed, for chance to throw some winning card into her hands, being perfectly well aware of the fact that her nimble tongue would not serve her now.

Mr. Brown walked toward her with the intention of urging her to say something in her own justification, when suddenly, with a most tragic scream, she rushed past us and went out of the house. "Pretty well done," I said jealously to myself; "in all probability acting is your natural vocation, madame." It was a cold night—about as cold as ever comes in our genial climate—there would be frost before morning.

"Oh, Lizzie!" said Mr. Brown, "go after her and beg her to come back; she may injure herself in some way."

"Not the slightest danger," observed the cynical individual thus addressed.

He gave me a reproachful look, and started after her himself. He was gone five minutes, and came to us without her. Billy and I were sitting by the fire in solemn silence, and heard down between us.

"I could not find her," he said. "You go and hunt her, Billy. She will come when you call her. I am afraid she will do herself some harm."

"No," said Billy; "she is a woman to harm others, but not herself."

So an hour passed, the night grew very cold. Even hardened Mrs. Brown became uneasy. Not that I feared anything more serious than that Alice might make herself sick by being out so late, so that I should have the work to do. But what interest moves the heart of poor humanity like a selfish interest! This prompted to generosity, I started after her. I went to the barn and called her—called her until I was hoarse. There was no answer. At first I was vexed, then frightened. What could have happened? I came back into the house, and sent Mr. Brown. Billy still refused to go. "Let her have it out," he said. "He would not demean himself by running after her. He could wait by the fire as well as any place for the next move in the game." But being an Irishman, the one thing he could not do was to wait. He had not the grand genius of patience. I think that in a quarrel he would have been equal to the greatest flow of words that ever issued from a woman's mouth; but to bear absolutely nothing from the opposing counsel was too much for Milesian endurance. I doubt whether even the most phlegmatic Dutchmen could sit quietly under the grand silent system of domestic warfare. It wives all understood this their influence over their husbands would be without limit. But they are like the beasts of the fields—they don't know their own power. And what a blessed thing it is for men that they don't! So Billy became restless, starting at every noise, and casting frequent glances toward the door. At last last he started up and went out.

In about ten minutes I heard both searchers calling me. I ran out, and down the ravine, guided by the sound of their voices, and soon met them coming back. My poor old man was carrying the baggage in his arms. Billy being too much excited to render any assistance. "Bring water!" screamed Mr. Brown; "Alice has a fit; she is dying." I knew she was not dying. I believed she was making the fit, so I did not go for the water. The water was brought, however, for Mr. Brown, completely exhausted, was compelled to lay her down; then he ran and brought a pitcherful. "Sprinkle it upon her her face," he cried.

I had an idea. In a moment it magnetized me into a sort of spasmodic activity. I took hold of the pitcher and dashed its contents violently into her face. For a moment she had a terrible struggle for her breath (no affectation in that), then relapsed again into her—what shall I call it?—tantrums. She was stiff as steelyards and looked like a big doll cut out whole from one piece of wood. Mr. Brown took her up again with infinite difficulty and carried her into the house, where he dropped her upon a bed. I wanted him to stand her on her head in one corner and prop her up with furniture, but did not dare suggest it. Immediately there was a clamorous demand for hot water and other restoratives.

"Here, Lizzie, take off her shoes and stockings, and bathe her feet."

Well, I declare! and it seemed that I did not hear, for I went out and sat down by the fire. Pretty soon it was, "Lizzie, make mustard poultices for Alice's ankles." I would have refused but that I had another idea, and complied. "Make them weak," said my relieved, from the sick room; "mix them half flour."

Half flour, indeed! I had some vinegar that was simply pyroligneous acid very slightly diluted. I mixed it with that, and instead of weakening the effects of the mustard with flour, I weakened it with red pepper. Then my charmer asked me to put the poultices on her. Of course I could not take so delicious a job from him, and told him so. I am bound to admit that the hussy's feet and ankles were the prettiest I ever saw. I have no doubt but Mr. Brown thought so too.

This wonderful, unparalleled combination poultice had not been on more than two minutes before she opened her eyes—her charming blue eyes—and began to squirm. My dear, delightful husband rushed to the rescue and pulled the mustard off her, and in an instant she stiffened herself in another convulsion. All this time she had not lost color and her pulse was unchanged. She knew perfectly well that I had no confidence in her acting, and rather suppressed herself when I was in the room. When I went out and peeped through the keyhole I could see her tearing at her bosom and hair and trying to bite her two attendants. I hope they enjoyed the performance.

Poor Billy sat on the bed, trying to hold her hands, to keep her from hurting herself. He was all anxiety now, and all contrition. He begged her forgiveness in the most humble and pathetic way. He told her that no matter what she could do in the future, he would never ask her a question nor utter a reproach. Then she would roll her eyes up quite out of sight, and her one hundred and ninety pounds avoirdupois would settle an inch deeper into the mattress. O, dear! how I trembled for the springs.

"Will she die, Mrs. Brown?" said Billy, during one of these (literal) sinking spells.

"No danger, Billy," I sniffled.

"O, look at her!" he said, in an agitated way so painful to witness, that I found it difficult to restrain myself from choking the suffering angel as she lay on the bed so conveniently before me.

"I would rather have died than have seen her so," he added, with a groan.

"Perhaps you will learn from this how to treat a woman," said Mr. Brown, sternly.

I could not stay in the room another moment, without danger of an explosion. So I went out. But what relief could I gain by going out, unless I had some one with me before whom I could boil over in that high-pressure style suited to the effervescent state of my feelings.

"Mr. Brown, I want to see you a moment."

Mr. Brown came. I did not take hold of one of the buttons of his coat, as I usually do in domestic conference, but stood apart, and looked at him with a look that would probably have passed muster as a good caricature of "the stony British stare" we read of.

At first I could not speak for something in my throat, that might have been Little Pickie's trap ball from its size and shape; but I swallowed it, and began:

"Billy is not the only one who has learned something to-night. I have learned how a woman can crush a man in the very face of truth and justice, and cover up her own wicked, wicked ways, by practising upon his silly sympathies. And I now give you fair warning, Mr. Brown, that whenever I want my own way, and can't have it on straightforward, honest principles, I intend to have fits. And when you see me in fits, I hope you'll know how to treat a woman."

Mr. Brown is not a Scotchman, and it is possible to get an idea in his head without a surgical operation; but even the partner of his joys and sorrows will admit that it requires something little short of a mental earthquake to do it. In this instance, he looked at me, and kept looking, at first with a perfectly blank face, then with an expression of bewilderment, then amusement, then with awakening intelligence, and last with something like scorn in his eyes. He did not speak. Like Barkis, he is not overburdened with colloquial powers; but, unlike Barkis, when he does speak, it counts. As Aunt Becky used to say about him, "John Brown is a man of mighty few words, but what John Brown says, he generally says to the point." Feeling, as I suppose he did on this occasion, that even he could not speak sufficiently to the "point" to do justice to the subject, he turned slowly and walked back into Alice's room.

Now there is no insult so galling to a woman as for her husband to refuse to listen to her when she has determined to give him a piece of her mind. To work up one's whole soul to a pitch of angry eloquence, and find no audience! Out of the bitter depths of my disappointment, was born another idea.

Quite remarkable, I think, you will admit, for a little dumpling of a woman to have three ideas in one night; but then, there was a strong head of steam on—fits are very stimulating—and the family brain was pushing ahead beyond its natural pace. Now this third idea was almost sublime in its audacity. I actually took it into my head not only to attend the pantomime in Alice's room, but to direct the performances—in short to elect myself theatrical manager.

So I went and stood by her bed. She was no better.

"We'll put the poultices on again, Mr. Brown." She looked disgusted even through her fit. But I wet them with fresh vinegar and newly sprinkled them with red pepper and handed them over to Mr. Brown to put on.

"Now, Billy," I said, "she will be better soon. When she begins to recover consciousness you observe that the corners of her mouth will be violently drawn down, while the corners of her eyes will be drawn upward. I have seen many such cases and I know all the changes perfectly. After that she will remember how cruelly you have treated her and will cry bitterly and probably reproach you for your unkindness. Then she will begin to feel the poultices and beg us to take them off. After which she will drink a glass of wine and go to sleep."

It was a sweet thing to see how, as soon as the poultices began to make her think herself in—well, warm—she tried to shape her face in accordance with my prediction. She cut this part of the performance short, however, and passed rapidly into the next. Here she was at home. Such faces as she made in her effort to squeeze out a few tears may I never more behold. The pantomime ended here, however; her cries and screams were terrific, and more than made up in tragic and earsplitting enunciation for her lachrymal deficiency. O, how she wriggled, and how that quintuple back action, double-lex combination poultice was pulling at the dainty cuticle of her charming feet!

"She is getting better," said Billy. "O, speak to me, dearest!"

He had better Lara left this entreaty alone, for he soon found himself in the position of Ahasuerus, when he called for his satanic majesty, who presently came and made Ahasuerus wish he had called for somebody else. Such reproaches as she heaped upon his devoted head were enough to make his mother turn in her grave. After exhausting her vocabulary of abuse, she ordered us to take off the poultices.

"No," said that thoughtful Mrs. Brown; "you will have another fit as soon as they are removed."

"O, do take them off, do!"

"No!" gently and firmly.

Billy—"O, do take them off."

Alice—"O, do, do, do!"

Interested Malevolence—"Do you want to see your darling dying before your eyes in another fit?"

Disinterested Benevolence—"Lizzie, they must come off; they are driving her wild."

Alice—"They are skinning me; they are killing me! Yah-h-h!" (prolonged into a roar like that of a brute)—"O Lord, I am dying!"

General rush for the foot of the bed. I held the clothes down firmly and told the men to stand back. Surprised at my vehemence, which was certainly impressive, as contrasted with my languor in the other parts of the performance, they gave way and stood back.

"O, my darling, try and bear it a little longer," said Billy, precipitating himself upon her breast in an embrace so violent as to cut another yell in two parts. Of course, she could not stand this, so she struck him such a blow in the face as made him think there were fifty mustard poultices in his eyes.

Then happened what I expected. She kicked the bed clothes up to the ceiling and sprung into the middle of the floor as nimbly as an athlete, tore the poultices off of her ankles, and rushed frantically after some water to stop the burning.

"She'll do," observed that one of the spectators whose malevolent disposition has been before alluded to. "If she should have another fit, Billy, locate the mustard plasters in a new position. I don't think there is any skin left where they have been. Good night; I am going to bed."

Once domiciled under the canopy of my old-fashioned four-poster, with Mr. Brown beside me, he began to remonstrate with the wife of his bosom.

"Lizzie," he said, "I am ashamed of your heartlessness. How could you treat that poor suffering angel as you did? I should have thought the sight of her innocent baby-looking feet would have moved you to compassion, if nothing else. It is perfectly plain to me that Billy ought to be whipped for his cruelty to her in the first part of the evening. Dunderheaded Irishman! he is no more fit to be married to that gentle, refined creature than to an angel of light."

"Perhaps one of your sympathetic disposition would have suited her better," said Mrs. Brown, with a withering sarcasm.

"You are trying to insult me, Lizzie; but let me tell you that if I was married to a woman like her—so sensitive to all disagreeable influences—I should be tempted to keep her in a bandbox, and never let any of the worries of life come near her."

"The kind of bandbox her first husband is in," I suggested. "Certainly, that would meet my hearty approbation."

"How is it, Lizzie, you women can be so cruel to each other?"

"Women of her stripe, sir," I said, "don't shine to dazzle other women. And while they concentrate all their rays upon you men, we from our shaded position can see clearly all that is going on and the motive that lies hidden from you."

"The baseness of you suspicious disgusts me," he said. "Can it be that you are the woman I considered the most tender-hearted and the most credulous creature in existence only one month ago? What has changed you so? Is it possible that you are jealous?"

O, what a blow was there, my country-women! Much too close to the truth to be taken as a joke. As may be imagined, all the seeds of Satan lying so long dormant in Mrs. Brown's tender little heart, took root at once upon this charge monstrous—so (heaven forgive the lie) untrue. They not only took root, but achieved a growth so sudden and gigantic as entirely to eclipse all such prodigies as Jonah's gourd and Jack's beanstalk. She started up in bed. It came into her head to have a fit, but she doubted her genius in an extemporaneous production of such magnitude, and concluded to put it off until she had time for a private rehearsal. The most tragic thing she could substitute was to throw the bed clothes on the floor. This had a decided success in Alice's drama, but Mr. Brown arrested the movement and rolled himself up in them like a huge chrysalis. Baffled at every point, she wanted to fight; and was encouraged in this idea by remembering to have heard of some woman who whipped her husband whenever she wanted to—first after tying up in a sheet. Mr. Brown had already tied himself up. How accommodating, to be sure!

"Your last move was just exactly in my band," she said. "I have now got you where I want you!" and she began pounding him with both fists. But she might as well have been beating the feather bed for all the harm it did. At last the chrysalis became convulsed as with an earthquake, and a voice, quivering with suppressed mirth and pity, too, issued from its depths.

"Don't hurt your dear little dimple fists," it said. "I'll come out and let you whip me, if you choose; but remember that I had rather be kissed."

"Let Alice to kiss you! I dare say you would like that better," and with this last shot there came again that something about the size of an apple dumpling in her throat; and this time she could not swallow it. She did get real fits, and the gymnastic exercises she went through that night to get rid of them would make an article of twenty-one columns in a sporting journal, with "continued next week" at the end of it.

The demon of hysteria yielded to stimulants soon after midnight, and it was I, and not Alice, who got up before daylight to get breakfast for the men. Mr. Brown tried to help me. He did not know how to turn a batter cake, and, of course, a great big thing like him, with No. 10 boots to stumble over, was awfully in my way. But I recognized the intention of his kind heart, and suffered the inconvenience thankfully.

For four days Alice laid in her bed, while I did the work and Billy waited on her. There was nothing the matter, only that she could not wear her shoes and stockings. If I treated her cruelly, retribution followed me. I was taken sick almost as soon as she was able to do the work again. In the meantime, she had poisoned Billy's mind against me to such a degree that he could hardly bear the sight of me, and she was using her influence with him to get him to leave us and go back to Sacramento, the place where she had formerly lived. One day, while I was still in bed, though convalescent, Mr. Brown told me that Billy was dissatisfied and intended going away immediately. In his settlement with him he found great discrepancy between the time as he kept it and the time as Billy kept it. Investigating the matter, we discovered that Alice had kept the time for him since their marriage, and had put in more days, than there were between the date of his coming to us and the date of his leaving. Billy was surprised at this and feared we would consider him dishonest. "It was a mistake in Alice," he said; "women are so careless, you know."

The next day they were sent to the nearest town in our bright new wagon, together with Billy's tool-chest and Alice's enormous Saratoga trunk. And that was the last of them for some time. When I got up about the house again, I found it stripped clean of every portable thing I had—sheets, table cloths, towels, napkins, spoons, unmade material of every description, clear down to the feather of Little Pickie's Sunday hat and her blue gros grain sash.

It was Mr. Brown's turn to be angry now. For my part, I thought it was a good ride dance at any price; and, of course, I soothed his ruffled feelings, after the manner of charming wives, by saying, "Didn't I tell you so?"

Did Billy know it? No, he did not. I ran across him in a street car in this city only a few weeks ago. The gayety was all faded out of his frank, handsome face. He had in his lap a little girl about two years old; she was the very image of himself, and the only time his face relaxed from the habitual severity of its expression was when he looked at this child.

"And how is Alice, Billy?" I asked.

"She is gone to the devil, Miss Brown. She ran away with that fellow who wrote her those letters before we had been in Sacramento a month. She took what money I had with her and my best suit of clothes. About a year after she sent me this baby. It was a helpless little darling then, but I knew it was mine, and I fell to thank God for even a child to love. I have called it Lizzie."—*Overland Monthly.*

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It has been sagaciously remarked that a woman's only reason for anything is "because." This theory is borne out by the way the girls operate with counterfeit notes which come under their hand in the Treasury Department. General Spinner, who has had twelve years' experience in the work, says they are worth ten times as much as the men for such business. "A man always has a reason for a counterfeit," says the General, "forty, may be, but he is wrong half the time. A woman never has a reason. She says 'its counterfeit, because it is counterfeit, and she is always right—though she could not tell how she found out it she were to be hung for it."

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Capital punishment having been abolished in Iowa, hanging has to be done by volunteer sheriffs.

## A PICTURE.

BY G. P. WILLIS.

There is a little low hut by the river's side,
Within the sound of its rippling tide;
Its walls are gray with the mosses of years,
And its roof all crumbly and old appears,
But fairer to me than a castle's pride
Is that little low hut by the river's side.

That little low hut was my natal nest,
Where my childhood passed—life's spring-time blest—
Where the hopes of ardent youth were formed,
And the sun of promise my young heart warmed,
Ere I threw myself on life's swift tide,
And left the dear hut by the river's side.

That little old hut, in lowly guise,
Was lofty and grand to my youthful eyes,
And fairer trees were ne'er known before
Than the apple trees by the humble door,
That my father loved for their thrifty pride,
Which shadowed the hut by the river's side.

That little low hut had a glad hearth-stone,
That echoed of old with a merry tone,
And brothers and sisters, a merry crew,
Filled the hours with pleasure as on they flew;
But one by one have the loved ones died
That dwelt in the hut by the river's side.

The father revered and the children gay,
The grave and the world have called away,
But quietly all alone there sits
By the pleasant window, in summer, and hears,
An aged woman, long years allied
With the little hut by the river's side.

That little old hut to the lonely old wife
Is the cherished stage of her active life;
Each scene is recalled in memory's beam,
As she sits by the window in pensive dream,
And joys and woes roll back like a tide
In that little old hut by the river's side.

My mother! alone by the river's side,
She waits for the flood of the heavenly tide,
And the voice that shall thrill her heart with its call
To meet once more with the dear ones all,
And form, in a region beatified,
The band that met erst by the river's side.

That dear old hut by the river's side
With the warmest pulse of my heart is allied,
And glory is over its dark walls thrown
That statelier piles have never known,
And I shall love with a fonder pride,
That little old hut by the river's side.

## "THE OPEN DOOR."

Rev. William S. Alger drew an even larger congregation yesterday morning than that which has listened to him at either of his previous appearances in the pulpit of the Church of the Messiah. The fame of his oratory had evidently gone abroad, and his return for another day's service was greeted by an increasing circle of admirers. It is the belief of many in the congregation that if Mr. Alger could be permanently settled as the pastor of this church its troubles would soon be ended and a career of prosperity open before it. The trustees say they are still undecided as to the choice of a pastor to be called, and have as yet done nothing beyond securing a temporary occupant for the pulpit from week to week. Next Sunday Rev. John Ware will officiate. It was announced that the annual meeting of the society would be held on December 7. The Thanksgiving day exercises will be held jointly with the congregation of All Souls' Church at the latter church, corner of Twentieth street and Fourth avenue. Mr. Alger's sermon was as follows, the text being the eighth verse of the third chapter of the Apocalypse:

"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The theme suggested by these words from the Apocalypse is the impossibility of a monopolization of the gifts of God. The things of man's production are the constant prey of cliques and factions who seize them for the express purpose of withholding them from producing those general benefits they were meant to accomplish. One of the oldest examples of monopoly is that of Joseph in Egypt while he was ruler of that land. During the seven years of plenty he stored away great quantities of provisions, and when the seven years of famine came he sold them unto the people, receiving their money, their cattle, their persons and land, until Pharaoh become sole owner of the whole of Egypt and the people in it as well. In Athens speculators often abused their privileges to buy up some necessary article, until a law was passed that no citizen should buy of certain articles more than a specified quantity. In Spain and France monopoly ran riot, with fearful results. Queen Elizabeth granted to one individual the exclusive right to import, export, and sell alum to her subjects. Sir Walter Raleigh enjoyed a monopoly of the tobacco trade from her. Not only were material things thus bartered away, but the matters beyond form were put under exclusive control in Roman Catholic countries. For a long time the Jesuits had the exclusive right to the education of the people, and they never gave up that power without dispute and struggle, while the people, rushing iron one extreme to another, have often banished them from the places they have formerly infested. The wrong of monopoly is three-fold. It increases the cost, destroys the quality, and limits the distribution of the products with which it deals. The true desiderata are to lower the cost, raise the quality, and universalize the supply of everything that man needs. Let there be a monopoly of carpets or hats, and at once all the evils I have mentioned would follow in respect to these two articles, and reflect on all other products; but if all are thrown open to competition they will be more durable, more moderate of price, as well as more extensively put before the public. Just so there is found a class who would make a barter and hold to themselves the truths of religion, who would conjure up old dead and dying scraps of theological truth, no more nourishing than dried bones, and thrust these dusty dogmas each Sunday into the throats of their people, when men thirst and die for the fresh grass of reality, lit with the sparkle of the spirit. This contracted spirit of favoritism appears nowhere with greater impropriety than in religion, since God is that power and spirit to which every person stands in equal relation. Throughout the world there is visible in this bad tendency to monopolize powers and privileges of every sort, and when we turn away from this exclusiveness to the relations of man to the divine government we are confronted by a wholly different order of things. We step into the very aroma of freedom and universality. His favors are flung forth to all without favor. It was His veritable impulse which made the ancient prophet stand upon the mountain and cry, "Ho! every one that thirsteth let him drink of the waters of life freely, and to him that hath no money let him come." Everything that men claim as peculiar to themselves is worthless when compared with the gifts that God puts before all mankind. This truth is wholesome, comforting, and inspiring, and need to be enforced. The truth that however much man may monopolize the artificial product, there is no monopoly of the great original boons of God. Let us illustrate this great truth. I take, too, a special pleasure in presenting this subject to you, because it is so well calculated to fulfill the end which the Sunday services sought to fulfill—to cheer the heart, expand the mind, and inspire the soul of the worshiper to luminous and disinterested deeds, instead of depressing him with low and selfish views. First, then, there is set before us the open door of material nature—the air, light, water, earth, the firmament. How fortunate it is that these are unpriesonable, free to us all, and