

H O M E .



MY GENTLE-NATURED FRIEND: To the lappel of thy walking-coat still clings the button I have so often held: thou seest I have it now. Sit here, in this pleasant place, and let me talk to thee of things which concern thee nearly.

When thou perceivest occasion, say aught which may occur to thee, remembering, only, there be some who know not when they have said enough. Thou hast perceived that my humor is not lively, as it was awhile since; I have been thinking of the Home I once called mine. Do not marvel that I weep to think of my dear wife whom I did love so tenderly. But she is happy now: and they — our children: but nay, let me not speak of them more.

Hast thou a home? From thine emotion I perceive thou hast. Children are there; and the youngest, mayhap, a darling boy, just learning to climb his father's knee. Hark! It doth seem to me the day hath passed, and thou hast invited me home, to tea. Let me not be gloomy, now; I will e'en forget my years and vanished sprightliness, and affect a gayer form of speech. Ah! there the brave little fellow stands, in the window, watching for Papa! Oh! what delicious music is that infantile 'crow' of delight, with which he greets you! And 'mother,' still 'the most beautiful woman in the world,' drops her sewing, and makes the promising student rehearse gleefully the fresh politeness of 'tissing hand to papa'! I know your nature well; and I know that now a flood of feeling overwhelms your heart. How you pray, inwardly, *he* may live to man's estate, and be an honor to his parents and his race! You *know* he will! You bound lightly up the steps — shut the door upon the world and its cares — and know you are in the only Paradise this earth affords!

Hush! Dost hear that strain of varied music? I have a theory it comes from yon dwelling. Now, to miss such harmony were a pity; and while we approach that prison-house of all sweetness, let us further discourse. You have said truly, children are not given to quiet. There seems a necessity in nature for children; and another necessity that they should remind one, timely, of their presence. The serpent, after exhausting the resources of his invention, has been known to resort, for this purpose to a 'rattle.' The child is not thus fettered; and it is believed that he neglects no means of warning which nature, accident, and kind parents have placed within his reach. Again that swelling harmony. But let us still nearer.

We have reason to think, that were the vocal capabilities of a child at all proportioned to his ideas of vocal effect, no sounds other than his own could by any possibility be distinguished. In fact, the auricular organ would be disorganized. But, circumscribed as they are, his vocal powers should be counted little short of the wonderful. Whether con-

fining himself to the recital of his first impressions, the indignant remonstrance against injury and neglect, or the outward manifestation of inward grief and pain, the execution is always such as does him credit. But when these and other 'disturbing causes' conspire, the effect may be supposed to approach very nearly the level of his most exalted conceptions.

Now the full tide of harmony arrests our ears and steps. Shall I describe to thee, in language at once technical and familiar, both what thou seest and hearest, and that which is unseen and unheard? Well, then; listen. The youthful *artist* and his nurse are improvising a varied and elaborate harmony, (*doloroso*), in the natural key, the *tones* of which are few, but the harmony at once wild and wonderful. At intervals (were the music written) you might read along the score these words in the Italian language: '*Diminuendo, a poco laudandum.*' The startling injunction not to spare your breath, embraced in the abbreviated terms '*mezzo-forte*,' and '*forte*,' would also accompany every measure. The magnanimous duo lavish an amount of vocal sweetness upon the neighborhood which, were it properly distributed, might suffice for the vocal necessities of the whole solar system. At the distance of half-a-mile the attentive listener need not lose a single note. You will observe two distinct *tempos* — one for baby, and one for nurse — are beat upon drums by under-graduates; one of whom varies his rôle, in a '*pp*' passage by the subdued bump, bump, bump, of a fall down-stairs, which 'passage' is immediately succeeded by a *Grand Finale, tutti, fortissimo*, with unprecedented modulations into remote and comparatively unknown keys, and a miraculous occasional return to the original one; the whole being relieved, at suitable intervals, by an *obligato*, skilfully executed upon the 'trumpet,' alternating with the shovel and tongs, which, under the influence of the prevalent inspiration, contribute their sweetest notes to swell the tide of harmony.

But we cannot have good music, like the poor, 'always with us.' A gradual 'stilling of the elements' is now taking place, and whom am I permitted to name as the happy 'instrument?' None other than the faithful nurse, erst *Prima Donna*. Ah! wondrous woman! A kind of recitative, half-sung, half-spoken, all original, combined with artistic treatment of the refractory infant, is accomplishing the seeming impossibility. Note her *language*, as you follow the music! [*Spoken*:] See here, Tommy! Tommy *dump*? [*Sings, Presto, vivace.*] Up he goes! [*False motions.*] Up he goes! U-u-u-u-up. [*Goes up.*] - - - he goes - - -! [*Spoken*:] oh - - - oh - - - oh - - - oh - - - (!) What Tommy kying for? *Hey*? [*Savagely*:] S'all Molly cut he head off? - - - [*Playfully*:] O-o-o-o—off goes Tommy's head! [*Sings*:] U - - - u - - - p ——— he goes in a ballo-o-o-o-n! [*Spoken*:] Now baby's gone: whe-e-ere 's baby? *Oop* (!) [*Enticingly*:] Won't baby *tiss* Molly? The-e-e-re! I knew he would! The-e-e-re!" The reason I do not represent to you her *action* is, that it is not to be imitated or described by a mere mortal.

But listen! *There* is a different strain. The *mother* sings, now. How sweet is her voice, and plaintive! There is a something in it makes one sad to hear. How strange, that 'old familiar air' should sound so mournfully! It is no pleasure to stay longer.

How pleasant is this place ! The kind trees bless us with all they have to give, a cooling shade ; and their still whisperings with the gentle breeze come down to us faintly and solemnly. Often, when I am sitting here, shapes, natural and spiritual, seem to pass before me ; the former youthful, sometimes, but oftener grave and old. They are alike welcome : and I have sometimes found myself unconsciously addressing them as though they were real : which, in some sense they may be.

The spirit is upon me. How thronged is this erst deserted scene ! Come here, dear boy, and listen to words of wisdom, from one long past the season of youth. (It seems but yesterday he began, as thou, to struggle for himself.) Ah ! some time you will not wonder, as now you wonder, at the earnestness of your father, your mother's tears, when they would have persuaded you to stay with them yet longer. How earnestly they besought you not to yield so readily to delusive arguments with which a youthful imagination, and a manly though untried heart, were urging you into the race and battle of life ! When thou didst bid them farewell, O sanguine youth ! thou wert leaving much happiness behind, more perhaps, than thou shalt find again this side the grave.

From a life of ease and indulgence, thou art come upon one of turmoil — of ambitious struggle — perhaps of final disappointment : and what if *success* prove unsatisfying, the beacon an *illusory one* ! Ah ! doubly illusory, twice unsatisfying, in the light that beams from the hearth-stone of your early home !

He passes on. I thought my language, in its earnestness, had checked him for a moment ; but doubtless this was too fond a fancy. And why should I detain so brave a youth, anxious for all the good this world affords, laughing at the promise of inevitable misery !

ON the brink of yon cold, deathly river, stands a weary traveller, aged and trembling. With painful step, and slow, has he toiled thus far, and it seems as he would enter the waters. My soul yearns to comfort him, and to stay his steps.

Trembling Pilgrim on life's barren waste ! Dark is the tide that would arrest thy course. Why fearest thou not to plunge ? What sustains thee, now, O aged one ! what wilt thou find on the thither shore ?

As he fades from sight, and the scene recedes, the chill wind from off that icy stream doth bring for answer one word only : In the distance, now HEAVEN it seems — now HOME !

JACQUES MAURICE.

A SUMMER DAY.

The circling sun from his covert of night
Is soaring up the sky,
And flooding the earth with a ruddy light,
And gliding the clouds on high.

Through pendent branches and clustering leaves
The winds go sighing away,
And swaying and bending the mossy trees,
And fanning the summer's day.

Sitting alone in the forest shade,
I watch the mottled clouds that sail
Across the sky, in streamers clad,
Like stulps before a gale.

The night comes on with a stealthy pace,
The sun-beams are upward thrown ;
The wingéd hours have run their race,
And the summer's day has flown.