

Like a man late from club, he has lost
 His key, and around stumbles moping,
 Touching this, trying that, now a sharp, now a flat,
 Till he strikes on the note he is hoping,
 And a terrible blare at the end of the air
 Shows he's got through at last with his groping.

There,—he's finished,—at least, for a while ;
 He is tired, or come to his senses ;
 And out of his horn shakes the drops that were borne
 By the winds of his musical frenzies.
 There's a rest, thank our stars, of ninety-nine bars,
 Ere the tempest of sound recommences.

When all the bad players are sent
 Where all their false notes are protested,
 I am sure that Old Nick will play him a trick,
 When his bad trump and he are arrested,
 And down in the regions of Discord's own legions
 His head with two French horns be crested.

MY JOURNAL TO MY COUSIN MARY.

March, 1855.

Of all the letters of condolence I have received since my misfortune, yours has consoled me most. It surprises me, I confess, that a far-away cousin—of whom I only remember that she had the sweetest of earthly smiles—should know better how to reach the heart of my grief and soothe it into peace, than any nearest of kin or oldest of friends. But so it has been, and therefore I feel that your more intimate acquaintance would be something to interest me and keep my heart above despair.

My sister Catalina, my devoted nurse, says I must snatch at anything likely to do that, as a drowning man catches at straws, or I shall be overwhelmed by this calamity. But is it not too late ? Am I not overwhelmed ? I feel that life is a revolting subject of contemplation in my circumstances, a poor thing to look forward to. Death itself looks pleasanter.

Call up to your mind what I was, and what my circumstances were. I was healthy and strong. I could run, and wrestle, and breast strong winds, and cleave rough waters, and climb steep hills,—things I shall henceforth be able only to remember,—yes, and to sigh to do again.

I was thoroughly educated for my profession. I was panting to fulfil its duties and rise to its honors. I was beginning to make my way up. I had gained one cause,—my first and last,—and my friends thought me justified in entertaining the highest hopes.

It had always been an object of ambition with me to—well, I will confess—to be popular in society ; and I know I was not the reverse.—So much, Mary, for what I was. Now see what I am.

I am, and shall forever be,—so the doctors tell me,—a miserable, sickly, helpless being, without hope of health or independence. My object in life can only

be—to be comfortable, if possible, and not to be an intolerable trial to those about me! Worth living for,—isn't it?

An athlete, eager and glowing in the race of life, transformed by a thunderbolt into a palsied and whining cripple for whom there is no Pool of Bethesda,—that is what has befallen me!

I suppose you read the shocking details of the collision in the papers. Catalina and I sat, of course, side by side in the cars. We had that day met in New York, after a separation of years. She had just returned from Europe. I went to meet and escort her home, and, as we whirled over the Jersey sands, I told her of all my plans and hopes. She listened at first with her usual lively interest; but as I went on, she looked me full in the face with an air of exasperated endurance, as if what I proposed to accomplish were beyond reason. I own that I was in a fool's paradise of buoyant expectation. At last she interrupted me.

"Ah, yes! No doubt! You'll do those trifles, of course! And, perhaps, among your other plans and intentions is that of living forever? It is an easy thing to resolve upon;—better not stop short of it."

At this instant came the crash, and I knew nothing more until I heard people remonstrating with Kate for persisting in trying to revive a dead man, (myself,) while the blood was flowing profusely from her own wound. I heard her indignantly deny that I was dead, and, with her customary irritability, tell them that they ought to be ashamed of themselves for saying so. They still insisted that I was "a perfect jelly," and could not possibly survive, even if I came to consciousness. She contradicted them energetically. Yet they pardoned, and liked her. They knew that a fond heart keenly resents evil prophecies of its beloved ones. Besides, whatever she does or says, people always like Kate.

After a physician arrived, it was found that the jelling of my flesh was not the worst of it; for, in consequence of some injury to my spine, my lower limbs were paralyzed. My sister, thank Heaven,

had received only a slight cut upon the forehead.

Of course I don't mean to bore you with a recital of all my sufferings through those winter months. I don't ask your compassion for such trifles as bodily pain; but for what I am, and must forever be in this life, my own heart aches for pity. Let yours sympathize with it.

I thought to be so active, so useful, perhaps so distinguished as a man, so blest as husband and father!—for you must know how from my boyhood up I have craved, what I have never had, a home.

Now that I have been thrust out of active life and forced to make up my mind to perfect passiveness, I have become a bugbear to myself. I cannot endure the thought of ever being the peevish egotist, the exacting tyrant, which men are apt to become when they are thrown upon woman's love and long-suffering, as I am.

My only safeguard is, I believe, to keep up interests out of myself, and I beg of you to help me. I believe implicitly in your expressed desire to be of some service to me, and I ask you to undertake the troublesome task of correspondence with a sick man, and almost a stranger. I will, however, try to make you acquainted with myself and my surroundings, so thoroughly that the latter difficulty will soon be obviated.

First, let me present my sister,—named Catalina,—called Kate, Catty, or Lina, according to the fancy of the moment, or the degree of sentimentality in the speaker. You have not seen her since she was a child, so that, of course, you cannot imagine her as she is now. But you know the circumstances in which our parents left us. You remember, that, after living all his life in careless luxury, my father died penniless. Our mother had secured her small fortune for Kate; and at her death, just before my father's, she gave me—an infant a few weeks old—into my sister's young arms, with full trust that I should be taken care of by her. You know of

all my obligations to her in my babyhood and for my education, which she drudged at teaching for years to obtain for me. I could never repay her for such devotion, but I hoped to make her forget all her trials, and only retain the happy consciousness of having had the making of such a famous man! I expected to place her in affluence, at least.

And now what can I bring to her but grief and gray hairs? I am dependent upon her for my daily bread; I occupy all her time, either in nursing or sewing for me; I try her temper hourly with my sick-man's whims; and I doom her to a future of care and economy. Yet I believe in my soul that she blesses me every time she looks upon me!

Thackeray says women like to be martyred. I hardly think it is the pursuit of pleasure which leads them to self-denial. Men, at any rate, do not often seek enjoyment in that form. If women do make choice of such a class of delights, even instinctively, they need advance no other claim to superiority over men. The higher the animal, the higher its propensities.

Kate the other day was asserting a wife's right to the control of her own property, and incidentally advocating the equality of the sexes,—a touchy point with her. I put in,—

"Tell me, then, Lina, why animals form stronger attachments to men than to women. Your dog, your parrot, even your cat, already prefers me to you. How can you account for it, unless by allowing that there is more in us to respect and love?"

"I account for it," said she, with her most decided nod, "by affinity. There is more affinity between you and brutes. It is the sons of God who find the daughters of men fair. We draw angels from the skies;—even your jealous, reluctant sex has borne witness to that."

"Pshaw! only those anomalous creatures, the poets. But please yourself with such fancies; they encourage a pretty pride that becomes your sex. Conscious forever of being your lords,

we feel that the higher you raise yourselves, the higher you place us. You can't help owning that angelic woman-kind submits—and gladly—to us."

"Nonsense! conceited nonsense!"

"But *don't* they?"

"Some do; but I do not."

"Why, all my life you have been to me a most devoted, obedient servant, Kate."

"Yes, I have my pets," she answered, "and I care for them. I am housemaid to my bird; my cat makes her bed of my lap and my best silk dress; I am purveyor to my dog, head-scratcher to my parrot, and so forth. It is my pleasure to be kind. Higher natures always are so,—yes, Charlie, even minutely solicitous for the welfare of the objects of their care; for are not the very hairs of our head all numbered by the Most Beneficent?"

She began in playful insolence, but ended with tearful eyes, and a grateful, humble glow upon her face. Its like I had never seen before in her rather imperious countenance. I gazed at her with interest. She saw me, and was irritated to be caught with moistened eyes. She scorns crying, like a man.

"Come, come!" said she, childishly and snappishly, "what are you looking at?"

Of course you cannot have any idea of her personal appearance from memory, and I will try to give you one by description.

Though over thirty, she is generally considered very handsome, and is in the very prime of her beauty; for it is not of the fragile, delicate order. She has jet-black, very abundant hair, hazel eyes, and a complexion that is very fair, without being blonde. A bright, healthy color in cheek and lip makes her look as fresh as a rose. Her nose is the doubtful feature. It is—hum!—*Roman*, and some fastidious folks think a *trifle* too large. But I think it suits well her keen eyes and slightly haughty mouth. She has fine hands, a tall figure, and an independent "grand action," that is not want-

ing in grace, but is more significant of prompt energy.

The study of woman is a new one to me. I often see Kate's friends and gossips,—for I occupy the parlor as sick-room,—and I lie philosophizing upon them by the hour, puzzling myself to solve the problem of their idiosyncrasies. Lady Mary Wortley Montague said, that, in all her travels, she had met with but two kinds of people,—men and women. I begin to think that one sex will never be thoroughly comprehended by the other, notwithstanding the desperate efforts the novelists are making now-a-days. They all go upon the same plan. They take some favorite woman, watch her habits keenly, dissect her, analyze her very blood and marrow,—then patch her up again, and set her in motion by galvanism. She stalks through three volumes and—drops dead. I have seen Kate laugh herself almost into convulsions over the knowing remarks upon the sex in Thackeray, Reade, and others. And I must confess that the women I know resemble those of no writer but Shakespeare.

We take our revenge for this irritating incapacity by saying that neither can women create ideal men at all resembling reality. But *halte là!* Was it not said at first that Rochester *must* be a man's man? Is not the little Professor Paul Emanuel an actual masculine creature? Heathcliff was a fiend,—but a male fiend.

But where am I wandering? To come back to my sister. She is a fair specimen of the quick, impulsive, frank class of women. She says she belongs to the *genus irritabile*. She is easily excited to every good emotion, and also to the nobler failings of anger, indignation, and pride. But she is so far above any meanness or littleness, that she don't know them when she sees them. They pass with her for what they are not, and she is spared the humiliation of knowing what her species is capable of. Kate's nature is very charming, but there is a gentler, calmer order of beings in the sex. I once was greatly attracted by one of them; and

you, I think, belong to that order. However, I should not class you with her,—for Kate says she was a “deceitful thing.” She may have been so, for aught I know; but I hold it as my creed, that there are some women all softness, all gentleness, all purity, all loveableness, and yet all strength of principle. Kate says, if there are men all courage, all chivalry, all ardor, and all virtue, I may be right.

The Germans say, “Give the Devil a hair, and he will get your whole head.” Luckily it is the same with the good angels. I have seen a hundred examples to prove it true. I will give the one nearest my heart.

Lina's generous aspiration at the birth of her baby brother was the hair. Since then, the angel of generosity has drawn her on from one self-denying deed to another, until he has possessed her utterly. Her self-sacrifice was completed some weeks ago. I will tell you how,—for her light shall not be hidden under a bushel.

When I arrived at this, her little cottage home, after the accident, it was found impossible to get me up stairs. So I have since occupied the parlor as my sick-room,—having converted a large airy china-closet into a recess for a bed, and banished the dishes to the kitchen dresser. During the day I occupy a soft hair-cloth-covered couch, and from it I can command, not a view, but a hearing, of the two porches, the hall, and the garden.

The day after my return was a soft, warm day; and though it was in February, the windows were all open. I heard a light carriage drive up to the front door, and supposing it to be the doctor, I awaited his entrance with impatience. After some time I discovered that he was with Kate in the garden, and I could hear their voices. I listened with all my ears, that I might steal his true opinion of myself; for I concluded that Kate was having a private consultation, and arranging plans by which I was to be bolstered up with prepared accounts, and not told the plain facts of the case. I had before suspected that they did not tell me the worst. I could just catch my name

now and then, but no more; and I wished heartily that they were a little nearer the windows. They must be, I thought, quite at the bottom of the garden. Suddenly I perceived that the voice addressing my sister was one of impassioned persuasion, and I heard the words, "Be calm and reasonable,"—"Not forever." Then Kate said, with a burst of sobs, "Only in heaven."

"It is all over with me, then," I thought, aghast. But having settled it, after a struggle, to be the best thing both for me and Kate, I began to listen again. They were quite silent for some moments. Then I heard sounds which surprised me,—low, loving tones,—and I desperately wrenched myself upon my elbows to look out. The agony of such effort was more tolerable than the agony of suspense. They were not far off, as I supposed, but close under the window, standing in the little box-tree arbor, screened from all eyes but mine; and no doubt Kate believed herself safe enough from these, as I had never been capable of such exertion since the accident. Their low tones had deceived me as to their distance.

I was mistaken in another respect. It was not the doctor with Kate, but a fine-looking man, whose emotion declared him her lover. His arm held her, and hers rested upon his shoulder, as she looked up at him and spoke earnestly. His face expressed the greatest alarm and grief. I do not know where she found the resolution, while looking upon it, to do what she did; for, Mary,—I can hardly bear to write it,—I heard her forever renounce her love and happiness for my sake.

I might then have cried out against this self-sacrifice; but there is something sacred in such an interview, and I could not thrust myself upon it. I wish now that I had done so. But then I listened in silence—grief-struck—to the rejection of him she loved,—to the farewells. I saw the long-clasped hands severed with an effort and a shudder; I saw my proud sister offer and give a kiss far more fervent than that which she received in return;—for she felt that this was a

final parting, and her heart was full of love and sorrow; while in his there lingered both hope and anger,—hope that I would recover, and release her,—resentment because she could sacrifice him to me.

And yet, after the parting, Kate had but just turned from him, when a change came over his countenance, at first of enthusiastic admiration, then of a yet more burning pain. He walked quickly after her, caught her in his arms, and dashing away tears, that they might not fall upon her face, he kissed her passionately, and said, "It is hard that I must say it, but you are right, Lina! Oh, my God! *must* I lose such a woman?"

Kate, trembling, panting, stamped her foot and cried, "Go, go!—I cannot stand it!—go!" Ah, Mary! that poor, pale face! He went. Kate made one quick, terrified, instantly restrained motion of recall, which he did not see; but I did, and I fainted with the pang it gave me.

When I recovered consciousness, I found my sister bending over me, blaming herself for neglecting me for so long a time, and calling herself a cruel, faithless nurse, with acute self-reproach!—There's woman for you!

I told her what I had overheard, and protested against what she had done. She said I must not talk now,—I was too ill; she would listen to me to-morrow. The next day I broached the subject again, as she sat by my side, reading the evening paper. She put her finger on a paragraph and handed it to me. I read that one of the steamships had sailed at twelve o'clock that day. "He is in it," Kate said, and left the room.—He is in Europe by this time.

Helpless wretch that I am!

Are not Kate's whole head and heart, and all, under the dominion of Heaven's best angels?

II.

March, 1855.

AND now, dear Mary, I intend to let you into our household affairs. This illness has brought me one blessing,—a

home. It has plunged me into the bosom of domestic life, and I find things there exceedingly amusing. Things commonplace to others are very novel and interesting to me, from my long residence in hotels, and perfect ignorance of how the pot was kept boiling from which my dinners came.

But before you enter the house, take a look at the outside, and let me localize myself in your imagination. Bosky Dell is a compact little place of ten acres, covered mostly with a dense grove, and cut into two unequal parts by a brawling, rocky stream. The house—a little cottage, draped with vines, and porched—sits on a slope, with an orchard on one side, a tiny lawn bordered with flowers on another, the shade of the grove darkening the windows of a third, and on the fourth a kitchen-garden with strawberry-beds and grape-trellises. It is a pretty little place, and full of cosy corners. My favorite one I must describe.

It is a porch on the south side of the house, between two projections. Consequently both ends of it are closed; one, by the parlor wall, in which there is a window,—and the other, by the kitchen window and wall. It is quite shut in from winds, and the sun beams pleasantly upon it, these chilly March days. There is just room enough for my couch, Kate's rocking-chair, and a little table. Here we sit all the morning,—Kate sewing, I reading, or watching the sailing clouds, the swelling tree-buds in the grove, and the crocus-sprinkled grass, which is growing greener every day.

Thus, while busy with me, Kate can still have an eye to her kitchen, and we both enjoy the queer doings and sayings of our "culled help," Saide. She became Kate's servant under an inducement which I will give in her own words.

"Massy! Miss Catline, when I does a pusson a good turn, seems like I wants to keep on doin' 'em good turns. I didn't do so dreffle much for you, but I jes got one chance to help you a bit, and seems like I couldn't be satisfacted to let you

alone no more."—A novel reason to hear given, but a true one in philosophy.

This "chance" was when my sister was attacked with cholera once, in the first panic caused by it, of late years. All her friends had fled to the country, and she was quite alone in a boarding-house. I was at college. She would have been left to die alone, so great was the fear of the disease, if Saide, who was cook in the establishment, had not boiled over with indignation, and addressed her selfish mistress in this fashion:—

"That ar' young lady's not to have no care, nohow, took of her, a'n't she? She's to be lef' there a-sufferin' all alone that-a-way, is she? I guess so too! Huh! Now I'se gwine to nuss her, and I don't keer if you don't know nothin' about *culining*, you must get yer own dinnas and breakwusses and suppas. That's the plain English of it,—leastways till she's well ag'in."

She devoted herself night and day to Kate for several weeks, and then accompanied her to this house, as a matter of course. She is a privileged personage. She often pops her head out of the kitchen window to favor us with her remarks. As they always make us laugh, she won't take reproofs upon that subject. Kate says her impertinence is intolerable, but suffers it rather than resort to severity with her old benefactress. I enjoy it.

She manages to turn her humor to account in various ways. I heard her exclaim,—

"Laws-a-me! Dere goes de best French-chayny gold-edged tureen all to smash! Pieces not big enough to save! Laws now, do let me study how to tell de folks, so's to set 'em larfin'. Dere's great 'casion to find suthin' as 'I do it, 'cause dey thinks a heap o' dis yere ole chayny. Mr. Charley now,—he's easy set off; but Miss Catline,—she takes suthin' purty 'cute! Laws, I has to fly roun' to git dat studied out!"

Kate overheard this;—how could she scold?

Saide can never think unless she is "flyin' roun'"; and whenever there is a

great tumult in the kitchen, pans kicked about, tongs falling, dishes rattling, and table shoved over the floor, something pretty good, in the shape either of a *bonne-bouche* or a *bon-mot*, is sure to turn up.

This morning there was a furious hubbub, that threatened to drown my voice. Saide was evidently "flyin' roun'," and Kate, who could not hear half that I read, got out of patience.

"What *is* the matter?" she asked, raising the sash of the window.

"I on'y wants the currender, (colander,) Miss Catline,—dat's all, Miss."

"Well, does it take a whirlwind to produce it?"

"Oh, laws, Miss Catline! Don't be *dat* funny now, don't!—yegh! yegh!—I'se find it presentry. I'se on'y a little frustrated, (flustered,) Miss, with de 'fusion, and I'se jes a-studyin'. Never mind me, Miss,—dat's all, indeed it is,—and you'll have a fuss-rate minch-pie for dinner. I guess so, too!—yegh! yegh!"—And so we had.

Kate's domestics stand in much awe of her, but feel at least equal love. So that hers is a household kept in good order, with very little of the vexation, annoyance, and care, I hear so many of her married friends groaning about.

April.

For a month nearly, Kate has forbidden my writing, and the first part of this letter was not sent; so I will finish it now. My sister thought the effort of holding a pen, in my recumbent position, was too wearying to me; but now I am stronger, and can sit up supported by pillows. I hasten to tell you of another most important addition to my comfort, which has been made since I wrote last. I am so eager with the news, that I can hardly hold a steady pen. Isn't this a fine state for a promising young lawyer to be reduced to? He is wild with excitement, because some one has given him a new go-cart!

Ben, the gardener, was that indulgent individual. He made for me, with his

own industrious hands, what he calls a "jaunting-car-r-r." It is a large wheeled couch on springs. I am a house-prisoner no longer!

I think the first ride I took in it was the most exciting event of my life. I was not exactly conscious of being mortally tired of looking from the same porch, over the same garden, into the same grove, and up to the same quarter of the heavens, for so many months; but when the change came unexpectedly, it was *transporting* happiness.

I suppose it may be so when we enter a future life. While here, we think we do not want to go elsewhere,—even to a better land; but when we reach that shore, we shall probably acknowledge it to be a lucky change.

Ben drew me carefully down the garden-path. I inhaled the breath of the tulips and hyacinths, as we passed them. I longed to stay there in that fairy land, for they brought back all the unspeakably rapturous feelings of my boyhood. Strange that such delight, after we become men, never visits us except in moments brief as lightning-flashes,—and then generally only as a memory,—not, as when we were children, in the form of a hope! When we are boys, and sudden joy stirs our hearts, we say, "Oh, how grand life will be!" When we are men, and are thus moved, it is, "Ah, how bright life was!"

Ben did not pause in the hyacinth-bed with me. He was anxious to prove the excellence of his vehicle; so he dragged me on in it, until we had nearly reached the boundary of our grounds, where the two tall, ragged old cedar-trees marked the extreme point of the evergreen shrubbery, and the view of the neighborhood lies before us. He stopped there and said,—

"Ye'll mappen like to look abroad a bit, and I'se go on to the post-office. Miss Kathleen bid me put you here for-nest the landskip, and then leave ye. She was greatly fashed at the coompany cooming just then. I must go, Sir."

"All right, Ben. You need not hurry."

The fresh morning wind whisked up to me and kissed my face bewitchingly, as Ben removed his tall, burly form from the narrow opening between the two trees, and left me alone there in the shade, with nothing between me and the view.

That moment revealed to me the joy of all liberated prisoners. My eyes flew over the wide earth and the broad heavens. After a sweeping view of both in their vast unity, I began to single out particulars. There lay the village in the lap of the hills, in summer time "bosomed high in tufted trees," but now only half veiled by the gauze-like green of the budding foliage. The apple orchards, still white with blossoms, and green with wheat or early grass, extended up the hills, and encroached upon the dense brown forests. There was the little red brick turret which crowned the village church, and my eye rested lovingly upon it. Not that it was anything to me; but Kate and all the women I respect love it, or what it stands for, and through them I hope to experience that warm love of worship, and of the places dedicated to it, which seems native to them, and much to be desired for us. I have cared little for such things hitherto. Their beauty and happiness are just beginning to dawn upon me.

—"Dear Jesus, can it be?

Wait we till all things go from us or e'er we go to thee?

Ay, sooth! We feel such strength in weal, thy love may seem withstood:

But what are we in agony? *Dumb*, if we cry not 'God!'

Behind the village I can see the blue hazy line of a far-distant horizon, as the valley opens in that direction. I know the sea lies there, and sometimes I fancy that *mirage* lifts its dark waters to my sight.

In a wooded nook on my right stands the little brown mill, with its huge wheel, and wide blue pond, and foamy waterfall. On that day I heard its drone, and saw the geese bathing, and throwing up the bright sparkling drops with their wings, until they fell like fountains.

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On my left lay "a little lane serene," with stone fences half hid by blackberry-bushes,—

—"A little lane serene,
Smooth-heaped from wall to wall with un-
broken snows,
Or in the summer blithe with lamb-cropped
green,
Save the one track, where naught more rude
is seen
Than the plump wain at even
Bringing home four months' sunshine bound
in sheaves."

I thought of those lines there and then, and they enhanced even the joy of Nature. They tinged her for me with the magic colors of poetry.

When I had thus scrutinized earth, I looked up to heaven. It had been so long shut from me by the network of the grove, that it was like escaping from confining toils, to look straight into Heaven's face, with nothing between, not even a cloud.

I have never seen a sweeter, calmer picture than that I gazed upon all the morning, and for which the two huge old cedars formed a rugged, but harmonious frame.

I have lived out of doors since. When it is cold, I am wrapped in a wadded robe Kate has made for me,—a capital thing, loose, and warm, and silky-soft. To an invalid with nerves all on edge, that is much. I never found out, until Kate enveloped me in its luxurious folds, what it was that rasped my feelings so, every morning, when I was dressed; I then knew it must have been my flashy woollen dressing-gown. I envy women their soft raiment, and I rather dread the day when I shall be compelled to wear coats again. (Let me cheat myself, if I can.)

III.

May, 1856.

You wish to know more of Ben. I am glad of it. You shall be immediately gratified.

He is a true Scot, tall and strong and sandy-haired, with quick gray eyes, and a grave countenance, which relaxes only upon very great provocation.

Before I came here, he was known

simply as a most careful, industrious, silent, saving machine, which cared not a jot for anybody in particular, but never wanted any spur to its own mechanical duty. It was never known to do a turn of work not legitimately its own, though mathematically exact in its proper office. But after I came here with my sister, a helpless cripple, we found out that the mathematical machine was a man, with a soft, beating heart. He was called upon to lift me from the carriage, and he did it as tenderly as a woman. He took me up as a mother lifts her child from the cradle, and I reposed passively in his strong arms, with a feeling of perfect security and ease.

From that day to this, Ben has been a most devoted friend to me. He watches for opportunities to do me kindnesses, and takes from his own sacred time to make me comforts. He has had me in his arms a hundred times, and carries me from bed to couch like a baby. I positively blush in writing this to you. You have known me to be a man for years, and here I am in arms again!

Ben's decent, well-controlled self-satisfaction, which almost amounts to dignity, is gone like a puff of smoke, at the word "Shanghai." Poor fellow! He once had the hen-fever badly, and he don't like to recall his sufferings.

The first I knew of it was by his starting and changing color one day, when I was reading the news from China to Kate in the garden, he being engaged in tying up a rose-bush close by. Kate saw his confusion, and smiled. Ben, catching the expression of her face, looked inconceivably sheepish. He dropped his ball of twine, and was about to go away, but thinking better of it, he suddenly turned and said, with a grin and a blush,—

"Ye'll be telling on me, Miss Kathleen! so I'se be aforehond wi' ye, and let Mr. Charlie knaw the warst frae my ain confasson, if he will na grudge me a quarter hour."

I signified my wish to hear, and with much difficulty and many questions wrung from him his "confasson." Kate

afterwards gave me her version, and the facts were these:—

He persuaded Kate to let him buy a pair of Shanghais.

"But don't do it unless you are sure of its being worth while," Kate charged him; "because I can't afford to be making expensive experiments."

Ben counted out upon his fingers the numberless advantages.

"First, the valie o' the eggs for sale, (mony ane had fetcht a dollar,) forbye the ecawnomy in size for cooking, one shell hauding the meat o' twa common eggs. Second, the size o' the chickens for table, each hen the weight o' a turkey. Third, for speculation. Let the neebors buy, and she could realize sixty dollar on the brood o' twal' chicks; for they fetcht ten dollar the pair, and could be had for nae less onywheres. Every hen wad hae twa broods at the smallest."

Kate doubted, but handed over the money. The next day she was awaked from a nap on the parlor sofa by a most unearthly music. There was one bar of four notes, first and third accented; bar second, a *crescendo* on a long swelled note, then a *decreasing* equally long.

"Why," she cried, "is that our little bull-calf practising singing? I shall let Barnum know about him. He'll make my fortune!"

Ben knocked at the door, presented a radiant grin, and invited inspection of his Shanghais. Kate went with him to the cellar. There stood two feathered bipeds on their tip-toes, with their giraffe necks stretched up to my sister's swinging shelf where the cream and butter were kept. It spoke well for the size of their craws certainly, that, during the two minutes Ben was away, they had each devoured a "print" of butter, about half a pound!

"Saw ye ever the like o' thae birds, Miss Kathleen?" began Ben, proudly.

"My butter, my butter!" cried Kate.

Ben ran to the rescue, and having removed everything to the high shelf, he came back, saying,—

"It was na their fault. I tak shame

for not minding that they are so gay tall. But did ye ever see the like o' yon rooster?"

Indeed, she never had! The frightful monster, with its bob-tail and boa-constrictor neck! But she said nothing.

Ben named them the Emperor and Empress. They were not to be allowed to walk with common fowls, and he soon had a large, airy house made for them. He watched these creatures with incessant devotion, and one morning he was beside himself with delight, for, by a most hideous roaring on the part of the Emperor, and a vigorous cackling, which Ben, very descriptively, called "scaughing," by the Empress, it was announced that she had laid an egg!

Etiquette required Kate to call and admire this promise of royal offspring, and she was surprised into genuine admiration when she saw the prodigy. Her nose had to lower its scornful turn, her lips to relax their skeptical twist. It was an egg indeed! Ben was nobly justified in his purchase. His step was light that day. Kate heard him singing, over and over again, a verse from an old song which he had brought with him from the land o' cakes:—

"I hae a hen wi' a happy leg,
(Lass, gin ye loe me, tell me noo,)
And ilka day she lays me an egg
(And I canna come ilka day to woo!)"

Wooing any lass would, just now, have been quite as secondary an affair with the singer as in the song,—a something *par parenthèse*.

But, alas! Ben's face was more dubious the next day, and before the week was over it was yard-long. The Empress, after that one great effort, laid no more eggs, but duly began her second duty, sitting. There was no doubt that she meant to have but one chick,—out of rivalry, perhaps, with the Pyncheon hen. It was gratifying, perhaps, to have her so aristocratic, but it was not exactly profitable as a speculation.

"Ben," said Kate, dryly, "I don't know that that egg was wonderfully large, as it contained the whole brood!"

Poor Ben! That was not all. The clumsy, heavy Empress stepped upon her egg, and broke it in the second week of its existence; but, faithful to its memory, she refused to forego the duties of maternity, and would persist in staying on her nest. As the season advanced, Ben lost hope of the second brood he had counted upon. In short, his Empress had the legitimate "hen-fever," and it carried her off, though Ben tried numberless remedies in common use for vulgar fowls, such as pumping upon her, whirling her by one leg, tying red flannel to her tail, and so forth. Of course such indignities were fatal to royalty, and Ben gave up all hopes of a pure race of Shanghais.

The Emperor was then set at liberty, and for one short half-hour strutted like a giant-hero among the astounded hens. But no sooner did the former old cock—who had game blood in him, repute said—return from a distant excursion into the cornfields with his especial favorites about him, and behold the mighty majesty of the monster, than his pride and ire blazed up. He put his head low, ruffled out his long neck-feathers, his eyes winked and snapped fire with rage, he set out his wings, took a short run, and, throwing up his spurs with fury, struck the stupid, staring Emperor a blow under the ear which laid him low. Alas for royalty, opposed to force of will!

"And you had to pocket the loss, Kate?" I said.

"It was my gain," she replied. "Ben had always been dictatorial before; but after that, I had only to smile to remind him of his fallibility, and I have been mistress here ever since."

So far had I written when your welcome letter arrived. Kate found me this morning sighing over it, pen in hand, ready to reply. She put on her imperious look, and said she forbade my writing, if I grew gloomy over it. She feared my letters were only the outpourings of a disappointed spirit. Indulgence in grief she considered weak, foolish, unprincipled, and egotistical.

"I can't help being egotistical," I replied, "when I see no one, and am shut up in the 'little world of me,' as closely as mouse in trap. And with myself for a subject, what can my letters be but melancholy?"

"Anybody can write amusing letters, if they choose," said Kate, reckless both of fact and grammar.

"Unless I make fun of you, what else have I to laugh at?"

"Well, do! Make fun of me to your heart's content! Who cares?"

"You promise to laugh with us, and not be offended?"

"I promise not to be offended. My laughing depends upon your wit."

"There is no mirth left in me, Kate. I am convinced that I ought to say with Jacques, 'Tis good to be sad, and say nothing.'"

"Then I shall answer as Rosalind did,—'Why, then, 'tis good to be a post!' No, no, Charlie, do be merry. Or if you cannot, just now, at least encourage 'a most humorous sadness,' and that will be the first step to real mirth."

"I shall never be merry again, Lina, till you let me recall Mr. —. That care weighs me down, and I truly believe retards my recovery."

"Hush, Charlie!" she said, imperiously.

"Now, dear Kate, do not be obstinate. My position is too cruel. With the alleviation of knowing your happiness secure, I could bear my lot. But now it is intolerable, utterly!"

She was silent.

"You must give me that consolation."

"To say I would ever leave you, Charlie, while you are so helpless, would be to tell a lie, for I could not do it. Mr. — is a civil engineer. He is always travelling about. I should have no settled home to take you to. How can you suppose I would abandon you? Do you think I could find any happiness after doing it? Let us be silent about this."

"I will not, Kate. I am sure, that, besides being a selfish, it would be a foolish thing to submit to you in this matter. I shall linger, perhaps, until your youth is

gone, and then have the pang, far worse than any other I could suffer, of leaving you quite alone in the world. Do listen to reason!"

She sat thinking. At last she said, "Well, wait one year."

"That would be nonsensical procrastination. Does not the doctor declare that a year will not better my condition?"

"But he cannot be sure. And I promise you, Charlie, that, if Mr. — asks me then, I will think about it,—and if you are better, go with him. More I will not promise."

"A year from last February, you mean?"—A pause.

"Encroacher! Yes, then."

"And you will write to him to say so?"

"Indeed! That would be pretty behavior!"

"But as you rejected him decidedly, he may form new"—— She clapped her hand upon my mouth.

"Dare to say it!" she cried.

I removed her hand, and said, eagerly, "Now, Kate, do not trifle. I must have some certainty that I am not wrecking your happiness. I cannot wait a year in suspense. I am a man. I have not the patience of your incomprehensible sex."

"I have more than patience to support me, Charlie," she whispered. "He insisted upon refusing to take a positive answer, then, and said he should return again next spring, to see if I were in the same mind. So be at ease!"

I sighed, unsatisfied.

"I am sure he will come," she said, turning quite away, that I might not dwell upon her warm blush.

"There is Ben with the horse. Are you ready?" she asked, glad to change the subject.

I was always ready for that. I had enjoyed the "jaunting-car-r-r" so much, that my sister, resolved to gratify me further, had made comfortable arrangements for longer excursions. I found that I could sit up, if well supported by pillows; and so Kate had her "cabriolet" brought out and repaired.

She had not the least idea of what a cabriolet might be, when she named her vehicle so; but it sounded fine and foreign, and was a sort of witty contrast to the misshapen affair it represented. It was indescribable in form, but had qualities which recommended it to me. It was low, wide-seated, high-backed, broad, and long. The front wheels turned under, which was a lucky circumstance, as Kate was to be driver. Ben could not be spared from his work, and I was out of the question.

We have a horse to match this unique affair, called "Old Soldier,"—an excellent name for him; though, if Kate reads this remark, she will take mortal offence at it. She calls the venerable fellow her charger, because he makes such bold charges at the steep hills,—the only occasions upon which the cunning beast ever exerts himself in the least, well knowing that he will be instantly reined in. Kate has a horror of going out of a walk, on either ascent or descent, because "up-hill is such hard pulling, and down-hill so dangerous!"

Old Soldier can discern a grade of five feet to the mile of either. If I did not know his history, (an old omnibus horse,) I should say he must have practised surveying for years. He accommodates himself most obligingly to his mistress's whims, and walks carefully most of the time, except when he is ambitious of great praise at little cost, when he makes the charges aforesaid.

"He is so considerate, usually!" Kate says; "he knows we don't like tearing up and down hills; but now and then his spirit runs away with him!"—I wish it would some day with us. No hope of it!

We stop every two miles to water the horse, and though we are exceedingly moderate in our donations, we are a fortune to the hostlers. I carry the purse, as Kate is quite occupied in holding the reins, and keeping a sharp look-out that her charger don't run off. Not that he ever showed a disposition that way,—being generally quite agreeable, if we wish him to stand ever so long a time; but

Kate says he is very nervous, and he *might* be startled, and then we *might* find it impossible to stop him,—a thing easy enough hitherto.

I am obliged to keep the purse in my hand all the time, there being such frequent use for it. Kate says,—

"Give the man a half-dime, Charlie, if you can find one. A three-cent piece looks mean, you know; and a fip mounts up so, it is rather extravagant. That is the twelfth fip that man has had this week, and for only holding up a bucket a half-minute at a time; for Soldier only takes one swallow."

She will pay every time we stop, if it is six times a day.

"Shall I give the man a half-dollar at once," I ask, "and let that do for a week?"

"No, indeed! How mean I should feel, sneaking off without paying!"

When the roadside shows a patch of tender grass, Kate eyes it, and checks Soldier's pace. He knows what that means, and edges toward the tempting herbage.

"Poor fellow!" his driver says,—"it is like our having to pass a plate of peaches. Let him have a bite."

And so we wait while he grazes awhile. It is the same thing when we cross a brook, and Soldier pauses in it to cool his feet and look at his reflection in the water.

"Perhaps he wants a drink. We won't hurry him. We will let him see that we can afford to wait."

If he had not come to that conclusion from the very start, he must have believed human beings were miracles of patience and forbearance.

I could write a fine dissertation upon Kate's foolish fondness and her blind indulgence. I could show that these are the great failings of her sex, and prove how very much more rational *my* sex would be in like circumstances. But I find it too pleasant to be the recipient of such favors myself just now, to find fault. Wait until I do not need woman's tenderness, and then I'll abuse it famously. I

will say then, that she is weak, foolish, imprudent; I will say, she kills with kindness, spoils with indulgence, and all that; but just now I will say nothing.

In one thing I think her kindness very sensible,—she uses no check-rein. I think with Sir Francis Head, that all horses are handsomer with their heads held as Nature pleases. I pity the poor

creatures when I see them turning to one side and the other, to find a little relief in change of position. To restrain horses thus, who have heavy loads to pull, is the height of folly, as a waste of power.

You take no interest in these remarks, perhaps; but treasure them. If ever, Cousin Mary, you *drive a dray*, they will serve you.

[To be continued.]

THY PSYCHE.

LIKE a strain of wondrous music rising up in cloister dim,
Through my life's unwritten measures thou dost steal, a glorious hymn!
All the joys of earth and heaven in the singing meet, and flow
Richer, sweeter, for the wailing of an undertone of woe.
How I linger, how I listen for each mellow note that falls,
Clear as chime of angels floating downward o'er the jasper walls!

Every night, when winds are moaning round my chamber by the sea,
Thine's the face that through the darkness latest looks with love at me;
And I dream, ere thou departest, thou dost press thy lips to mine;—
Then I sleep as slept the Immortals after draughts of Hebe's wine!
And I clasp thee, out of slumber when the rosy day is born,
As the soul, with rapture waking, clasps the resurrection morn.

'Twas thy soul-wife, 'twas thy Psyche, one uplifted, radiant day,
Thou didst call me;—how divinely on thy brow Love's glory lay!
Thou my Cupid,—not the boy-god whom the Thespians did adore,
But the man, so large, so noble, truer god than Venus bore.
I thy Psyche;—yet what blackness in this thread of gold is wove!
Thou canst never, never lead me, proud, before the throne of Jove!
All the gods might toil to help thee through the longest summer day;—
Still would watch the fatal Sisters, spinning in the twilight gray;
And their calm and silent faces, changeless looking through the gloom,
From eternity, would answer, "Thou canst ne'er escape thy doom!"
Couldst thou clasp me, couldst thou claim me, 'neath the soft Elysian skies,
Then what music and what odor through their azure depths would rise!
Roses all the Hours would scatter, every god would bring us joy,
So, in perfect loving blended, bliss would never know alloy!

O my heart! the vision changes; fades the soft celestial blue;
Dies away the rapturous music, thrilling all my pulses through!
Lone I sit within my chamber; storms are beating 'gainst the pane,
And my tears are falling faster than the chill December rain;—
Yet, though I am doomed to linger, joyless, on this earthly shore,
Thou art Cupid!—I am Psyche!—we are wedded evermore!