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IN THE DARK.

BY NORAH PERRY.

This is my little sweetheart dead
Blue were her eyes and her cheek was red
And warm at my touch when I saw her last,
When she smiled on me and held me fast

With the light, soft clasp of her slender hand;
And now beside her I may stand and stand
Hour after hour, and no blush would rise
On her dead white cheek, and her shut eyes

Will never unclose at my kiss or call
If this is the end, if this be all
That I am to know of this woman dear
If the beautiful spirit I knew lies here

With the beautiful body cold and still,
While I stand here now and thrill
With my yearning memories sore at heart,
For a token or a sign to rend apart

The pitilessvell there is nothing beyond,
If this woman, so fair, so fine, so fond
A week ago—fond, fine and fair
With the life, the soul that shone out there,

In her eyes, her voice which made her in truth
The woman I loved; if this woman forsooth
Is dead as this dead clay that lies
Under my gaze with close-shut eyes

Then what is the meaning of life, when death
Can break it all, as breaks at a breath
The child's blown bubble afloat in the sun?
What is the meaning of all is done

When this breath goes out into empty air,
Like this childish plaything, dimmy and fair?
What is the meaning of love's long pain,
The yearning memories that rend and strain

The living heart or the living soul,
If this is the end, if this is the whole
Of life and death—this little span
That drops in the dark before the plan

Which the brain conceives is half complete
Making life but the bubble a empty cheat?
Was, a year ago, through all the maze
Of speculation's far-hung haze,

I followed on with careless tread
I had not looked then on my dead—
My dead so infinitely dear,
My dead that coldly lying here

Mocks my fond heart with semblance fair
Chills me with measureless despair
Then I could calmly measure fate
With nature's laws, and speculate

On all the doubts that science brings
Now, standing here, what is it springs
Within my soul, that makes despair
Not quite despair? O fond, O fair

O little sweetheart, dead to me,
Somewhere or other thou must wait for me
Somewhere, somewhere I shall not look in vain
To find thy living face, thy living love again.

—Independent.

"WELL DONE!"

Just where one of our beautiful Western rivers widens to the sea, nestles the little fisher hamlet of Ferrybank; its low thatched cottages clustered on the rugged beach, and dotted here and there upon the noble cliffs which rise behind—brilliant in summer time with furze and broom and heather. On the other side the river, the quiet and picturesque watering place of Llanvriar lies cool and white among the rich warm blossoms on the hillside, and between the hamlet and the town plies the little ferryboat which gives the village its name. But the trusty little sailing vessel is but rarely used; for at least half its time it lies in utter idleness under the ferryman's cottage, while the waters lap it softly as they pass, and laugh that they are close upon the sea at last.

But the fishing-boats at Ferrybank have no such holiday. When they rest they do it in an an uncertain manner, standing ready for action, though high and dry upon the rocky beach, and waiting to be dragged down amid those busy shouts, as they are dragged so many times each year. But one there is even of those which, from month to month, lies useless and rudderless upon the isolated shelf of rocks, and the fisherman—their rough voices softened a little—tell how one evening the Squire's yacht found that boat tossing tenantless upon the waves not quite three miles from shore, and towed it slowly home; landing it on the beach just where the missing fisherman's son stood waiting and watching for his father's signal. None of them can tell how Owen Vaughan—the ablest and most fearless sailor on the coast—met his death upon the secret sea; but they will tell how the boy, through all the night that followed, sat alone upon the cliffs, and how, when he came home at last he had a look upon his face as if he had borne the sorrow of a man's life—a look which they tell you he can never lose again. And then they added, turning a little from your face to look, beyond the very sea itself, to where the sky spreads wide and bright above, that though such things may be like oft told tales in lives like theirs, yet that the shock they bring never is the less keen for that nor the bereavement less deep and sore. This is how in Owen Vaughan's cottage there was felt the great hush of a sudden grief, which the boy—who had loved his father with that strength and devotion which it is given us sometimes to see in boy natures—battled with in a strange, unboyish silence, while his mother let her sorrow overwhelm her, and the baby girl, herself an unconscious comforter, cried wonderingly in the gloom of the darkened cottage.

But this grief grew less as years went on. The mother earned a scanty livelihood by her washing, and little Duddgha—in spite of the weight of her Welsh name—grew from babyhood to girlhood, tall and lithe and active, ever ready with the nimble feet or fingers to lighten her mother's toil, while Owen won his way so rapidly in the village school that the lame schoolmaster began most painfully to feel the narrowness of his own erudition under the boy's wide questioning. He was even right, too, when he muttered suggestively among the villagers that "Owen was an odd child, and would not associate with his schoolfellows."

At last the village schoolmaster, seeing he could take the boy no further on the path he trod so rapidly, mentioned generally the advisability of leaving school now, and mentioned it particularly to Sir Bulkley Gwynne, the rich eccentric bachelor who owned all Ferrybank, and lived in the great house upon the wooded bank above Llanvriar. Sir Bulkley, always quick to see the help which it would be wise to give, and always proud and glad when he found unexpected gifts and powers among his people, examined the boy himself—startled without puzzling him, frightened, without bewildering him—and then dismissed him with a few curt words of advice, but no encouragement. Yet only a few days afterward he appeared again in the village school, and, walking through the rows of standing boys to where Owen waited with his head raised from his open book, he told him he had chosen another school for him, and that the master had promised, on condition of the boy's progress being satisfactory—here the Squire's hand which was upon Owen's shoulder now, grew a little heavier, and his voice a little more emphatic—to retain him as tutor, and pay him according to his services.

Sir Bulkley, making nothing of his own share in this, and saying nothing of the great hope he entertained for the lad, felt that he had given him just the start in life which, by his own industry and talent, might lead him safely to the end; but he never guessed the depth of his protege's gratitude when Owen found that this school to which he was sent was one of the first private schools in Wales, nor with what intense earnestness the lad pursued this new path which his generous patron had opened for him, and which it was such happiness to walk in.

One day a new light broke in upon this path for Owen, showing him the track for which he had been unconsciously longing. A friend of Sir Bulkley Gwynne's, who was going abroad, and wanted a secretary and interpreter, heard of Owen's wonderful facility in acquiring languages, and offered to take him. The baronet, always ready and kind, traveled himself to the inland Welsh town, and started Owen off to London, handing him a note for £100, with a few kind words of encouragement, which Owen never forgot through all his life, and telling him that when his engagement was over, if he would like to stay abroad and study, this would give him the power to do so.

Through France and Germany and Italy went Owen with his patron, perfecting himself in each language with that extraordinary power which seemed born with him, and his patron, returning to England, left him at a German university. Three years after that first letter from abroad had filled the fishing village with a great astonishment, it was to receive a greater one. A handsome, grave looking gentleman, with kinnly gentle words for all he met, walked from the station to Mrs. Vaughan's cottage, and there put his arms about the slight figure of the little washerwoman and held her to his heart, while she sobbed out aloud in the strength and weakness of her joy. Duddgha, standing by in shy bewilderment, a grave and gentle girl of seventeen, felt the charm of his face when he turned to take her, too, within his arms; and, in a cry of gladness, there broke from her the old pet name for him, which had not passed her lips since she was a child, and he had been used to carry her upon the cliffs and tell her wonderful stories and beautiful legends of the sea.

Next morning Owen walked up to the great house on the bank, to see, to repay, and once again to thank Sir Bulkley, who, with a genial hand shake, eyed him curiously and asked where was the £100.

"Here, sir," said Owen, touching his temples, lightly. "You bade me store it here."

And Sir Bulkley, laughing heartily at the thought of receiving the money, felt that the debt had been discharged in the way he best liked.

New fell to second cloud on Owen's life; a cloud whose lengthening shadow was to reach the end. Before he left Germany he had obtained the appointment of second master at the grammar school in Vicester, one of the first, if not the very first, in England. And it was whispered that to win this appointment was almost equal to winning the head mastership, because Dr. Hope was very anxious to resign, and his second master, who would necessarily perform many of his duties temporarily, would stand the best chance of succeeding him. Proudly Owen told his mother and sister this, as he pictured glowingly the useful, restful life they should lead with him. Then fell the cloud, darkening at once his loving anticipations. The mother would not leave her cottage on the beach.

"I'm too old a tree to bear such moving, Owen, dear lad," she said. "It would kill me to be set in a new home now. I'rather tarry where your father lived, no other place would ever be the same to me."

"Not the home which I would make you, mother; where you shall do what you like all day; only being there to make it home for me"

But his pleading was of no avail though he never wearied in it.

"You shall not work, then mother," he said at last, feeling that he must be content with that.

"Not work?" she echoed as if the prospect were most dreary. "Why Owen, I should soon be tired of my life—a fretting, idle old woman. No, dear, let your mother live and work just as she has been used to; *that's* the kindest for her; and Duddgha chooses to bide with me."

So Owen, all his loving dreams faded now, took possession of his solitary rooms, and the pleasure which he might have had in sending his frequent gifts to his mother was destroyed by her oft-expressed wish to have nothing more than she had been used to through her lowly life; nothing more than her boy's cherished letters and her proud knowledge of his goodness.

Owen lived at first a busy but almost saddened life at Vicester, too deeply studious to make many friends; but at last he found in Dr. Hope's household a sweeter companionship than he had ever dreamed of. A pleasant, genial household was that of the head master, and here Owen was always made most welcome, liked and respected for himself alone. Dr. Hope, always cordial, was doubly so to Owen, on whose young strength and power he had learned to lean in many ways. Mrs. Hope, doubting nothing of the young man's antecedents, because he had been recommended by those who stood high on the world's ladder, encouraged his visits and made them pleasant to him, with that subtle, delicate tact which some ladies possess so pre-eminently; and Alice, their only child, greeted him always with her gladdest smile, flushing brightly when she heard his step upon the pavement of the court, as she daily watched for his coming.

But no one saw his eye gladden in her presence; no one saw his hand tremble when it met hers; for Owen's, always remembering the cottage on the beach where his childhood had been spent, and where his mother and sister toiled, kept a close firm grasp on the burning hope which sometimes rose within him stronger than his strength, and placed between himself and Alice the shadow of his early poverty; so much the darker from her own frankly avowed pride and pleasure in her old honorable name.

"It is always well for a man who would attain a good position in my line of life to have on his side good birth and a good name, followed up, of course, by an English university education."

So the doctor would say sometimes, and Owen could laughingly argue in favor of the German education and let the other criticism pass. But though he could so laugh it off at times the strain was slowly telling on him, and at his solitary fireside he would make a resolution—bravely enough he could make it there—not to go to the schoolhouse save on rare and necessary occasions, and when the hope of which he was scarcely conscious was mastering him he would travel to Ferrybank and again plead with his mother, in the low dark cottage which grew to seem more and more gloomy to him on each visit. Still no pleading, even of his, availed.

"But, mother, if you will not come with me," supplicated Owen, "let me find you another home. You shall choose where; it shall be in this very spot if you like; only let it be free from gloom and discomfort."

But the mother pleaded in her turn to be left where she was happiest; and, silenced once more, Owen sought to beautify the place a little by his generous gifts. But no; these made no difference in the poor dwelling. All the money that he sent his mother was put sacredly away. "When I am gone, Duddgha," she said to her daughter, "you will find it all untouched, and you may want it then."

It was Christmas eve, and Owen was to dine at the schoolhouse. He entered the long warm room just as Alice, with her hands full of flowers, came in from the greenhouse. While they lingered together arranging the flowers, she wooed him on to talk of what she felt he loved, and knowing that home would be near his heart this Christmas time, asked him of his mother and sister.

"I never like to mention your sister's name, Mr. Vaughan," she said, "because I do not know how to pronounce it. I have seen it in a book of yours, but I never heard you say it."

The color mounted slowly to Owen's brow, for something in Alice's gentle words sounded like a rebuke.

"We pronounce it Duthga," he said; "it is an odd name, is it not? But it looks worse than it sounds."

"I like the sound of it," Alice answered. "I think I should know your sister if I saw her, Mr. Vaughan, though I do not fancy her like you; no girl could have your kind of face. Is she as tall as—I am?"

"No," answered Owen, smiling a little as he pictured the two girls—one in her plain calico gown, singing to herself as she stood ironing in the cottage kitchen, and the other as she stood beside him now in her soft velvet dress, with the delicate fern and crimson rosebud in its bosom.

"Is she as fond of flowers as I am?" asked Alice, guessing nothing of these thoughts.

"I can not tell," said Owen, watching the white fingers as they touched caressingly the brilliant petals, "for she has not such flowers as these within her reach."

"There are some beautiful ferns to be found at Tenby," said Alice, in quick fear lest she had hurt him. "Papa and I have found some choice ones near there. Does she know. I wonder because—because your home is not far from Tenby, you once told me."

The girl's voice grew unconsciously a little wistful as she spoke, remembering how seldom he had told her anything of his home, or of those whom he felt he loved so dearly; but just then her father called Owen into his study, and she was left to wonder. She had a misty impression, though she could not tell how gathered, that his mother did not like society, and that her daughter could not leave her, but she knew that Owen had never definitely told her even this.

But Alice had forgotten this passing cloud before the long and cheerful dinner was over. The servants had left the room, when Owen, sitting next to Alice and listening happily to her bright voice, felt a sudden chill creep in upon the scene. The words of one of the doctor's guests struck upon his quick, keen ear.

"Much as I want a tutor in my school before next term, I could not engage Leslie because he can not have been brought up a gentleman. His father, I hear, was a village tradesman. But what looks particularly bad is that he does not tell me the fact himself. In many ways he would undoubtedly suit the post. He is gentlemanly looking, and he speaks well, besides having testimonials of the highest class. Still, there is that insuperable objection."

"Insuperable," muttered the doctor assenting. "I would not entertain the idea. What do you think, Vaughan?"

"If," said Owen, taking a long time to peel an atom of walnut, and looking down upon it very intently, "if his words and acts, as well as his appearance, are those of a gentleman, I can not see what difference is left for his birth to make. One can but look and act and speak as a gentleman, let one's birth be the noblest in the land; and if we miss none of these things in each other, what need have we to question further?"

"You speak warmly, Vaughan. In my place you evidently would engage this son of a village shop keeper to help to educate noblemen and gentlemen's sons."

"We men do not often question each other on out birth and early life," said Owen, "and do not often volunteer to talk of it unquestioned. Then will it never be that we may judge men by what we find them—respect or despise them, not according to the rank they bear, but according to the part they act?"

"Better in theory than in practice, Vaughan," said Dr. Hope, lightly. "Still, my objection is the want of truthfulness at starting."

"Many of our highest families," said Alice, "have been founded by one man who has risen from the people and they are proud to trace back to such a one. Why, because we are his contemporaries, should we scorn him for it?"

"Suppose," said Owen, glancing rapidly into Alice's face, while his heart beat gratefully for her words—"suppose, Dr. Hope, that one of your own masters had come to live among you, of lower birth even than this candidate you speak of, and had told you nothing of his antecedents, feeling that if he were suitable for the post, that was all, and that if he were not, you would soon discover it; suppose you had liked him and associated freely with him, giving him a welcome always in your house, and had then discovered his history—should you blame him for his silence?"

"Blame him" echoed the doctor notly. "I should turn my back upon him promptly, I assure you, where he the finest scholar in England.

Slowly and darkly the color rose in Owen's face. "That is the general opinion, I suppose," he said; and Alice was not the only one who noticed the tone of pain in his voice.

"What should you do, yourself, Mr. Vaughan?" asked Mrs. Hope merrily. "Come, next to the doctor himself, you are the one most likely to be placed in such a position."

"I think," said Owen quietly, "that I should merely care what the man himself might be. It would signify as little to me what his father had been as what his son would be years and years afterward."

"Wait until some one imposes upon you," returned the doctor; "he would not like it, would he, Alice?" he added, laughing up at her as she rose to follow her mother.

Eagerly Owen waited for her answer.

"I do not think a really low born man could succeed in such an imposture, papa," she carelessly said, "even if he tried."

The Christmas mirth had all died out of Owen's eyes when he joined Alice again, and her shy, kind words could not bring it back; neither did their memory bring a tender smile to his lips when he recalled them afterward.

Well and bravely had Owen kept his resolution: while Alice, from the sombre rooms of the old schoolhouse, listened in vain for the familiar step upon the pavement, waited in vain for the old clasp of the slight firm fingers, hungered in vain for the old pleasure his coming ever gave. And he? He performed his old tasks just as he had performed them always.

As the spring came on she drooped and pined so sadly that they said she needed the sea air, and they begged her to accept the invitation of an old school friend who had lately married and gone from her home in Scotland to stay with her husband's relations on the Welsh coast.

"It is to Llanvriar I am going, Mr. Vaughan," said Alice, a little wearily, as she told Owen of her approaching departure, while he stood steadily before her looking into her pale face. "Papa says he thinks I shall be close to your home. May I take anything for you? Is there *anything* I can do?"

No, there was nothing, he told her, speaking with cold, tight lips, while his heart grew hot and wild with rebellion as he thought how, if his home had been different, Alice would have brightened it now for his sake. And so they parted with a simple hand shake.

While alice was at Llanvriar there was a concert given by the patrons of the Ferrybank School. One of the singers, a pretty, grave-looking girl of about twenty, struck Alice particularly.

"It almost seemed to me as if I had seen her before," she said to Mr. Gwynne, her host; "and yet I know I have not. I have not even seen any one very like her; and yet something in her eyes, I think, seems familiar to me. Who is she?"

"She is supposed to be rather a peculiar girl," was the answer, "yet no one knows why, unless to be good and helpful to one's mother is peculiar. Perhaps they think so in Ferrybank, for it isn't a very common failing there. She has a brother, though, who *is* peculiar: a specimen of that rare wild plant genius, a specimen no one would expect to find drifted into a wretched fisher cabin on our shore. He was one of my uncle's proteges. I wish Sir Bulkley were at home now, so that you might ask about him. My uncle is so proud to rehearse his career. I believe he is doing excellently now in England, and I suppose he deserves it, for he studied like any old don you like to mention, Miss Hope."

"Did he?" asked Alice, but little interested. "Please to tell me what is the girl's name."

"Duddgha Vaughan. Her mother is a washerwoman, and lives in one of those desolate cabins on the shore, in the very midst of the fish odors; a lasting disgrace, I think—though I dare not say so to Sir Bulkley—to the son, who lives in abundance himself, and leaves his mother and sister to earn their own livelihood in such a hole. You can see the cottage from our windows. I will show it you: such a poor place it is."

"What?"

The word came from Alice in a whisper, and seeing she was anxious to hear, Mr. Gwynne told her his version of Owen's story; while the words crept into her icy heart, and the music to which she had come to listen died unheard.

That Owen should have been her truest friend for all two years—her nearest and first friend, she repeated to herself, the flush of anger and mortification rushing into her face at the thought—only to give her this pain at last.

"I think I will go over just once and see his mother," she said to herself over and over again during her stay at Lanvriar; but a strange new feeling of shame, which she blushed to recognize, prevented her.

Alice had been back at home a week or more when Owen Vaughan came voluntarily once more to the schoolhouse. Dr. and Mrs. Hope were both out, and Alice sat alone. The familiar step, for which she had so often listened, was close behind her now, yet she never turned. How could she turn while that light—half of anger, but half of passionate affection—burned in her eyes? He sat beside her, grave and gentle as of old, but there was a new tone in his voice when he told her the story of his life, a new longing in his face when he told her how he loved her. In a few simple words he told her; but these words she saw were uttered from his heart, and their truth and earnestness were like the truth and earnestness of prayer.

"I have determined many times that I would never utter these words to you, Alice," he said. "I have struggled long and hard against temptation, but it has mastered me at last. Before you went away, looking so frail, I almost broke my resolution. But when you came back, still looking weak and ill, and when I found you cold and strange to me, I said, 'I will listen to nothing now but my own heart. I will tell her the story of my early life, and then how fervently I have loved her and must love always. I will tell her both these things, and leave my fate in her hands.' Alice, I read my answer in your face. You disdain this love of mine. You send me from you, and it will be hard to trust or hope in any one again. Wait, do not say it yet. I thought I had prepared myself, but the darkness falls so suddenly."

But Alice did say it. She told him she disdained the love he offered; and told him so in cold and scornful words which were to come back to her afterward with the crushing weight with which they fell upon his heart. And he watched the young fresh lips from which the cruel words were falling, as if he were struggling to wake from some desolate dream.

"You tell me this story of your childhood, Mr. Vaughan," she ended with chilling slowness, "because you rightly guess that I heard it before I returned. It is as unnecessary to tell it to me at all now, as it is unnecessary to tell me of the imagined love that was built up on deceit."

The shadows, darkening his eyes as he turned them slowly from hers, frightened her, and she dared not glance at him as he sat in that deathly silence, his chest heaving with violent emotion.

"If you were capable of such love as you speak of," she went on with cutting emphasis in his long silence, "would your own mother and sister be toiling in poverty, while you are living among us as a *gentleman?*"

"Hush!" he said slowly, as he rose, with a suppressed passion in his steadfast eyes. "You have said enough to kill my hope; more than you will care to recall in the years to come. Only in rare sweet moments have I ever dreamed that you would accept my love when you knew all, whatever you may have been to me before; but I never dreamed that from your lips could come such words of cruel contempt. I will say nothing of their truth or falsehood. It is enough for me that you can believe them."

The spring sunshine still streamed through the old window, but it touched the white brave face no longer. The slow step died below upon the pavement, and as each echo fell heavily on Alice's heart, she longed to cry aloud.

"If I had been prepared," she sighed, wearily, "or if I had really been what he has thought me, I should have—have said it differently."

"I think, mother," she whispered that evening, when her mother wondered at her wan face, "it would do me good to go back to Llanvriar for a little time. I promised to do so if I could. Will you let me go at once?"

So the next morning Alice went.

A little of the old color had come back to Alice's cheek, and a little of the old lightness to her step, before she had been many days at Llanvriar. But she knew it was not the sea air only which had brought them back. Sir Bulkley Gwynne was at home now, and on the very first evening of her arrival she had heard Owen's story from him. Thinking over this story as the generous old squire had told it, Alice felt a great change had come over all her thoughts of Owen.

"When I go home again," she mused in silent happiness, "I shall see him and speak to him once more. And, then, perhaps—" The words died here; but it was plain that Alice, though she had longed to come, was looking forward already to this going home. And more than ever now she stood beside the window overlooking Ferrybank, and gazed with anxious loving eyes on Owen's home.

"It strikes me, Miss Hope," remarked Mr. Gwynne, coming up to her at this window one day, "that you are not to leave Llanvriar without seeing a storm at sea. You say you have never seen one in your life."

"Never," answered Alice, shuddering unconsciously.

"Well, I think my uncle's prognostic of this evening is likely to be verified; he always dreads this southwest wind. I am going across to Ferrybank to see how things are looking, for the gale increases fast and threatens to be violent."

"Is there a life boat on the coast?" asked Alice, late that night, when she and Mrs. Gwynne sat listening to the wind as it rumbled through the trees and moaned of its own dark deeds upon the sea.

"Yes; it was one of Sir Bulkley's generous gifts to Ferrybank, and many a life has been saved already. We have one of the ablest crews in Britain, so we always say, ready to go out at a minute's notice. Don't look so frightened, dear. Shall we go to bed?"

"O, no!" pleaded Alice; "let us wait for Mr. Gwynne. It is too terrible a night for sleep or rest."

Down upon the shore at Ferrybank a breathless, eager crowd had gathered, leaning hard against the wind, and blinded by the spray which dashed in showers to the wild shore. Gazing—gazing out into the darkness which hid the hungry sea, they waited while the wide doors of the lifeboat house were unlocked and the great boat wheeled down to brave the storm. Amid the mightier sounds Sir Bulkley Gwynne's voice rose clear and sharp, as watching the trained crew take down their life-belts, he counted them rapidly.

"One is missing—Hughes! Where is Hughes?"

No one had seen Hughes, but half a hundred voices called his name now.

"His place must be supplied," the Squire shouted, sharply and distinctly. "We dare not delay one second."

A young man, who had been active and prompt in his help, came into the light of the lamp which Sir Bulkley held. "I am ready, Sir Bulkley; let me go. You know that an oar is no new toy to me. If you refuse me I shall take out my father's boat. Listen! Could I stay upon the shore here while the drowning plead for help? In the rocket's light I saw the life boat from the brig put out, and I know it could not pull through such a storm as this. Let me go, Sir Bulkley."

As he spoke, the Baronet, raising the lamp which he was placing in the boat, saw in his face the steady bravery which was so plain in his low quick tones.

"Vaughan! I did not know you were here. I trust you in this as I have trusted you before. Go, if you think it well."

"Thank God," said Owen, softly, as the Squire wrung his hand.

Amid the cries and prayers of the excited crowd, the strong, swift boat put out upon the dangerous surf, and all eyes followed its light as it rose and fell upon the waves, and slowly neared that other faint white light which glowed on the masthead of the struggling vessel.

Only five miles from shore the brig would be, and now and then distinctly seen in the sudden blazing of the rockets; yet now the lights reeled and tossed and would not meet.

"Sir Bulkley, I've been ill for weeks, sir"—the one member of the crew who had been absent when the boat started, came panting breathlessly upon the scene—"but I saw the rockets and I couldn't lie upon my bed and leave my place here empty."

"The boat is out on its duty, Hughes," the Baronet answered, a little sternness in his voice, though he marked pityingly the man's pained breathing. "Your place is filled by one who will do his duty even to death."

"It shouldn't have been Owen Vaughan, though," said Hughes, when the bystanders had told him of the launch. "His arms haven't been in lately for that sort of work, and they say that, two or three years ago, he was forbidden to use an oar. What could induce him to go when he knew that? Ah, there! see how she rides that heavy sea—God bless her!"

The waves sobbed gently and softly, tired of the passionate unrest of their long night; and, gazing upon them with wild and tearless eyes, as if their mellow plush bewildered her, Alice stood again at that window from which she could see Owen's cottage home.

It was quite late in the morning when Mr. Gwynne returned to tell of the scene upon the sea shore last night.

"After all, I'm thankful to tell you only one accident occurred," he said, wondering at the depth and sadness of Alice's sympathy; "but it was a painful one indeed. That young Vaughan, of whom my uncle told you so much, Miss Hope, happened to be at his mother's cottage—came only yesterday or the day before—and he volunteered to take one place in the life boat, begged for it, indeed. Splendidly he handled his oar, so all the crew say, and was untiring in all he could do for the rescued. Strong and brave and ready, they said; and if you knew them you would understand what that means. Whether it was only that he worked too hard, or whether he hurt himself in some way, is not known; but when he tried to land he fell upon the beach. I helped to carry the poor fellow into his mother's cottage, and I shall not soon forget her face as it met his. The doctors talk of paralysis of the heart, and say that he must have known that such a task as he undertook last night would probably kill him. He had been warned in Germany, it seems. I'm glad to say they have not told the mother this, for they had before told her how he entreated my uncle to send him, and how could she reconcile the two facts?"

Every word entered deep into Alice's sore heart, and when all had been told one thought and longing held her. Along and unobserved she slipped away and hurried to the river. The old ferryman was busy enough this morning; the boat had been ceaselessly plying its way to and fro since daybreak. Eagerly Alice listened to the voices around her as she was pulled across, for all were taking of the storm, and all spoke Owen's name.

When she reached the opposite shore, she walked on rapidly among the spars of the lost vessel and over the dismal line of drifted seaweed to that cottage on the beach, in which she knew that Owen lay. For a moment she felt that she must be mistaken, because no crowd had gathered here, but one glance around showed her a group of people whispering together at a short distance, and unconsciously thanking them in her heart for the silent respect thus shown, she knocked softly at the half-closed door.

"I am an old friend of Mr. Vaughan's," said Alice, very softly, as she looked appealingly into the face of Owen's sister. "May I see him?"

Duddgha's eyes, swollen and tired with weeping, fixed themselves for a moment wonderingly upon the lady who said this; a lady with a beautiful pale face and eyes as tired as her own, quietly and simply dressed, yet elegant as few visitors at the gloomy cottage had ever looked to the girl before. Without answering, she led Alice into the kitchen, and then stood in hesitation beside the window, where a bunch of primroses and wild white violets drooped as if they felt the sorrow of the house.

"My brother is very, very ill," she whispered; every word uttered in keenest pain. "Do you think you had better see him?"

"Yes, O yes, if I may," replied Alice, her voice most earnest and entreating.

Without another word, Duddgha walked off noiselessly to an inner room; gently drew her weeping mother from the bedside, and stood aside for Alice to pass in.

The end was very, very near. Alice saw that, even in her first yearning gaze.

"Owen!" she cried. But she could say no other word, and only fell upon her knees beside the bed, and looked at him with all her heart surging in her eyes.

"Alice, once more together," he whispered; and the look upon his face was one of perfect peace, no agony and no regret. "Together at the end. The distance that lay between us, dear, is all traveled now."

Kneeling there in the presence of the great Leveler, and looking back upon her life and his, Alice felt how slight had been this distance of which he spoke, yet how impossible to pass it now. The barrier which had stood between them when she felt herself above him had been raised by her own hand, she owned, with a sobbing pain at her heart. Now, with that wonderful glory on his face, he stood immeasurably above *her*, and this barrier was from the hand of God.

And still she could not speak to him one word; only her eyes, so full of love and pain and penitence, told all.

His two kind friends were with him at the end. Old Dr. Hope, who had only the day before received the short, sad letter, in which Owen told his story and resigned his appointment in the grammer school, was in time to tell him, with dim eyes, he had come himself on purpose to take him back to the place he had filled so well; and Sir Bulkley Gwynne was there, too, walking quietly in the outer room, and muttering that the sunshine on the water dazzled him.

The eyes upon the pillow, bright with unutterable happiness, read the yearning love upon those faces gathered in the silent room, and read in it that highest light which made all clear.

Softly, through the open doorway, came the soothing murmer of the open sea. Away, in the wide blue above the open windows, a lark's song faltered toward the unreached heaven. The only shadow on the bright spring noon was the hushed shadow of the outspread wings.—*Belgravia.*

[From the Washington Republican, May 11.]

Mr. Wheeler and the Louisiana Compromise.

Congressman Wheeler, of New York, has evidently become restive under the criticisms of the press of the country upon the result of the Louisiana compromise, and now attempts to explain that after all it was not a failure. In this attempt he places himself in direct conflict with the statements of his colleague, Mr. Frye, of Maine, and asserts a new construction of the compromise which will, to say the least, astonish a large number of Republicans who have heretofore believed that they understood every detail of it. We print his explanation in full elsewhere, and commend it to the careful attention of our readers, with the suggestion, however, that they recall the fact of Mr. Wheeler's silence pending action on the compromise when Mr. Frye was outspoken and decided in his determination of its meaning. It is true this suggestion may give rise to the idea that Mr. Wheeler should not have remained quiet so long as he has, but with that we have nothing to do. We think, however, that while he has this explanation business on hand he should clear up all doubts and suspicions and let the public know who has told the truth, Mr. Frye or himself.

The argument that the Legislature had constitutional authority to act as it pleased, advanced by him, is the same that was advanced by the more earnestly Democratic and so-called Conservative members of the Legislature against the adoption or acceptance of the compromise. Mr. Frye understood this, as did also leading members of the administration and the majority party in Congress. It was further understood, however, that both parties in the Legislature yielded all constitutional authority for the purpose of securing harmony. There could have been no compromise without this mutual yielding. The very word compromise carries with it the forcible assertion that the contending parties had met on middle grounds, and in that meeting was governed, not by any strict construction of the law, but by the equally binding law of mutual consent. This mutual consent, it must be remembered, was pledged upon the word of honor of duly delegated representatives of the Conservative majority of the Legislature. It was acceded to in good faith by the Republican members of that body, simply because it had the sanction of a committee of the House of Representatives of a Republican Congress. There was no understanding then that only those members whose signatures were procured to the compromise should be bound by it, but the declaration was plain that the majority wings of both parties should overcome the objections of their respective minorities, and abide by agreements or decisions of the congressional committee. We did not believe then that the Democrats would faithfully live up to those agreements and decisions, and we predicted the bad faith on their part which followed as soon as the extra session of the Legislature had convened under Governor Kellogg's proclamation.

Mr. Wheeler boasts that good government has been established as the result of his compromise, notwithstanding the treachery of which we insist the Conservatives have been guilty. We admit all this, but further insist that it exists simply because the policy of the Republican administration of the State, begun before the compromise, has, fortunately, not been interfered with. But the facts prove that as soon as the Conservatives obtained control, as the result of their treachery, they began a system of extravagance which increased the expenses of the government to an alarming extent in the matter of supporting the legislative branch. No one can deny this, and while we deplore it, we are willing to join Mr. Wheeler in his congratulations that peace and quiet are the order of the day. But we know the people of the State so well—or more properly speaking, we doubt the sincerity of the mob element so much—that we are fearful of the future. In other words, we confidently predict a renewal of the White League and banditti terrorism which has disgraced the State and destroyed the prosperity of her people, as soon as the provocation of political excitement shall be developed.

THE TEACHER'S DREAM.

BY PROFESSOR W. H. CHYABLE.

The weary teacher sat alone
While twilight gathered on;
And not a sound was heard around—
The boys and girls were gone.

The weary teacher sat alone
Unnerved and pale was he;
Bowed 'neath a yoke of care, he spoke
In sad soliloquy.

"Another round, another round
Of labor thrown away—
Another chain of toil and pain
Dragged through a tedious day.

"Of no avail is constant zeal,
Love's sacrifice is loss,
The hopes of morn, so golden, turn
Each evening into dross.

"I squander on a barren field
My strength, my life, my all,
The seeds I sow will never grow;
They perish where they fall."

He sighed, and low upon his hands
His aching brow he prest,
And o'er his frame erelong there came
A soothing sense of rest.

And then he lifted up his face,
But started back aghast—
The room by strange and sudden change
Assumed proportions vast.

It seemed a Senate hall, and one
Addressed a listening throng,
Each burning word all bosoms stirred,
Applause rose loud and long.

The wildered teacher thought he knew
The speaker's voice and look,
"And for his name," said he, "the same
Is in my record book."

The stately Senate hall dissolved
A church rose in its place,
Wherein there stood a man of God,
Dispensing words of grace.

And though he spoke in solemn tone
And though his hair was gray,
The teacher's thought was strangely wrought—
"I whipped that boy to-day."

The church, a phantasm, vanished soon;
What saw the teacher then?
In classive gloom of alcoved room
An author plied his pen.

"My idlest lad!" the teacher said
Filled with a new surprise—
"Shall I behold his name enrolled
Among the great and wise?"

This vision of a cottage home
The teacher now descried;
A mother's face illumed the place
Her influence sanctified.

"A miracle! a miracle!
This matron, well I know
Was but a wild and careless child
Not half an hour ago.

"And when she to her children speaks
Of duty's golden rule,
Her lips repeat in accents sweet
My words to her at school."

The scene was changed again, and lo
The schoolhouse rude and old
Upon the wall did darkness fall
The evening air was cold.

"Boo-hoo!" the sleeper, waking, sobbed
The spaced along the floor,
And, whistling slow and soft and low
He locked the schoolhouse door.

And, walking home, his heart was full
Of peace and trust and love and praise;
And singing slow and soft and low,
He murmured, "After many days.

A Telegraph Malady.

A day or two ago we quoted under this heading a paragraph from the *Graphic*. The paragraph referred to an employe who had been engaged in a telegraph office in France, presumably, for nine years, who found that he could not form clearly certain letters of the alphabet, and who, after endeavoring to manipulate with his thumb, and subsequently with his first and second fingers and his wrist, finally became disabled from what has been designated "telegraph paralysis." The paragraph concluded by saying that the so called disorder is very common among telegraph clerks, and it seems not improbable that much uneasiness may be caused by the wide publicity already given to such a statement. We have therefore been at some trouble to inquire into the matter, and we are glad to find that the malady, if such it may really be designated, is wholly unknown in this country. A correspondent, a practical telegraphist of twenty years' standing, who has had much experience both in the training and subsequent control of telegraph clerks, assures us that he never heard of the disease until he saw the paragraph in question; and we learn from other sources that a case of the kind described in the paragraph has never been known to occur in connection with our telegraphic service, either in the days of telegraphic companies or since the acquisition of the system by the postoffice. We should imagine that there are more telegraphists employed in Great Britain than in any other country, and looking to the prominence given to female labor in our telegraph offices, it seems probable that if the disease spoken of was really incidental to the practice of telegraphy, it would have developed itself more rapidly in England than elsewhere. As we have just stated, however, it is wholly unknown among us. We do not assume, of course, that the particular case referred to has not occurred, but we imagine that it is capable of explanation in some way or other. It appears that different countries use different forms of telegraphic apparatus, and that varying methods of manipulation are necessary under certain circumstances. In France, unless we are mistaken, and, indeed, on the continent generally, a form of instrument is in use which requires a rapid nervous style of manipulation which an English telegraphist would call "tapping," as distinguished from the "pumping" action mostly in use in this country. In America we know this to be the case; and we are not certain that the malady reported by the French physician has not shown itself there in an incipient form. The system of single currents almost universally adopted in America renders the use of a short, rapid stroke practicable in sending over very long distances, and the generally high pressure system of telegraphy adopted in the United States would, perhaps, conduce more to the development of nervous diseases than that adopted in other countries. In England the telegraphist generally grasps, or, as it is technically called, "holds" his key, and "tapping" is confined to the shorter circuits for which the single current apparatus is employed. Cases are constantly occurring, of course, such, for instance, as the transmission of the Queen's speech, or some other heroic part of telegraphy, in which the operator becomes "tired" from a long sustained effort, and seeks relief by various expedients; sometimes he will change from one finger to another; sometimes he will use the palm of the hand, and sometimes even the wrist, as the paralyzed telegraphist is said to have done. But a few minutes' rest will generally restore his powers; and the inconvenience of a protracted effort of manipulation on the part of the telegraphist will not be found to be greater, as a rule, than that occasioned by a protracted use of the pen or pencil. Different forms of instruments have developed the ingenuity of the telegraphist in seeking relief for his tired and often benumbed fingers. The relief consists not so much in absolute rest as in varying the form of manipulation, and "Bright's bell"—an instrument now almost obselete—is a good example of how the telegraphist used to rest himself by increasing his labor. The "bell" is worked by two "tappers," and generally both hands are employed in its manipulation. The very difficulty which occurred to the French telegraphist—viz: that of forming the alphabet—often occurred to the manipulators of the "bell" instrument, and it was invariably surmounted by the operator making a series of strokes—sometimes as many as tw