DEATH OF THE OLD WIFE.

BY S. A. BUTTERFIELD, M. D.

To the Editor of the Indianapolis Sentinel:

SIR—Reading in last Sunday's Sentinel the sketch entitled "Death of the Old Wife," I was so impressed with its beautiful and life-like simplicity that I thought to preserve it by changing it into verse, which you will please insert in your excellent Sunday edition, if you think it worthy of so much space. Respectfully, S. A. B.

She'd lain all the day in a stupor,
With constantly short'ning of breath;
Her husband in sadness sat near her,
Silently watching the work of death.

And now as the night drew around them
Its dark sable curtain of gloom,
She woke and called her aged partner,
To ask if night darkened the room.

He tenderly bent himself o'er her,
And took in his own her wan hand,
And answered her softly, that darkness
Was fast shutting light from the land.

And then her thoughts turned to their children,
And asked him if they were all there:
Their children, who'd all gone before them,
And left them a sad, lonely pair.

With trembling he answered her question:
The children, dear one, are all safe;
Don't think of them, Jenet, my darling,
But rather think now of yourself.

My trust is in Thee, blessed Father,
She said, though so dark is the way:
I'd rather with God walk in darkness
Than alone in the sunlight of day.

O, where is our Charley! she muttered—
Their Charley, whose soft golden hair
'Neath the snows of a score of long winters
Had lain, she imagined still there.

The hands that so faithful had labored,
So bravely had lightened his toil,
That never had shirked any duty,
However their palms it might soil;

Those hands, all so calloused and wrinkled,
So cold now, he patted and kissed;
For well he knew how lone and dreary
'Twould be when the old wife was missed.

For oft in their long-wedded journey
Together they'd stood by the bed,
Where the death-angel claimed for his victim
The mother, or family's head.

And when the slow hours had reached midnight,
That spirit so gentle and mild,
As peacefully past from its labors,
As comes the calm sleep of a child.

Then the stricken old man, sadly weeping,
They tenderly led from the room,
And strove with their kind words and cheery
To brighten his dark night of gloom.

You've found Heaven first, my dear Jenet,
He murmured; but soon you will come
To take your old heart-broken partner
With you to our heavenly home.

So ere the first winter snow's fallen,
The old man has gone to his rest,
To live with his faithful companion
For aye in the land of the blest.

And thus was their grand diamond wedding.
Their friends had so kindly prepared,
Transferred to a far brighter mansion,
Where its joys by their children are shared.

Indianapolis, October 15, 1881.

AN ARDENT LOVER.

His name was Jacob. It had been his father's before him, and his father's father's. The Storms were a hard-working, money getting race. Jacob Storm, the father of our hero, constantly said that "he couldn't see why under the shinin' sun a man needed an eddication; 't any rate, mor'n 'nough to reckon his crops and cattle." Jacob, the younger, had once expressed a desire to attend school out of town; but Storm, senior, killed his ambition in that respect with a few words.

"The old red school-house was good enough for your father and your grandfather, and when you get all you can there, I'll find plenty of work for you; it shan't be said that one of the old Storm blood ever hired out to work for strangers."

The inhabitants of Putneyville were not all conservatives of the Storm order. Sons of rich farmers were in College, daughters of hard-working fathers and mothers were away at school, and Putneyville felt their influence when they came home for a vacation.

One of the gayest, brightest, prettiest girls in town was Sallie Rivers. Her father had a poorer farm and fewer bonds than his neighbor, Jacob Storm. But the Rivers family worshiped another idol. From the mother down, every one valued a good education. The father had been denied it, as he had been the eldest of a large family, and compelled to aid in supporting the rest. He was a man of excellent natural ability, and extravagantly fond of reading.

When his boys and girls grew around him they heard important topics discussed at the table; they knew all about Congress and our relations with foreign powers, and once Mr. Rivers had been called upon to represent his town in the Legislature of the State.

The boys of the family were compelled to work their way through College, and Sallie, the jovial, was compelled to follow their example.

No wonder Jacob Storm, Jr., adored Sallie. He had lived near her for years, and carried her dinner pail back and forth for her, had purposely misspelled words to let her pass above him, and in all her maddest pranks he had rejoiced while others blamed. Sallie's brothers were fond of her, and never for one moment thought it either unladylike or sinful for her to share all their sports. When one of their neighbors gave a party the verbal invitation was generally, "Sallie and the rest of the boys."

Sallie liked it; she was full of bounding life; she hated silly airs; and as her brothers were, with one exception, older than herself, surely it was quite proper for her to do as they did. When Tom wrote home from College that his dear little sister "must not go out in the hot sun, or she might spoil her complexion," Sallie wrote back, "Don't bother, you dear old maid. I care more for good, sound health than anything else; and those who really love me won't mind a few freckles." Sallie went on in her own way; she flew from one end to the other of the large farm house, now singing a scrap of some familiar song, now chanting in full, clear tones some grand anthem. Jacob Storm had once called her "Will-o-the-wisp," and the name fitted her so well, the boys took it up. The wildest colt on the farm would obey Sallie; she feared nothing; went and came as she pleased, and accomplished in one morning more than her mother and Huldah, the maid, could possibly do together.

Naturally the warm-hearted, active, cheerful girl was the light of her father's eyes. He could not send her away from home, like the boys, not even for the coveted education. For three years in her teens she bore the restraint as meekly as possible; but the fourth year it could not be borne. How much the girl suffered in secret, no one knew.

"Father," she said, one day, as she sprang from her saddle, "my mind is made up. I shall go into the mill and earn money enough to attend school."

"But mother can't spare you, daughter."

"Mother is willing," said Sallie; "she always wanted to study herself."

"Well, we seem to need you here, somehow," said the old gentleman, stroking the colt's neck to hide his feelings.

"Yes, father, and you shall have me. I can work hard and come home to spend every vacation; and won't you be glad to see me?"

Mr. Rivers led the colt away, and did not answer.

"Why not?" he said to himself; "why shouldn't she have a fair chance? I suppose I might sell of the meadow to old Storm, and send my only girl away in good shape; but it will spoil the farm and I hate to."

He could not think of the house without her; he dreaded the long winter evenings, and the warm summer days without his darling, and at last he sat down in one corner of the barn on an old grindstone, which Sallie had often turned for him. He sat there a long time to overcome his selfishness; and at last, as he heard the girl's ringing voice calling him to supper, he rose up, saying, "She's my only girl; and she shall have a chance, come what will."

The boys were delighted. They were proud of Sallie, and quite sure she would do herself and the family credit. To be sure, Tom's pride was hurt when he heard she was at work in the mill at Glenmere; but the new house which Tom had urged his father to build had cost more than they expected, and every year some new machinery must be purchased. It was twenty miles to Glenmere—twenty miles from home-love, care and comfort, but Sallie did not falter. To be sure, it was a trial to leave them all, a hard thing to select from her little store of girl's belongings; and a small room in a boarding-house would never afford the delight that her own large, sunny chamber did. Sallie felt a thousand tears, but did not shed one, although her mother and Huldah wept profusely as the carriage drove away, with Sallie's father on the back seat with her, and Jacob Storm in front with Sallie's brother Dike.

Dike was younger than his sister, and in deep grief at her loss. It did not comfort him to be told that she would not board among strangers, but become a member of Mrs. Mora's family. He did not choose to listen when Jacob Storm told him that Sallie was too wise and too good to remain buried in Putneyville. Dike was sixteen, and at that age a boy considers everything a "burning shame" which interferes with his pleasure.

"I wish I had her chance," said Jacob, as father and daughter talked in low tones on the back seat.

"Great chance," said Dike, "to go down there and work among all sorts, and never have any music or any home, or—"

Dike paused; his feelings were too much for him, and yet he would not let Jake Storm see a tear in his eyes.

"It's a chance to make yourself something better than a drudge—a chance to see and know what is going on in this great world. Reading is good, Dike, but seeing is a million times better."

Jacob read early and late, he thought and studied; but after all, he knew the discipline which Tom and Joe Rivers were having would be a great blessing to him. His only dread was that Sallie might consider him inferior to her. "She shall not get before me if I die trying," he said.

Sallie's room was not so bad, after all; Mrs. Mora had done her best to please her old friend Mrs. Rivers. When Sallie's books were unpacked, and her piano was in one corner, and her pet bird Glory was hung up, the place was quite delightful. Sallie could not live in a dingy, dull hole; sunshine was necessary to her existence. Her first week in the mill left her pale and weary, but a stout heart and a strong will kept her up.

At night she was busy; her music and studies occupied every moment. Mrs. Mora tried to interest her in the sports and games of her fellow-boarders, but Sallie politely declined.

A room-mate was impossible, as she desired to spend all her spare moments in preparation for her future work. About this time she wrote to Tom: "It is a hard grind, dear old boy; and sometimes, when my head whirls with the noise, or the associations vex me, I feel like running away to China or Japan; but I don't. I only go home when I am free, and take a good dose of Chopin or Beethoven; they tone me up. By careful management I shall be able to save some money. There is a little French girl here who is anxious to study; every week I give her a lesson for a lesson; I speak and read French with her; then two of Mrs. Mora's children take lessons on the piano, and my board bill is light. Who do you think comes here every Sunday? Why, Jacob Storm. His father will not let him go to College, and he walks down here after work is done on Saturday, and returns Sunday night. He is a great friend of John Mora's, and I have to be teased about him, but I don't mind that. Jake seems like one of you, and every week he asks me about my lessons.

"Sometimes his father allows him to drive down, and then you may be sure we have a good breath of country air. He said one day in his slow, deliberate fashion: 'If my coming annoys you, Sallie, just say so; but it seemed to me that you might not feel so far away if you saw a home face once a week.' Sometimes he would bring a few flowers, or some chickweed for Glory, and sometimes a piece of new cheese in a dainty box, and generally a meteor message from mother or Dike. When he drives down Dike comes with him, and I can work harder all the week after seeing his rosy face.

"Jake gets books from the library here, and leaves them for me to read first; then we talk them over afterward, and Dike is getting quite interested."

Brave little Sallie! The days and weeks flew by and found her at her post. She only saw the hard daily toil, only felt the bonds which kept her close until she could join the girls who quietly and easily walked the path of knowledge.

She did not know that her example gave Joe new courage, and kept Tom from many a "College lark;" she never dreamed that Jacob Storm was making a man of himself for her sake; she could not see the power she exercised over Dike, who was inclined to be somewhat wayward; she never guessed that her devotion to self-culture and study had stimulated some of her associates to go and do likewise. She only felt the pressure of the daily toil, and longed for the day of her emancipation, only worked unceasingly.

Little by little the sound of the factory bell grew hateful to her, and its red brick walls wearied her eyes, but over and over to herself she said, "There is no such word as fail." Her brief vacations were seasons of joy. Jacob Storm wished they might last forever. He, too, was hard at work; and one day, when he and Sallie had discussed the merits of various authors, and compared notes concerning their studies, Sallie's outburst of praise for his achievement drew from him an avowal of love.

"Why, Jacob," said she, regretfully, "I never thought of you in that way. I should as soon fancy Tom marrying me."

"You think I am clumsy and slow," he said, "or perhaps stupid and ignorant, because I remain here when others go away; they have educated themselves, with fate and fortune to aid them. I have done it thus far against fate and without fortune. I shall some day make the world hear of me; how, when or where, I do not know, but it will come."

"I believe you, Jacob," said Sallie, "and I am proud of you; but love is something I know nothing of, and until I have finished my course as a student, I must put pleasure out of my head. Don't sulk Jacob; I am not heartless, only ignorant. Come, saddle Tam O Shanter, and let us have one of your mad rides to Sparkling Spring, it will be something to remember when I am grinding at the mill again."

Jacob obeyed her. Her wishes had been his law for years and he was manly enough to be proud of it.

At last the goal was won. Sallie was in College devouring herself to her cherished books, and Jacob still worked as he had done before, now blaming himself for his folly in regarding his fathers wishes, now working at his books with the desperate energy of one who has staked all on success.

Every Sunday he visited Glenmere with Dike, but no longer spends his time with Sallie. At last a chance came. Jacob Storm, senior, was gathered to his fathers, and his son was free.

Dike wrote to his sister in boyish fashion: "Old Storm has gone, and Jake mourns for him as if he had been loving and tender, instead of a stiff old miser. Jake will leave here soon; he does not say where he is going.

"I shall miss him terribly; we have read and studied together all winter. Jake knows a heap. He surprises me all the time. He is having your picture painted for me from the one you sent home. I wish I could go with him, but, as you say, it would never do to leave father and mother alone. I am reading the books you ordered, but I can't pin myself down to hard study after working hard all day."

Sallie's last year of College life was drawing near a close, and the students were arranging for their separation, when an invition was sent to them to attend a lecture by an eminent gentleman who had been recently appointed to a Professorship in a Western University.

"Going, Miss Rivers?" asked a senior as she peeped in the half-opened door of Sallie's room.

"No, I think not. I shall employ the time in writing home."

"Do go. They tell me Professor Storm is quite remarkable, and Darwinism has its attraction for us all."

"Professor Storm was closeted with the President-to-day," said another senior, "and I understand that the light of his countenance will illuminate the College to-morrow."

"I think I will go," said Sallie, suddenly. "It will not do to miss a treat."

In her rebellious little heart she was saying, "I will go for the sake of the old name and my childhood's friend, but poor old Jake will never know it."

The hall was crowded and on the platform sat the College President, with several distinguished gentlemen. The speaker's face was partially hidden by the desk before him. When he rose at last, Sallie's heart gave a quick bound; for there before her stood her neighbor, friend and lover.

He did not seem to see her; his subject engrossed his entire attention. Sallie listened with pleasure. The physical training of the past added strength to his mental acquirements, and his clear, manly voice charmed all listeners.

"Isn't he fine looking?" whispered one. "What a splendid type of manhood," said another. "He understands himself perfectly, as well as his subject," said a third.

When the speaker closed, the applause was emphatic and prolonged. Sallie sat motionless. Surprise and pleasure mingled with a thousand memories. Professor Storm did not heed it. He was looking at a bright face just before him, and answered the congratulations of his friends in an absent manner.

"Pardon me," said he to the President; "I recognize an old schoolmate yonder."

"Ah, indeed! That is Miss Rivers, a young lady of remarkable energy and unbounded perseverance; she stands at the head of her class."

"She would be No. 1 anywhere," said the professor, as he hurried away to join her.

"I am so glad, so very glad," was all Sallie could say.

"Are you? Then help me to escape from all these eyes, and let me give you the latest tidings from home."

Miss Rivers was envied by her friends as she passed out, stopping now and then to introduce the popular scientist as an old schoolmate.

Of what they talked, and how, it matters not to us; we only know that a certain Professor was absent from his post in order to attend the exercises at a certain College, where Miss Rivers graduated, and we also know that a wedding took place soon after.

Mrs. Storm, nee Sallie Rivers, is also a Professor in the same institution with her husband, and her excellent parents spend a portion of each season with her.

The King and the Miller.

Near Sans Souci, the favorite residence of Frederic the Great, there was a mill, which interfered greatly with the view from the palace. One day the King sent to inquire what the owner would take for the mill, and the unexpected reply came that the miller would not sell it for any money. The King, much incensed, gave orders that the mill should be pulled down. The miller made no resistance, but folding his arms, quietly remarked:

"The King may do this, but there are laws in Prussia."

And he took legal proceedings, the result of which was that the King had to rebuild the mill and to pay a good sum of money besides in compensation.

Although His Majesty was much chagrined at this end to the matter he put the best face he could upon it, and turning to his courtiers he remarked:

"I am glad to see that there are just laws and upright Judges in my Kingdom."

A sequel to this incident occurred about forty years ago. A descendant of the miller of whom we have just been talking had come into possession of the mill.

After having struggled for several years against ever-increasing poverty, and being at length quite unable to keep on in his business, he wrote to the King of Prussia, reminding him of the incident we have just related, and stating that, if His Majesty felt so disposed, he should be very thankful, in his present difficulty, to sell the mill. The King wrote the following reply with his own hand:

MY DEAR NEIGHBOR—I can not allow you to sell the mill. It must always be in your possession as long as one member of your family exists, for it belongs to the history of Prussia. I regret, however, to hear you are in such straitened circumstances, and therefore send you herewith $6,000, in the hope that it may be of some service in restoring your fortunes. Consider me always your affectionate neighbor, FREDERIC WILLIAM.

The Milky Way.

Many astronomers, from Herschel downwards, have spent much time in observing and speculating upon the structure and functions of the great stellar streams known as the Galaxy or Milky Way. This part of the heavens has recently been made an object of careful study by M. Houzeau, of Brussels Observatory. He has indicated its composition by means of curves of equal luminous intensity. Looking casually at the Milky way, one might be disposed to think its luminosity nearly the same throughout. But M. Houzeau finds in it a series of luminous plates or masses, to the number of thirty-three, each diminishing in brightness outward from the centre. These are arranged almost exactly along a great circle of the celestial sphere. The solar system is nearly in the plane of this "equator," and probably near its centre.

SOCIETY DIRECTORY.

United Brothers of Friendship.

Sumner Lodge No. 11, regular communication every first and third Monday of each month. Hall north-east corner of Meridian and Washington streets. All members requested to be present, also members of other lodges of the same faith are invited.

H. W. Jackson, Worthy Master.
W. S. Lock financial Secretary.