

FIFTY AND FIFTEEN.

WITH gradual gleam the day was dawning,
 Some lingering stars were seen,
 When swung the garden-gate behind us,—
 He fifty, I fifteen.

The high-topped chaise and old gray pony
 Stood waiting in the lane :
 Idly my father swayed the whip-lash,
 Lightly he held the rein.

The stars went softly back to heaven,
 The night-fogs rolled away,
 And rims of gold and crowns of crimson
 Along the hill-tops lay.

That morn, the fields, they surely never
 So fair an aspect wore ;
 And never from the purple clover
 Such perfume rose before.

O'er hills and low romantic valleys
 And flowery by-roads through,
 I sang my simplest songs, familiar,
 That he might sing them too.

Our souls lay open to all pleasure,—
 No shadow came between ;
 Two children, busy with their leisure,—
 He fifty, I fifteen.

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As on my couch in languor, lonely,
 I weave beguiling rhyme,
 Comes back with strangely sweet remembrance
 That far-removed time.

The slow-paced years have brought sad changes,
 That morn and this between ;
 And now, on earth, my years are fifty,
 And his, in heaven, fifteen.

ILLINOIS IN SPRING-TIME:

WITH A LOOK AT CHICAGO.

I REMEMBER very well, that, when I studied the "Arabian Nights," with a devotion which I have since found it difficult to bestow on the perusal of better books, the thing that most excited my imagination was the enchanted locomotive carpet, granted by one of the amiable genii to his favorite, to whom it gave the power of being in a moment where nobody expected him, paying visits at the most unfashionable hours, and making himself generally ubiquitous when interest or curiosity prompted. The other wonders were none of them inexhaustible. Donkeys that talked after their heads were cut off, just as well as some donkeys do with them on,—old cats turned into beautiful damsels,—birds that obligingly carried rings between parted lovers,—one soon had enough of. Caves full of gold and silver, and lighted by gems resplendent as the stars, were all very well, but soon tired. After your imagination had selected a few rings and bracelets, necklaces and tiaras, and carried off one or two chests full of gold, what could it do with the rest,—especially as they might vanish or turn to pebbles or hazel-nuts in your caskets?

But flying carpets! They could never tire. You seated yourself just in the middle, in the easiest possible attitude, and at a wish you were off, (not off the carpet, but off this work-a-day world,) careering through sunny fields of air with the splendid buoyancy of the eagle, steering your intelligent vehicle by a mere thought, and descending, gently as a snow-flake, to garden-bower or palace-window, moonlit kiosk or silent mountain-peak, as whim suggested or affairs urged. This was magic indeed, and worthy the genii of any age.

The sense of reality with which I accepted this wonder of wonders has furnished forth many a dream, sleeping and

waking, since those days; and it is no uncommon thing for me, even now, to be sailing through the air, feeling its soft waves against my face, and the delicious refreshment of the upper ether in my breast, only to wake as if I had dropped into bed with a celerity that made the arrival upon earth anything but pleasant. I am not sure but there is some reality in these flights, after all. These aerial journeys may be foretastes of those we shall make after we are freed from the incubrance of avoirdupois. I hope so, at least.

Yet there are good things of the kind here below, too. After all, what were a magic carpet that could carry a single lucky wight,—at best, but a species of heavenly sulky,—compared with a railroad train that speeds along hundreds of men, women, and children, over land and water, with any amount of heavy baggage, as well as a boundless extent of crinoline? And if this equipage, gift of genii of our age, seem to lack some of the celerity and secrecy which attended the voyagers of the flying carpet, suppose we add the power of whispering to a friend a thousand miles off the inmost thoughts of the heart, the most desperate plans, the most dangerous secrets! Do not the two powers united leave the carpet immeasurably behind?

Shakspeare is said, in those noted lines,—

"Dear as the ruddy drops
That visit this sad heart,"

to have anticipated the discovery of the circulation of the blood: did not the writers of the Oriental stories foresee rail and telegraph, and describe them in their own tropical style?

It is often said, that, although medical science leaves us pretty much as it found us with regard to the days of the years