PHENOMENA OF DEATH.

Erroneousness of the Popular Notion as to The Death Agony—Death a Physiological Process, and It and Pain Seldom Go Together.

Thomas D. Spencer M. D., in popular Science Monthly.

It is our purpose to discuss, as briefly as possible, some most important aspects of dissolution. Addison says that there was nothing in history more imposing than, nothing so pleasing and affecting as, the accounts of the behavior of eminent persons in their dying hours; and Montaigne remarks, while speculating on death, that, of all the passages in the annals of mankind, those that attracted and delighted him most were the words and gestures of dying men. "If I were a maker of books," he continues, "I would compile a register with comments of various deaths, for he who would teach men to die would teach them to live. There are three elements presented in this fear of death: 1. The extinction of life's pleasures, interests and hopes to which the mind looks forward with a degree of apprehension proportionate to the amount of happiness they are capable of affording. With the young and vigorous the loss of these animal enjoyments is contemplated with extreme misery; hence the custom among the early Greeks of bearing the lifeless body of youth to the funeral pyre at break of morn, "lest the sun should behold so sad a sight as the young dead." 2. The dread of the unknown future, also depending upon the nervous temperament. And lastly comes a fear more powerful than either, which is the dread of pain, inherent in nature. From time immemorial the actual moment of dissolution has been supposed to be accomplished by a throe of anguish, known as the "death agony." This is believed to occur at that moment when the spiritual and physical forces that have been so intimately blended for many years are torn asunder—the one to moulder and decay, the other to take upon itself that new life beyond the ken of man.

This last element properly belongs to the physiologist, and as such we propose to consider it. Sir Francis Bacon, in one of his essays, published for the first time in the year 1577, gave to the world the following thought: "It is as as natural to die as to be born; and to the little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other." In profundity of thought and depth of research Bacon stepped in advance of his contemporaries, and lived in the future. Thus we find that, contrary to the generally received opinion of even this latter day, nature evidently designed that the end of man should be as painless as his beginning.

At birth the babe undergoes an ordeal that, were he conscious, would be more trying than a most painful death. Yet he feels it not. Born in an unconscious state, the brain incapable of receiving conscious impressions, his entrance into this hitherto unknown world is accomplished during a state of oblivion, known as nature,s anæsthesia:

Painlessly we come, whence we know not—
Painlessly we go, whether we know not!

From the earliest period of human history death has been considered as necessarily accompanied by pain; so general is this belief that the terms "death agony," "last struggle," "pangs of death," etc., have been in almost universal use in every age and under all conditions of society.

Nothing could be more erroneous; the truth is pain and death seldom go together—we mean also last moments of life. Of course, death may be preceded by weeks, or even months, of extreme suffering, as occurs during certain incurable diseases.

So exaggerated has been this notion that it has been considered an act of humanity to anticipate the "death struggle" by violence; for ages it was customary among the lower classes of Europe to hasten death by suddenly jerking the pillow from beneath the head of the dying, thus throwing the head backward, straining the pharyngeal and thoracic muscles, rendering the respiration already difficult, shortly impossible. A Venetian ambassador, in the time of Queen Mary, asserted that it was a common custom among the country people to smother the dying by means of a pillow placed over the face, upon which leaned or sat the nearest relative. This was founded upon the pious belief that a short road was the best one. This custom was handed down from generation to generation, parents performing it for their children and vice versa. But perhaps the saddest privilege ever allowed the near friends of the dying man occurred occasionally during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when, through executive clemency, in executions by hanging, they were permitted to grasp the feet of the suspended criminal, and, by clinging to the extremities, precipitate their additional weight on the body, thereby hastening strangulation. It is needless to say that these theories are false in both conception and practice. Death is a physiological process, and, like all other animal functions, should be painless.

When the fiat of death went forth, nature kindly provided an anæsthetic for the body. As the end of life draws near, the respiration becomes slow and shallow, interrupted now and then by deep, sighing inspiration, as though the lungs were vainly endeavoring to throw off the palsy slowly creeping over them. As the intervals between the inspirstions grow longer the blood becomes saturated with carbonic-acid gas—the same that is formed from burning charcoal whose deadily fumes have so often aided the suicide painlessly to destroy life.

While the power of breathing is gradually falling, the heart, which is in close sympathy with the lungs, begins to contract with less force, propelling the blood only a short distance through its areterial channels, thus causing the extremities to grow cold.

The blood sent to the brain is not only diminished in quantity, but it is laden with carbonic acid gas, which, acting on the nerve centers, produces a gradual benumbing of the cerebral ganglia, thereby destroying both consciousness and sensation. The patient gradually sinks into a deeper stupor, the lips become purple, the face cold and livid, cold perspiration (death damp) collects on the forehead, a film creeps over the cornea, and, with or without convulsions, the dying man sinks into his last sleep. As the power of receiving conscious impressions is gone, the death struggle must be automatic. Even in those cases where the senses are retained to the last, the mind is usually calm and collected, and the body free from pain.

"If I had strength to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die!" were the last words of the celebrated surgeon. William Hunter; and Louis XIV is recorded as saying with his last breath: "I thought dying had been more difficult."

That the painlessness of death is due to some benumbing influence actingon the sensory nerves may be inferred from the fact that untoward external surroundings rarely trouble the dying.

On the day that Lord Collingwood breathed his last the Mediterranean was tumultous. Those elements which had been the scene of his past glories rose and fell in swelling undulations and seemed as if rocking him asleep. Capt. Thomas ventured to ask if he was disturbed by the tossing of the ship. "No, Thomas," he answered, "I am now in a state that nothing can disturb me more—I am dying, and I am sure it must be consolatory to you and all that love me to see how comfortably I am coming to my end." In the *Quarterly Review* there is related an instance of a criminal who escaped death from hanging by the breaking of the rope. Henry IV. of France, sent his physicians to examine him, who reported that after a moment's suffering the man saw an appearance like fire, across which appeared a most beautiful avenue of trees. When a pardon was mentioned, the prisoner coolly replied that it was not worth asking for. Those who have been near death from drowning, and afterward restored to consciousness, assert that the dying suffer but little pain. Capt. Marryatt states that his sensations at one time, when nearly drowned, were rather pleasant than otherwise. "The first struggle for life once over, the water closing around me assumed the appearance of waving green fields.* * * It is not a feeling of pain, but seems like sinking down, overpowered by sleep, in the long, soft grass in the cool meadow."

Now, this is precisley the condition presented in death from disease. Insensibility soon comes on, the mind loses consciousness of external objects, and death rapidly and placidly ensues from asphyxia.

In spite of the natural antagonism to death, a moment's reflection will show that it is as much a physiological process as life; the two terms are correlative, the degree of vital activity depending on the extent of molecular death occurring at the same time. Strange as the paradox may seem, without death we cannot live; every thought emanating from the brain, every blow struck by the arm, is accompanied by destruction of nervous or muscular tissue. The bioplasmatic or living matter which enters into the formation of every animal tissue is constantly geminating into cells (the origin of all life), and as constantly passing into decay, their places being taken by protoplasts, thus keeping up the "active dance of life."

This dissimilation, or interstitial death occurs to such an extent that nature, in her wisdom, has provided excrementory organs for the purpose of removing from the system the effete material thus produced. Every living structure, after passing through certain stages of development, maturity, and, finally, retrogression, must come to an end. This may be, but the ephemeral existence of some of the lower ferms of fungi, which, born in the cool of the morning, die as the sun goes down; or, like the famous dragon-tree of Tenerifie, may outlast the pyramids that keep watch by the Nile.

The last topic for consideration is the pseudopia of death, or visions of the dying. This subject, coming under the realm of mental science, properly belongs to metaphysics rather than physiology. Various theories have been advanced to explain this phenomena, but they must remain as hypotheses at best, for they are not susceptible of demonstration. It is not an uncommon occurrence for the dying, after living some hours in a semi-conscious condition, to start up suddenly, and, with glowing face, point eagerly to some object invisible to the bystanders, and, with animated voice and gesture, state that they behold the glories of heaven or the familiar countenance of some friend long since dead.

The question naturally arises as to whether these conditions are merely the fantasies of a disordered and fast disorganizing brain, or are the dying actually permitted a momentary view of those mysteries hitherto unknown?

The traditions and superstitions of the past have led to a popular belief in the latter theory. Shakspeare expressed the sentiment of his day, when he placed in the mouth of the dying Queen Katharine these words:

Saw you not even now a blessed troop
Invite me to a banquet, whose bright faces
Cast thousand beams upon me like a sun?

Science, with its iconoclastic hand, has swept away these pleasing fancies, and in their places has constructed a fabric founded on analogy. In the anæsthesia induced by chloroform a condition is produced resembling that immediately preceding death—caused the carbonic acid poisoning—in which visions are constantly presented to the mind, the character of which depends upon the natural temperament of the individual. Thus it often occurs that a patient, when under the influence of chloroform, has beatific visions similar to those of the dying. It is my fortune to have at present a patient who invariably, when under the influence of chloroform, asserts that she sees angels hovering round her bed. The impression is so strong that she becomes much annoyed if the reality of these visions is disputed. The asphyxia produced by burning charcoal is oft-times accompanied by disturbed fancies similar to these preceding death, and the natural inference is that they are the resultant in both cases of one and the same cause. During the last moments of life the mind gradually loses cognizance of external surroundings, and is wrapped in self-contemplation. Though still in a semi-conscious condition, the weeping of friends and the voices of attendants fall upon dull ears. The eyelids are closed, the pupils slightly contracted, and rolled upward and inward. The dying man has forgotten the present for he is living in the past. One by one the events of a whole life appear—its joys and sorrows, perchance long since forgotten, rise before him in startling distinctness and then disappear in the swiftly-moving panorama. The familiar faces of the friends of his youth are thown upon the mental retina, their cheery voices reverberate in his ears, and the thought of meeting these friends in the near future is perhaps his last conscious impression. As this drowsiness creeps over the system, these images, molded from the past, become as realities to the disordered imagination. The germs from which originate these strange combinations have probably been lying dormant for years in the registering ganglia of the brain.

These death-bed visions are comparatively of frequent occurrence, and are generally aecepted as realities. The theory which we promulgate, though not new, will naturally excite prejudice; but it is better to know the truth than to cherish a belief, however pleasing it be, founded on fact.

A Pretty Big Fish.

From the Carson Appeal.

An Eastern tourist in Nevada had been spinning some incredible fish yarns, when one of the party, turning to an old mountaineer, said: "Bill, that gets away with fishing in this country, don't it?" "Wal, I don't know about that." "Do you mean to say that you have caught more and larger fish?" "No; but I have caught some pretty big fellers." "Come, now, tell us the weight of the largest trout you ever caught?" "Wal, I can't tell exactly as to the weight but you folks can figger on it. Now, you know it is over 200 miles around this yer lake. Put that down. As I said before, I don't know the weight of the biggest fish I ever yanked out, but I did haul one up on the beach, and after I landed him the lake fell three feet, and you can see by the watermark over yonder it hasn't riz since."

Eleven hundred houses in New York city have been wired and made ready for the Edison lamp. The company are now waiting for the engines and boilers for the stations. It is expected they will be in place and the work of illumination commence about the 15th of November. The Brush Electric company have now 500 lamps burning in that city, and the orders for more are greatly in advance of the capacity to fill them.

The wife of Hon. H. Houlten, of Elk River died on Friday; also the wife of Hon. Franklin Beebe, of Minneapolis.

A DISEMBODIED SPIRIT.

From Macmillan's Magazine.

A strange stillness and darkness, a gray, black twilight everywhere, broken only by a whiteness beneath; yet the darkness and stillness were nothing to me save as conditions that existed, but in which I had no concern. I passed out of the room, though no door opened for me, and down the stairs. There were faces I knew dimly, as in a dream; they went by sad and silent, not even seeing me. In a room beneath, where a flickering candle burnt, were two human beings, the one a babe sleeping in its cot; I stood by its side for a moment, not knowing what made me stay, but I saw the child's face, and felt a strange comfort at the sight. The other was a man sitting by a table, his arms stretched out across, and his head resting down upon them. He did not move or stir, his face was hidden, but I knew that he was bowed down by sorrow, and there was something that drew me to his side, that made me long to comfort him, to say pitying words, telling him how short were sorrow and sleep, how long were thought and waking. But the longing was undefined, and had no power to shape itself into action, and I stood silent and still. Then I put out my hand and touched his shoulder. He did not raise his head, but for the first time he moved, his frame was suddenly convulsed, and he sobbed bitterly. And so the night passed, he weeping and I watching and stealthily and cruelly the morning light crept in at the staring, uncurtained windows.

I was in the upper room again; I knew not how, nor how long after, for time and space had no more measure for me. I looked round the room; it was draped with white, and at one end there was a bed, and on it the outline of a human form covered by a sheet. There seemed some dim memory hanging about the room; but that was all, for consciousness returns but slowly, and knowledge remains but of few things, and only of those beings that have made a mark upon our souls that even death cannot efface. The door opened, and the man who had been weeping below entered, and suddenly I remembered and knew my husband. His face was sad and pale, his eyes were dim, his head was bent, but he raised it for a moment as he entered, and looked nervously round the room. I held out my arms to him, but he passed me by, taking no notice; I called him by his name, but he did not hear me. He went up to the bed, and, kneeling down, took the handkerchief from the dead face; step by step I went forward to look at it.

It was my own!

"Ah! no, no, no!" I shrieked, "it is not I! I am here beside you, my husband! Oh! my love—my love—it is not I! I am here! Look at me, speak to me—I am here!" but the words died away, and he did not hear them, and I knew that sound had gone from me forever. And still he knelt by the dead, giving it dear names, and showering down kisses upon it; and I stood by longing for all that was given for love of me, and yet not to me; stood looking with strange fear and shrinking at the white face and the still lips and the closed eyes—at that which had been my own self and was myself no more. But still he knelt there calling it me, and crying out to that which heard not, and saw not, and was but waiting for the black grave to hide it.

At last he covered the face with the handkerchief again, and rose and left the room. I could not follow him, and waited in unutterable longing to weep, but having no tears; to speak, but having no words; to die, but finding that time and death had passed by—that to death I had paid tribute and yet remained.

I looked round the room, and slowly there came dim memories of many things—of pain, and sorrow, and parting; of pain, that death had conquered, and that lay forever vanquished in that still form; of sorrow, that death had left, and that only one soul could conquer—a soul still living within a human body. I knew the room now; it was the one I used to sleep in and had called my own; they had covered the furniture with white, and yet around and about my things my hands had fashioned—hands that never more might stir a single leaf or move one atom from its place. Suddenly, in a corner of the room, I saw the uncovered looking-glass, and wondering, remembered; and fearing and shrinking with a strange terror, I went forward, and standing before it, looked and saw—nothing. All else I saw in the room, the shrouded furniture, some fading flowers in a vase, the outline of the dead woman lying on the bed—everything; but of me that stood before it there was no sign, no trace—nothing—nothing. And still, scarce believing, and holding out my hands to it in my agony, I stood before it, but the vacant glass gave no sign, no trace; showed nothing—nothing. Then I understood—then I realized—that sight and sound knew me no longer, and that the eyes I loved were blind to me in their waking hours—blind forevermore while time should last; and time, that heaps dust on all things, would heap it up higher and higher between the memory of my face and him. But did he not feel my presence? did he not know that I was by him, until, at last from out of the worn body, the soul should slowly lift itself into that which is but one step higher in the universe?—till meeting should be again, and sorrow and parting no more? * * * For as the clay fetters fall, dear, and the earthy chains one by one give way, our souls shall draw nearer and nearer, untill slowly the mist shall clear and we shall see each other once more face to face, and out of the darkness of human pain shall come everlasting light. How the knowledge of this would help you! how it would comfort you to know that though sight and sound have gone, yet there is one thing that links the worlds together—and memory that binds the mortal to the immortal! For love that is stronger than life shall be stronger than death, and, passing on, shall look upon death—the love that came to us from without, and shall pass out with us into that which ever has been and shall be, unto which no end is. * * * Through all the long days which followed I was with him, through all his lonely hours and passionate grief. I stood by him when he slept, and whispered loving words into his ears, and he heard them and was comforted. And we traveled back together along the dream road to all that had been in the far-off time, and the remembrance of old, sweet days came before his sleeping eyes; but things were not as we had felt them, but shaped themselves differently, and wore strange and terrible faces that made him start from his sleep and look around the dark room, half fearing, half wondering, and he saw, not me standing beside him, but only the black hopelessness of the night. Or I would say strange words to him as he slept—words that in life I had never said, so that he might know there was a meeting-time yet to come, for of that I dared not speak; but he would not hear them.

"Come to me in my waking hours," he cried, and I would make so sign, no response. It is only in dreams that the dead have power over the living, for theirs is the land of which the living see only fitful gleams in their sleep—a land where, to the living, all seems, and nothing is, and nothing earthly has an abiding-place. "It is only a dream," he would cry out in his despair; "it means nothing, it is only the fevered picture-making of my own brain." Yet a world of our own creation we can in some way control; but in the world that we enter in our sleep, we have power, no control.

At first I was always with him, for his thought and will and longing had power to bring me, to give me a voice in his dreams, to grant me a sight of his face, but I could not tell him; I could not wait and hope and wait again.

Dear, was it only the clay that held you, was it only the touch of my hand that caressed you, the tone of my voice that ever had tender words for you, and the sound of my eager feet that hurried swiftly toward you ever, and stayed before you waiting? Was it not my soul you loved, and its human form but as the house in which that soul dwelt? For the body is but a mere accident, a chance garment flung aside and dropping to decay when no longer strong enough to hold the soul it covers, a refuge in which for a time we take shelter and use human symbols to do our work and say our say; a place of lodging for that which has been, and is forever, and which, while it stays in the body, is fed and strengthened and beautified, and then goes forth again, or is weakened and starved and disfigured, and at last is scattered to be gathered up no more. Was it not my soul you loved, dear, and that is not sleeping in the dead woman? Life was not only in the beating heart and aching head, but in the hurrying feet and tender hands and the little, eager fingers, in every atom of flesh, and from every of these it has gone forth and waits till you shall choose whether eternity shall be ours or not. * * * *

I came to him and knew by his face that a long time had passed since our last meeting, and he was changed. Strange faces were around him, and strange voices pleased him, and the old tenderness was not in his eyes when he thought of me, and my flowers were no longer on his table, my portrait no more before him, and songs that had not been mine were on his lips. The brightness came back to his face and the happy ring to his voice, as he passed on into a world in which I had no part or memory. But I knew that it must be so, I would not have had him grieve always, and is not life sweet, even to those to whom death will be sweeter?

Fearing and dreading, I stood by his side once more, but only to know that the thought of me saddened him, to watch him struggle with the past, and try to shut out the remembrance of the dead face we had stood beside * * * and with him there was a woman, yonng and fair, fairer than I even in my fairest days, and in her eyes there was a look of love, and on her lips were tender words, and he looked down upon her face and listened to her just as long ago he had looked down at my face and listened to my words. I stood beside him and put my hand upon his arm, and he started as if he felt a deathly coldness. I tried to look into his eyes, but shudderingly he turned away. I whispered old words into his ears, and he heard them in his heart and remembered them, and I knew that thoughts of me were strong upon him; yet with a sigh he turned away and wound his arms round the woman who had taken my place. "He is lonely and sad," I cried; "he cannot always, be alone, without mortal hands to soothe him, and human tones to comfort him, it is this that draws him to her, for he is yet human. It is her humanity he craves to help him along the lonely road; the sound of a voice, the sight of a face, and all that I can be to him no more; but it is me he loves, it is my face he shall see once more before him in his dying hour when the companionship of human life is ended."

It is not her soul that will know him when only love gives recognition, and only love may guide him over the great threshold. * *

He rested his head down upon her hair, and she whispered longingly, "If I had only had your first love!" He looked at her sadly and gravely, and into his voice there came a sweetness I had never heard, as he answered her slowly, "You have my best love." * * * And still I stayed looking at him, listening to him, knowing that I should do so nevermore—that now indeed was the great parting between us. For that which he had called love had been but a delight in sound and sight and touch, born of the flesh and dying with it, and not worthy of the name, and nothing else could bring me to him. And I would have been content, since he had willed it so, had she that was with him had power to give him a perfect love; but I knew that it was not so. And still I stayed, even while he clung to her until he shut his eyes so that in fancy he might not see me, and hid his face that he might not hear me; and with a wrench he shut all remembrance of me out of his heart and turned to her again. * * * And then I fled out into the night, knowing that if we met again there would be no memory of me with him, for memory dies with the body unless it is strong enough to outlive death, or love is there to carry it on. And even if he saw my face again in some dim future of which I knew not yet, it would be strange to him, as a flickering thought that can be identified with no past and which we dare not call to memory, is strange. For as the body knows much the soul may not remember, so has the soul secrets that can never be known by the body.* * * And I cried out to the darkness in my anguish, and the wind lent me its voice and shrieked in the crevices and beat against the windows; but I knew he standing within heard not or took no heed, and thought of nothing save of the woman beside him. "Oh could you but know!" I cried, "could you but know how with our own hands we make our heavens and hells and the heavens and hells of those we love!" For that which is our hearts to the end is always, and so ourselves do we work out our own immortality. The choice is with us and the material in our own hands, to live or die even as we will; but to live the soul must have strength—strength that is greater than death, greater than the power that comes after to gather us in until separate life is ours no more, and the strength that is greatest is born of love that is perfect. And of perfect love are all things born, of love that in its highest has gathered beauty and knowledge and wisdom to itself, until the mortal life has become immortal and passes on with all things in its hands.

I do not know how far I went, on and on, into what strange lands, on and on, borne by the wind and hurried by the storm, making no sign, leaving no footprint behind. Sometimes it seemed as if the wind that met me understood, and went by moaning and pitying, and carried on, perhaps to him, some sad message, for in its tone there seemed a cry of parting and despair that was my own. * * * And then I went back once more to see the babe that had slept in its cot the night I had first stood beside my husband in his sorrow. There is only one being with which one's soul longs for affinity, an affinity born of love and sympathy, and now my soul knew that this was denied it; my thoughts went back to the child that was mine and his. And I loved it chiefly for the life that was in it—life that was his once and might know me still. I stole in the darkness through the quiet house, and found the room where the child lay sleeping in its bed. I saw its face and its soft hair and closed eyes, and heard the sweet sound of breathing that came through its parted lips, and I longed for human life again, and would have given my soul up thankfully to have had my flesh and blood back for one single instant, to have held that little one in my arms. And I stooped and kissed it, but it turned shrinkingly away, even in its sleep, and then, affrighted, awoke and cried "Mother, mother!" And from an inner room the fair woman came; but I stood close to the child still, and touched it softly; and again shrinking and affrighted, it held out its hands to her and cried "Mother, mother!" and she took it into her arms, and the child looked up at her face and smiled, and was satisfied. * * * And I passed out into the night, and on and on forevermore, farther and farther away—on and on, seeking the Infinite and finding it never. * * *

DEATH AND CUPID.

CHAPTER I.

A darkened room. A nurse sat by the side of the bed. Every now and then she rose from her chair and looked at the pale face of the poor girl over whom she watched.

"Not much life in her, poor thing," she murmured. "I know the symptoms too well; it's all over with her."

And then there was a gentle knock at the door, and a staid old gentleman walked into the room. It was the doctor. He asked a few questions of the woman in attendance, and looked at the patient. Then he shook his head and whispered:

"I fear there's a change for the worse, poor thing."

And after a few directions he left the room as he had entered it, silently and sorrowfully. When he had descended the stairs he was accosted by a young man, who waited impatiently for his verdict.

"Well?"

"No hope, I fear," said the doctor. "She is gradually sinking; if she has any friends you had better communicate with them."

"Is there no hope?"

"I am afraid none. She may linger on for a few days. She may die to-night; but unless a miracle be worked she cannot recover."

The young man sighed heavily, shook hands with the good physician, and turned his head away to avoid showing his tears.

"There is always some hope in every case," continued the doctor in a comforting tone.

"Still I should not be doing my duty if I did not reveal to you my forebodings."

And thus they parted.

This young man entered the parlor, and, throwing himself in an arm chair, buried his face in his hands and wept aloud. He had recovered his lost love, only to see her die, and be unable to save her! He was unconscious of everything save his great grief.

By-and-by there was a knock at the door, and the nurse entered.

"She is awake, sir," she said, "and is crying for you. Poor, dear young lady, I am afraid it will soon be over." He made a supreme effort to regain his composure, and asked:

"Does she know where she is?"

"Yes, sir. I told her how you brought her here, and how sorry we all were to see her so ill, and she called out that she must see you at once before she died."

He arose from his chair, and silently left the room. He ascended the stairs; he stopped for a moment at the door of the chamber of death, and prayed to his God to give him strength to preserve his composure. Then he gently opened the door and went in.

"Florence!"

"Oh, Leopold, Leopold!" cried the dying girl in a faint voice, "you have come to me at last—you have forgiven me?"

"Forgiven you, my darling—my own, dear love! What have I to forgive you? Oh, Florence! It is I who must ask forgiveness! It is I who must implore your pardon. What right had I to cross your path? What right had I to cause you a moment's pain?"

And he knelt down beside the bed, and his tear-stained face bent over the poor, thin hand stretched out to him.

"Oh, Leopold, I've been mad—been wicked. But God has blessed me once more letting me see you—oh, darling—oh, my love!" And she passed her hand through his hair caressingly.

Leopold answered her words with his sobs.

"You can forgive me, darling? You can really forgive me now that I am dying? You are not angry with me now?"

"Angry, Florence! Oh, my love, how could I be angry with you? I never have had one thought of aught else than love, darling, in my heart. Angry! Had you killed me, darling, I would have blessed you with my last breath."

"And I have killed you, my darling. I have killed you, your happiness, your hope. Killed you, oh, my darling—my dear, dear love!"

She drew away her hands and raised them to her eyes, and her tears fell fast through the poor, thin fingers.

Leopold, by an almost superhuman effort of will, stopped weeping, and said in a broken voice:

"My dear child, you must not distress yourself. To know that you were happy gave me great comfort. I lived only for you. Your happiness was my first wish, my only care. As for me, I have lived very happily. I have not felt the wound so—so—"

And here his lips trembled and he broke down.

She took his hand once more, and now she was calm, and it was he who had lost self command.

"Dear Leopold, I want to tell you something. It has been on my mind to tell you over and over again. But I loved you, darling, and I was alive then—now I am sinking into the grave, and must soon die. Don't cry, dear. It is better for us all that it should be so. Better—much better."

And she patted his head with her hand, as a mother would have comforted a suffering child.

"I want you, darling, when I am dead, to marry one who has loved you for years. She has been so true to you, dear—always your friend. She it was who, in spite of the great love she bore you, tried, oh, so hard, to turn my wicked, frivolous heart toward you. She it was who fought your battles and defended you from all the attacks of your enemies. She who has sacrificed her own happiness for mine. Dear Edith, my own darling sister!"

"Edith!

"Yes, Edith. You must marry her; you will soon learn to love her, everybody loves her, and you will be happy. Oh, I shall die so calmly if I can only believe that I leave behind me a legacy of love. You will try to like her; will you not, Leopold?"

The young man bowed his head, and then she continued:

"And now, Leopold, before I die, let me tell you why we never married."

"No, Florence, darling. let us forget the past."

"My guradian forced me; he threatened me with my family's disgrace. And I was weak and cruel and wrong, and I accepted him, but never ceased from loving you. And oh, Leopold, I have been punished—so cruelly punished!"

"I know, dear; I know all now. He is dead; let us say no more about him."

And then they spoke in whispers—it seemed to be that the past of broken faith had gone, and that they had returned to the time when they were first engaged. Leopold knelt by the bed with her hand in his, his eyes fixed on hers. They talked as unreservedly as they were wont to talk of old; both were happy, contented, at rest.

Thus the hours passed. Florance was growing weaker and weaker. Leopold at last noticed the growing change; as he gazed upon her face he saw death—cold, horrible death!

She saw the horror in his eyes, and quickly read his meaning.

"Oh, Leopold, I am dying! Don't let me die, darling! I want to live for you!"

He drew his face to hers, and kissed her poor, thin lips.

"Save me, Leopold, Save me! I must not die—I cannot die! I have found you now, Leopold, I want to live!"

He soothed her, although his tears flowed quickly; he soothed her with a trembling hand and broken voice.

"You love me, darling?"

He kissed her lips. She threw her arms round his neck.

And thus lip to lip, with perfect love for one another in their hearts, they parted. He to dwell in the world and bear his sorrow for evermore. And she—ah, her poor, erring spirit had winged its flight to a more merciful world than this—a more beautiful world than this—to a world where laws are love and tears are never known.

Lip to lip, so they parted. Parted, yes, forever—forever until the great hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

Edith sits in the library, looking out of the window upon the park before her. Her cheek rests upon her hand, her arm upon the window sill.

The door is opened softly and a man enters the room. He approaches her.

"Edith!"

She turns suddenly round and her hand is clasped with his own. A thrill of pleasure makes her tremble.

"Edith," he continues, I want to ask you a question."

She looks down and waits to hear his voice once more.

"I am very lonely, Edith; I have no kith or kin, not a friend in the world! I loved you as a sister, as a dear, dear sister."

She is silent, but her bosom heaves with emotion.

"While I have been away I have learned to appreciate you at your just value—I have learned to love you as you should be loved."

He pauses for a moment and then continues, "I ask you, Edith, can you love me? Can you share my fate? Will you be my wife?"

She whispers an answer and is clasped in his arms. A smile of supreme rest and thankfulness illumines her face.

"My dear, dear love," she murmurs, "I have loved you from the first."

He kisses her forehead, and they stand at the open window looking out upon the bright landscape before them. The sun sinks and still their whisered words continue. The stars begin to twinkle in the clear, cloudless sky.

At last Edith murmurs "Florence," and her eyes are fixed upon his.

"It was her wish, darling," he replies, and he sighs, "Poor Florence!"

Tears gather in her eyes, and she repeats after him:

"Poor Florence!"

And they stand bathed in the moonlight, and in their hearts are enshrined two sweet words—words full of good omens for the future—"Love" and "Hope."

Garibaldi.

A correspondent of the New York *Mail* thus describes the present appearance of Garibaldi: "I never in all my life beheld a being so deathlike. If I had not seen his lips and eyes move I should have believed him to be dead. His face was absolutely livid, the yellow-white of a corpse, and his hair and beard are perfectly white. His eyes, however, retain fire, and move about from side to side, following people around the room, without, however, his changing his attitude in the least degree. The expression of his countenance is one of profound sadness, not unmingled with great sweetness." At the close of a conversation with him, the old hero said, "If you have the chance, pray you tell the English and the Americans that old Garibaldi, worn and weary, remembers their generous sympathy, and still loves them dearly."

She Probably Did Not Say This.

From the Vicksburg (Miss.) Herald.

The papers have said so much about Mary Anderson's limbs being attenuated that she told an interviewer her opinion of her own defects, She says: "I am aware of the fact that I would not appear to advantage in the ballet, but God gave me alent, and expected nature to do the balance, and if nature made a failure of her part, am I to blame for it? Is it just to criticise faults over which I have no control? Criticise my acting, my voice, my gestures, anything you will, only please don't allude to my limbs." Long ago we advised newspaper men to keep their hands off this subject, and to attend strictly to Mary's voice and gestures. We do not care if her legs are like corrugated copper lightning rods, and bowed like a parenthesis, her art is what touches us. Her soulful eyes, and mouth full of gum, are enough to make a man strike his parents.

The Confederate Funds.

General George G. Dibrell, of Tennessee, who commanded Jefferson Davis' military escort on his flight southward after Gen. Lee's surrender, has published a letter, in which he ridicules the recent statement of an officer of a Michigan regiment that Mr. Davis had $60,000 of gold in his saddle bags when captured. General Dibrell says that the specie, which was carried by a train of four wagons and amounted to $108,000, was paid to the troops at Washington, Ga., by order of General Breckenridge. The money was made over by Major E. C. White, the senior quartermaster present, and each officer and soldier received the same amount—$26.25. General Dibrell adds—Major White, after the payments were all made, handed me a report in writing of the amount received by him and the payments made to each command, showing how he had disbursed the $108,000. This report I brought home with me, but have lost or mislaid it. Major White was a citizen of Ann Arundel county, Md., but of late I have been unable to learn his address.

A Bonanza Boy.

A letter from the Katts-Kills says: "Among the very biggest of the many great lions here is James G. Fair, Jr., son of Senator Fair of Nevada, the bonanza king. This "heir to millions" is a youth of 19 or 20, has a rather unprepossessing face, a large frame, and the independent manner so common to western men. He is accompanied by William H. H. Brown, a young gentleman of Philadelphia, who is employed as young Thayer's tutor, to prepare him for the approaching examination for admission to Yale college. Thayer and his preceptor, so far as appearance indicate, are not working so hard over their books as to endanger their health, and, so far as I can see, the $500 per month and expenses, which the hotel gossips say Mr Brown receives from the senator for bringing the son's education up to the required standard, will result in a thorough knowledge of billiards, pool, flirtation and dancing rather than in a complete understanding of Greek roots and a thorough familiarity with Latin verbs."

The poison of a bee sting may be forced out by pressing the barrel of a small key firmly for a minute over the wound. No wound or swelling wil result.