

that he slept. Then she went to his secret room, opened it, and seized the letter, which she read frantically, and in haste. Returning to his bed, she again looked at him, and then, silently, left the room.

A moment later four old and hideous negroes came in, who lifted him from his bed, and bore him through numerous passages, descending by doors and secret stairways to a damp cave, where they seated him on some bundles of straw, and then fastened him by the neck, with a ring to the wall, after having tied his hands.

The reality ordinarily comes only after the dream, but here the dream itself was a horrid reality.

The hour had already arrived when the effects of the narcotic were over. Henri opened his eyes, struggled in his bonds, aghast, as if he were returning out of a terrible nightmare, and then after some moment of wonder, called his servant Rico.

Rico answered:

"Here I am, master, look at me!"

In fact, Rico was there too, face to face with Henri, in the midst of a rank of slaves, bound and fastened to the wall.

Darnetal, who had at last thoroughly aroused himself, and resumed his reason, uttered a cry of horror.

"You! Rico, what is that you say?"

"I say, master, that this is the Vault of the Blacks, where your wife has plunged us both, I know why."

Henri was for a moment profoundly prostrated by this frightful truth. Then he recalled the crime in the garden, and Doménica's ferocious irony, He was no longer ignorant of anything.

It is I who have caused all this, it was the letter of the Senora, resumed Rico, dolefully.

"You showed it to her?"

"She took it from me. I believed that she knew all,—and I feared this Vault. I could not foresee what was to happen, and when I had determined to tell you all that had happened, I was brought here while asleep. Master, poor master! if she would torment you as she does us!"

Henri, whose sight had become gradually accustomed to the half-light of the dungeon, saw with horror, at the bottom of it, and in a corner, a sort of forge, in which already were heating a number of instruments of torture.

Near the forge were copper boilers, and tables covered with pincers, scissors, iron pins, hammers, knives, and leaden chongs.

This rapid examination caused him to tremble for himself, and for his poor slaves, whose only crime was that they had served him well.

And then his thoughts returned to Frazia, whose atrocious murderer he now knew. The sound of a key in the lock, disturbed his gloomy thoughts.

A door opened, and he saw first enter, lamp in hand, like Lady Macbeth, his wife, followed by the four blacks who had appeared to him in his dream. One bore a green phial, which he placed on a table. Another went to the forge, took the bellows, and blew the fire, giving to it a new activity. A third took several pieces of wood, and formed a trough of the length of a man, at the end of which were two oblong apertures. The fourth followed Doménica, who passed before the frightened prisoners, who murmured for mercy.

Henri with open mouth, waited until she should come to him, but she ceased not her step.

She passed several times before the unfortunate beings, slowly and silently, while the poignant expressions of their faces would have softened any heart that had been full of hate for humanity, and of devouring jealousy,—of that Castilian jealousy, which, sometimes justifiable, can be carried to the last limits of vengeance.

Doménica had wished to know all without the aid of Henri, in order that she might punish those whom he loved.

It was for this reason she had daily descended to that terrible dungeon; hoping to draw by torture from them avowals that should work them evil.

She stopped at last before the negro Rico, and said to him:

"How many letters did you carry to the courtesan Frazia?"

"I carried only one, mistress."

"Lear, bring the pincers; tear the nail from the left thumb of Rico;—he lies."

Rico became pale as a shroud.

Lear brought the pincers, and seized the hand of the condemned.

At this sight, Henri, who, until then, had been silent from horror and fright, bounded from his straw, with a loud cry, which was lost in the depth of the dungeon.

"Stop, villains, stop!—that which you are doing is infamous!"

Doménica, slightly moved, smiling, and, without answering him, she called Poncio.

"Poncio, prepare for this fair stranger our green phial, that in an hour he may have a forehead more wrinkled than that of an aged man, a color yellower than that of the fruit of my citron-trees, and looks whiter than the snows of the Cordilleras; and which will bring death in the evening. No, not this evening; that will be to soon; let it be for to-morrow. Prepare it, Poncio, and give it quickly."

It is well known that among the most refined tortures there is nothing more terrible than the removal of the living nail.

At the first attempts Rico uttered cries and howlings like those of a wild beast, but vaults and hearts were alike deaf.

The miserable man rolled and twisted about, foam covered his lips and sweat stood in waves on his body. Blood burst from his nose, his eyes and his ears. His veins swelled as if under the pressure of cords, and his crispy hair shivered as much as his limbs. Lear tore away steadily, but the nail strongly rooted, would not give way.

"Stop a moment," said Doménica, "undoubtedly he will now be more reasonable. Let us see, Rico, if you will avow all that you know, and then I will free you in a minute."

Rico looked at his chained master for a moment, for a moment he hesitated.

"Be quick, Rico; I have no time to wait; speak, or, after having torn away the nail, I shall have your feet burnt in that trough."

"Oh! pull out the nail, mistress; but do not burn my feet."

And an almost imperceptible smile passed across his lips.

What was the meaning of that smile in that moment of supreme agony?

Once more, then, tell me all, or I will make you suffer as never negro suffered before; a torture without end. You shall see.

"I know nothing, mistress, and you shall know nothing."

At these words, so energetically pronounced, Lear resumed his pincers. The nail, already started, gradually lost its hold, and after minutes of exquisite suffering, to Rico, it fell all bloody at the feet of Doménica, whose eyes blazed like those of a demon.

The sufferer had swooned, and a new scene must be enacted.

"Infernal woman!" cried Henri, "you kill me, you kill me, by making the sufferer feel more than you have inflicted on him."

"Don't you go to hate me! I tell you, I am ready to go to the bottom of the earth, and place him in it, while he is insensible."

And then, approaching Henri,

"You wish to die, Henri?"

"Yes, I wish to die."

"Henri! look at me, then, once more,—you never then have loved me?"

"I know not, and what matters it? One may be for the moment fascinated by a serpent, but he drives it away at last."

"Ingrate!" she said, sadly, and approaching him.

"Who has been the most sinful of us two? Tell me, Henri, if there were yet time, would you not pardon me? Do you not wish to forget all, that I may love you again, and more than ever before, if that be possible? Let us fly to the ends of the earth, where we will live alone, unknown and unknown. I will be devoted to you and I will pray to God to pardon what you call my crimes. We will speak only of our love. Oh! answer me! Will you make no answer?"

Doménica all at once leaned her head on the shoulder of her husband. Her hand sought his to free it, and her lips would have met those of the prisoner, perhaps, when at her suppliant words he answered:

"No, never! rather death than such weakness."

"Oh!" muttered she, raising her head and stamping on the straw; "oh! this is too much! Well! so much the worse; you are about to die, and by a death such as was never before known."

"He shall not die more than myself," shouted a loud voice; "we are both free."

It was Rico.

His swoon had been only a feint.

He had only waited for that moment of partial freedom in order to do that which had suddenly occurred to him.

Suddenly, when they had removed his irons to bear him to the trough, he recovered his strength, and at the very moment when they were about to place him on the plank, he rose upright, by a rapid movement; and, with one of those efforts which can proceed only from despair, the black giant snapped the iron ties that held his hands, seized a knife that lay on the table, cut the cords about his feet in the twinkling of an eye, and hastening to his master, knife in hand, he opened the collar that held his neck to the wall, took him all bound as he was, on his vast shoulders, and opening the door he escaped, crying, "Vengeance, Senora; Vengeance!"

"Those five persons frozen with terror, listened to the shouts, which came from the top of the stairway, in two strong voices repeating, 'Vengeance!'"

Frazia had passed an awful night and, in the morning she could see before her Psyche the frightful furrows which the acid had ploughed in her face. Her entire visage, in fact, was burnt, her eyes alone having been miraculously preserved.

The authorities were already around her, interrogating her, with all possible reserve, on the circumstances, and pressing her to name the criminal.

The sufferer suspected no one.

They spoke of Henri, who had been seen to fly with such speed; but to their suppositions Frazia answered, that in fact M. Darnetal had accompanied her to the garden, but that he was not with her when the event happened, and that it would be absurd to mention his name in connection with it.

The physicians who had not left her for an instant, declared that the nervous contractions, and peculiar effects of vitriolic mutilations, and, above all, the immediate consequences of the crime, had determined an effusion of blood to the head, and that delirium would soon seize their patient.

In fact, poor Frazia, suffering more from hour to hour by the prolonged absence of Henri, robbed of her beauty, cut off from love, and not knowing how to explain that mysterious affair, was gradually sinking into a profound fever which threatened to put an end to her mortal career.

Two hours after mid-day Frazia was about to fall asleep, calling on the name of her lover, who was dead to her grief, when a hand softly removed her bed-curtains.

It was Henri!

"You!" she cried.

At this beloved, but too sudden apparition, she fell into a long and delirious crisis, out of which nothing could bring her but the words and embraces of Henri.

She was already in her agony.

No human phrase can render those passionate and delirious exclamations so touchingly drawn from that woman, upon whom a long and happy life had seemed to smile, but who was now dying a victim to passion. Henri held her already cold hand, he covered her burning forehead with kisses, sought to read his name in her eyes, fixed and brilliant as enamel, he called her name tenderly, as one calls a child; but already Frazia could scarcely answer him. The death-rattle was in her throat, her pulse was hardly perceptible, her teeth chattered, and her nostrils became dry and pinched.

Yet a few moments, and that tender heart had ceased to beat.

Towards six o'clock in the evening, Henri, who, in spite of the doctors, would not leave her bedside, heard, in the midst of a long and mournful sigh his name faintly escape her. It was the last breath, the last thought of Frazia!

The brig Palatine sailed the next morning for France.

"What do you think of my history?" asked the narrator.

"My dear Alfred, I swear to you that I will know the end of it. Oh! if it be all true, what a woman!"

"Yes, what a woman!" But be careful, she is looking at us still. I warn you again my friend, not to approach her during the voyage, and above all, to be silent."

"So that we shall never be able to ascertain what became of the master and the slave, Henri and his devoted Rico?"

"I have told you already that it is a history yet to be completed."

A fortnight after this frightful correspondence, Alfred fell sick, and died in horrible convulsions, without being able to open his mouth or to move his arms.

That which he had told me of Doménica occurred to me, and made me shudder. I went in search of the surgeon, to whom I confided my doubts, and demanded an autopsy; but he, undoubtedly, ashamed at having been deceived for the thousandth time replied that the sickness, quite ordinary, and well understood, was simply the typhoid fever.

I heard what he said, but I was not convinced, and I watched more closely than ever that abominable Spanish woman, who was now hideous in my sight.

Six months after my return to Europe, I went one evening, to the house of Madame la Comtesse N—, habourg Saint-Honore, the mistress of the house; an extraordinary woman, who brings together in her salon foreign travellers, artists, and the most beautiful women of Paris. They dance little there. Poets are admitted, but without their manuscripts; and all conversation is the great aim of these amiable sessions, which, as to the rest, do not number many of the select.

When I entered the room, conversation was at its height, but it was carried on in groups, which it was necessary to mingle in order to hear what was going on.

In one group that spoke of a hall which a Spanish Marchioness, newly arrived at Paris, was about to give.

A young man praised her marvelous beauty, her diamonds, and, above all, her liberal alms, which she poor partook of, and made known to the needs of their benefactors.

"She is the widow of a grandee of Spain," he said; just at the moment when a servant, throwing open the door, announced:

"Madame la Marquise d'Olivia."

"Here she is!" cried several persons of the group.

At the sight of that woman, dazzling with diamonds, youth and beauty, I was seized with a vertigo. I turned pale, my knees trembled, and I was obliged to throw myself on a fauteuil.

It was Doménica, of whom I had never been able to find any trace, but whom I now saw, in all the splendors of life, fashionable, adored, blessed! She blessed! Oh! my God!

Did she wish to atone for her crimes by charity? Had she thrown herself into the consoling arms of religion in order to drive away remorse?

I could have believed this had I not been able to see her attentively; but in one of her unstudied movements, and in a look which she cast furtively over the crowd, I could detect under that smiling and beautiful mask the deformity and hatred of hypocrisy.

For an hour the Marchioness of Olivia was the object of all eyes, and of all flattering words. They surrounded her, and they spoke to her of her ball, of her poor, and of her unfortunate country, the sweet skies of which, they were sure, she must regret.

This young woman was already at home in the salons of Paris, was perfectly well bred, and responded with the utmost propriety to all the homage that was addressed to her from all sides.

Gradually the group broke up, and each person came to place himself near the amiable hostess, who had now found a theme for conversation.

"What think you of the report of M. de Broglie on the abolition of slavery?" she asked of a young Deputy who stood near to Doménica.

It is unquestionably a very grave subject, but it has at least the merit of being appropriate to the time."

At these words, the door was thrown open, and they announced—

"M. Henri Darnetal!"

The Marchioness uttered a cry, and became pale with terror. Several ladies clustered around her, and wished her to smell of their salts; but she declared that she was not indisposed, and that one of her gold pins had drawn that exclamation from her.

Henri looked fixedly at her, but she cast down her eyes.

"I think," cried the Deputy, "that the arrangement is an error from the point of view of humanity; but I do not believe that it will be possible to abolish slavery altogether. The trade is carried on for the mere purposes of cupidity; by a particular set of men, and is a disgrace to a country; and from the infamous traffic in slaves has come that excessive barbarism which is the reproach of the colonies. I repeat it, it appears to me inopportune to abolish the trade in slaves; but it would be well if the government were to regulate it, to make it cease to be a monopoly, to reform the negro codes, and to watch over the labor and the instruction of the children of the blacks."

"Then, Monsieur de B—, you are not for abolition?"

"My system is a gradual abolition."

"Very well; you would nearly abolish the trade in negroes, but you would not free them?"

"Besides the ruin of the colonies which would follow immediate emancipation, we know that all these poor negroes do not merit freedom; and then, to speak frankly, they appear to hold a middle place between ourselves and the monkeys, so wicked and cunning is their nature."

"Permit me, sir, to speak on that point," said Henri, interrupting him. "The negroes are, like ourselves, capable of devotion and courage. Instead of debasing them by ignorance, elevate them by instruction, and you will find them men; for I know not that the barbarians of Attila were much better than the revolted negroes of St. Domingo. Civilization has placed armies where formerly were only hordes. I am ashamed at finding myself engaged in discussing this question; but I have visited in Mexico some habitations of blacks, I must nevertheless say, and here have witnessed things so horrible that you could hardly believe them, so unnatural were they. If I did not fear encroaching on your good nature, and you would listen to me, I would relate a history which I should be compelled to embellish a little, in order to prevent it from being too frightful to these ladies."

Here Henri turned himself toward Doménica, who rose, as if about to depart. An imperious look from him nailed her to her seat.

All the ladies entreated Henri to commence his history, and above all, not to omit anything, they lovingly, they declared, strong emotions.

Henri then gave, with a crowd of details, which more than once made the assembly shudder, the account I have narrated, and added:

"The negro Rico is not an exception. The blacks are devoted to those who, in place of maltreating them, treat them with kindness. This is only one of a crowd of noble examples. I have, myself, in the ante-chamber, a tall and handsome negro, like Rico, who bears for me a boundless affection, who would throw himself into the sea at a sign from my hand, who would go with me to the ends of the earth, and who has saved my life. This slave wishes not for his freedom, even with gold. He belongs to me feebly, to my house, to my person, to my thoughts. He would kill a man who should menace me with a blow. Love in that heart is boundless, but there, hatred is also great. He hates a certain woman as much as he loves me, and if that woman were here, and he should recognize her on the stairs, I would not be answerable for her life. He would strangle her with one hand, while with the other he would place on her neck, instead of the jewelled necklace she now wears, the same iron collar which she put on his throat."

These last words were pronounced in a tone that caused the blood of Doménica to freeze in her veins.

"Would you allow me to call that heroic negro into the room?" asked the Comtesse de N—, laughing.

Rico entered bearing a waiter, which he presented in turn to all the ladies seated around the room.

All admired his high stature, his gigantic limbs, his well developed head, and his sombre yet lofty look.

One woman only did not look at him, refused his refreshments, and sought to conceal herself behind her fan as he passed by.

I know not by what magnetic power Rico was affected almost as soon as he felt her robe touch him; but turning to her, and collecting himself, he let his water fall, and murmured, in a very low tone, "VANGUARD!"

What the lady was making up the fragments of her dress, Madame de N— said to Henri that he had just proclaimed the female sex, and that there existed not in the world a woman capable of such a deed.

Happily, Madame, she is only an exception; but this exception exists, and the woman is here; you know her, you love her, the poor slave, who visits the church and the theatre, and mingles

everywhere with the wretched and the wretched she is looked upon as an angel."

"It is clear," interrupted Madame de N—, "that M. Darnetal wishes to be pleasant. I have never known Doménica Granadiva, and I beg pardon of God and man if I have ever touched the hand of such a monster."

Doménica shuddered. The sweet rolled in streams from her forehead. She moved her fan, looking the while at the pitiless story-teller, and supplicating him with eyes full of tears.

"I defy you, Monsieur Teller-of-Mexican-Tales, to name to us this—"

Every one listened with dread. They feared almost to find themselves near the culprit. Their lips were parted, their hearts were still; they listened.

Henri advanced to the centre of the circle; and, pointing with his fore-finger at Doménica, "Behold her!" he cried; I am her husband, and there is her slave. Look at the thumb of his right hand."

Doménica could not bear this fatal scene. She fainted, and her servants bore her to her carriage. The next morning Henri called Rico.

"Well, Rico, we have had vengeance, have we not?"

"It is the beginning of vengeance, master, but it is nothing to a soulless woman. To-morrow, on her road to Italy, she will laugh at us."

"How, Rico?"

"She will depart to-night for Florence."

"How know you that?"

"I went immediately to her house, where I found an old slave friend of mine, who, like me, has been beaten for his services, and who, again like me, has a heart that beats for vengeance."

After a silence of some minutes, Henri resumed;

"Rico, my friend, Rico, are you not devoted to me? Do you not love me?"

"Yes, master."

"Well, then, think no more of Doménica; let her fly from city to city, and from country to country, until she shall be crushed under the weight of remorse."

"Remorse! Why she has a dungeon even in her house here, and Alvarez, the friend of whom I just spoke to you, has heard groans from thence."

"If what you say is true, justice."

"There is no longer a dungeon, for to-night she leaves for Florence."

"You will not leave me, Rico?"

"I ask for a month's freedom, master."

"To go to Florence?"

"I know not where. It is probable, however, that I shall not quit Paris, and that you will see me every day; but I ask of you a month, a single month of freedom."

"Are you not free in my house?"

"Yes, master; but it is a liberty more perfect than that, which I ask."

"I will grant it to you if you will not leave Paris."

Rico appeared to reflect for a moment, and then answered:—"Well, master, I will remain here."

"You promise me that?"

"I swear it by the blood of my father, whom Doménica caused to die under the rods."

"Again, Doménica! Forget her, Rico, as I do."

"You have been avenged, master, but I have not! Farewell until to-morrow."

And the implacable negro answered not when Henri spoke to him again.

Doménica, in fact, was about to leave that night for Italy. She could not remain in Paris, where she had received that terrible affront, and where, undoubtedly, other humiliations would await her. She spent the whole day in preparing for her journey.

Several times she rang for Alvarez, the friend of Rico, but Alvarez came not. He had left the house in the morning without communicating with any one.

She went on with her preparations. In the evening she went into the garden, as was her custom, and walked about alone until a late hour.

She was about to return to the house, when, at the corner of a hedge she was suddenly enveloped in a mantle, and her mouth closed, and she was borne through a little garden gate to a carriage that was in waiting.

The seizure had been so rapidly effected that she had not been able to make a movement, or to utter a cry.

Two minutes later the carriage tore over the pavement, and the blows of the coachman were multiplied, in order that it might fly the faster.

The victim sought to speak, but they had almost gagged her, and she was strictly enfolded in muscular arms.

After half an hour's agony the carriage stopped. Two men took her from it, bore her an hundred steps, opened a door, entered, descended a narrow stairway, opened another door, and placed the poor woman on a sort of bed. The two men then left her.

The furious Creole was to feel the law of retaliation.

Rico and Alvarez, her victims, had taken a close carriage, had seized their mistress in her garden, of which one of them knew the outlets, and had placed her on a pallet at the bottom of the cellar of an isolated house, which Rico had hired that day in the name of his master.

This house, situated behind the avenue of Saint Mandé, near the barrier du Tunc, was far removed from the highway.

What were these two vindictive slaves about to do with this woman? On going out, they only said:—"Farewell until to-morrow!"

On that night, Doménica, unbound and alone, in that dark dungeon, uttered piercing cries. She scratched the walls. She shook the door. All was in vain. She heard nothing—not even an echo.

It was a long and a horrible night, a night of despair, for, without having seen her ravishers, she had been able to recognize Rico by his rude embraces.

Was it he alone who had thrown her into that cell? If so, she was lost.

Was it Henri?

If it was Henri, she could yet hope, in spite of his cruelty, on the previous evening.

The next day, towards noon, she heard the sound of footsteps on the stairway. The door flew open, and she saw the two blacks enter, the one bearing a lamp, and the other a whip.

The captive felt as if she should swoon at that sight.

The two slaves laughed like two devils.

"What mean you to do with me, she cried, folding her hands."

"What have you done to others, Rico brutally answered, 'not such tortures, however, as I have suffered

THE FARE TO NEW YORK, by the steamboat line, has been reduced from five to four dollars.

NUMBER THREE

THE MASSACHUSETTS BOOT AND SHOE TRADE.—The value of the Boot and Shoe Trade of Massachusetts is estimated in amount at upwards of \$45,000,000 for the past year. The wholesale houses have done a full average business, while the profits of the manufacturers have been small, and the large body of operatives have worked on low wages, notwithstanding the high price of food. The manufacture of women's work has been fairly remunerative, while profits on men's heavy goods have been quite small.

Pearls.

The pathway of my duty lies in sunlight,
And I would tread it with as firm a step,
Though it should terminate in cold oblivion,
As if Elysian pleasures at its close,
Flashed palpable to sight as things of earth.

A wise man ought to hope for the best, be prepared for the worst, and bear with equanimity whatever may happen.

Old winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the shore
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
On the limits of wintry night;
If the land and the air and the sea
Rejoice not when Spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee
O winter!

The trials of life are like the tests which ascertain how much gold there is in us.

She was lovelier than the morn,
Sisters come!
Purer than a flower new born,
Sisters come!
All who saw her no'er could part,
Till her image filled her heart,
Dear her home!
Never doth kissed maiden's eyes,
Fitter for our Father's skies,
Dear her home.

To most men experience is like the stern lights of a ship,
which illumines only the track it has passed.

For love and beauty and delight
There is no death nor change; their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light—being themselves obscure.

Cherishfully acknowledge merit in others, and in return you will always receive the kind consideration which you desire. When you cannot consistently praise, by all means, keep silent, unless there be a manifest wrong, deserving censure.

The harvest is waving, and fountain and flower
Are sparkling and sweet as the radiant hour,
And the song of the reapers, the lark's sunny lay,
Proclaim through the valley—Day! beautiful Day!

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

Life's Looking Glass,

—BY—
EMMA CARRA.

One boon I crave—freedom of thought and pen,
If this be wanting other gifts are vain.

A Chat with the Readers of the
"Banner of Light."

Our worthy editors tell me when I take my pen to address the readers of the Banner of Light, I speak to a family twenty thousand strong.

If in the centre of our lovely Common there were erected a platform overlooking this vast throng, and I were called upon to address you verbally, I think I should shrink away, and if I did not disappear from the earth altogether, I should immediately leave the vicinity of this numerous host, nor return to the common again till no foot-print but mine crushed the young grass just springing into life there; but sitting at my little writing desk and holding in my right hand a tiny instrument, which, in skillful hands, can at all times be made more powerful than the strongest sword, I dare speak to you.

Although you are many, I wish mentally to group you altogether and address you as one individual, whom I would do my utmost to entertain pleasantly if he were before me, let his humor be grave or gay, lively or severe. My pen and I are one—so identified are we that I shall speak of myself in the singular. This is not my debut before the public, therefore I cannot say but that you and I have met before; be that as it may, whether stranger or friend, I now, in assuming the responsibility of filling this department, extend to you through the medium of my faithful pen the right hand of fellowship, and state that from this time till the future will determine how long I shall meet you no more but in the columns of the Banner of Light, having been engaged by the gentlemanly editors of this paper to write exclusively for them. In assuming this charge, I do not forget the many kind favors I have received from my former publishers of the press generally—they have encouraged my efforts and paid me liberally, and for these deeds I thank them.

You will perceive I have taken this department in April. A very tickle month, say you. It is, but after all we welcome her, even if she does give us now and then a stronger breeze than we feel grateful for, or pile over our heads dark clouds. In gayer moods she gives us sunshine, and then coquetishly sheds soft tears, as if she wept that she had displeased us. But I love April, for I know that she is a prelude to May and June.

Perchance as time rolls by, you may think the emanations of my pen partake somewhat of the character of the month in which I commence my labors here. I grant it will be so; for who of us always feels alike grave or gay? There are times in every one's history when dark mists veil the mental vision and light thoughts cannot find egress. At such moments the pen, if it move at all, will creep slowly over the paper, and the dark clouds that have settled about the heart will lend a shadow to every line traced by the power of thought—but these clouds do not last always. O no! there are in our rigorous climate more sunny days than stormy ones, and so it is in life; and when the mist vanishes and hope makes us joyous again, how the pen will dance over the white paper, and in skillful hands paint with a beautiful glow events that before had no interest for the writer.

Yes, reader, from this time forward, as long as we can make ourselves agreeable to each other, I hope to meet you here mentally once a week, where to the utmost of my ability I will strive to entertain you as I would a fire-side guest, realizing from experience that you will not always feel in the same mood. I shall at times indulge in a humorous chat on subjects that I think will interest us both, and then we will talk on graver topics—perhaps give some sketches of the darker shades of life, but always with this great principle in view; that He who made this vast world, knew our wants and necessities best, and that when he said, "Let there be light," he was aware that the darker shades were needed to bring out the true beauty of the lighter.

And now, reader, in conclusion let me say that in the future I shall do my best to please you, and if I prove unequal to the task, please extract from each article whatever of good there may be in it.

and pass the dross in silence; then shall I be encouraged to still greater efforts and my motto shall ever be Excellence.

THE CONTRAST:
Or, Aunt Debby and Aunt Seraphina.

O, how I wish I were rich! Not that I bear extreme love for shining ore—no, but because it would emancipate me from the slavery of fashion. I could do as I pleased then, and if I did not dress in a mode every time I went out, the most that would be said about me would be that I was a little eccentric.

Oh! how nice it would be when I arose in the morning to encase my feet in good old fashioned leathern shoes of sufficient size to allow me to move with freedom, and robe myself in calico, selecting such tiny figures and delicate hues as best become my complexion! When once free to wear what I chose, would n't I put my veto on human bodies being supported by bones of leviathan? Yes, every sea-monster after he had yielded to man what was truly useful and beneficial to the human race, should have the privilege of letting his bones sink to rest on coral reefs in his native element, the wild winds performing a requiem above him; while my garments being without props should leave my form free to repose as God designed it should do. I would make use of no crinoline—no whalebone—no tight fitting congress gaiters, nor would I promenade the streets when the thermometer was at zero with nothing to protect my poor brain from the weather but the shadow of a handful of lace and flowers reflected from a fashionable bonnet attached to the extreme back of head.

Every generation grows wiser and wiser, it is said.—Bah! nonsense! or if they do, does that wisdom make them happier?

Let me tell you something about my good Aunt Debby's style of dress and living when I was a little girl and used to go and see her spin. I loved my Aunt Debby, and not only I but all who knew her did the same. You never heard dyspeptic ejaculations in the little brown house where she lived; no, old Towser could lie by the wide kitchen jam from September till May without ever being driven from his comfortable quarters to let her sit by the fire and toast her feet; her horse and thick flannels and lincey woolsey gowns were a part of the harvest gleaned from the warm backs of the saxon flock in the meadow. With her own hands she spun and knit and wove, and the manufacturing of the fabrics kept a warm glow about her heart that made her welcome every one with a smile. No contrast was there between my Aunt's Sunday and Monday face. If the good old Elder Jones dressed in his homespun suit called on a washing day, the oldest inhabitant couldn't remember that she ever went into hysterics or stood in the kitchen and listened to hear her daughter Patty tell the pious old man she was not at home.

After Aunt Debby died modern ideas began to creep into the old brown house; for Uncle Silas was owner of one of those happy temperaments that don't believe in dying of grief when a life contract is suddenly broken up; so after Aunt Debby lay down to an unbroken rest, under the mossy old apple tree in one corner of the stony meadow where the Saxon flock were wont to graze, Uncle Silas gave the village painter a protracted job, and the exterior of the once brown house became as white as the glistening drifts that were piled about it in mid-winter.

It was summer now, and did the spirit of Aunt Debby ever hover about the spot, the contrast to her former home must have looked strange, so completely had familiar objects been changed. The seraglio oak bush where her linen milk strainer and towels used to bleach and flutter in the summer sun was gone now, for Uncle Silas in modernizing his home had hewn it down and then consumed it in the old stone fireplace which he afterwards filled with bricks and mortar, and then placed in front of it a model cook stove. The old sweep well lost its bucket and balance, and the cool breeze that flitted in the vicinity could no longer penetrate to the limped water at the pebbly bottom, for the wide top was planked over now, and an imposing pump inserted. The fence that encircled the wide yard at the back of the house was laid low, and the crooked rails piled behind the barn for future burning. No more did Brindle and her calf lie side by side in that enclosure on the dewy grass, but in their stead was a flower garden, and beds edged with box or striped grass ornamented the sides of the gravel walk. The quadrupeds and bipeds that in Aunt Debby's day roamed free all over the farm were now shut up in narrow quarters—in nooks that seemed laboring under the curse of barrenness.

This was done that ornamental trees might grow luxuriously near the house and that the sweet clover fields that lay between the homestead and the road might not receive a hoof-print, nor the gorgeous winged butterflies be disturbed in their summer-day rambles. The corn crib was emptied of its contents and the well fed spiders that had so long inhabited their gossamer homes in the peak of the roof had to migrate, and the swallows that were so tame in Aunt Debby's time and cut the air so fantastically, now built their nest elsewhere than under the eaves of the old corn crib for it was moved up and joined to the rejuvenated house, and by the aid of a skillful mechanic it was converted into a modern parlor.

Ah! little Aunt Debby think when she a bride used to sit on the rough bench in the corn crib and help Uncle Silas shell corn, and both would join in singing psalm tunes, that in a few years when she lay down to her last rest he would ere the earth's damp had removed the polish from her coffin convert that useful old building into a drawing-room and furnish it luxuriously.

It is not probable that Uncle Silas ever would have done so, but as we have said his was a happy temperament, and when he found that Aunt Debby had really left him he wisely concluded that life is too short to spend it in mourning and that another wife would be a very useful person at the homestead. Uncle Silas's ideas of qualifications for a matrimonial partner had changed somewhat since he married the plain featured Deborah Bristol, he now began to think that a handsome wife was not only useful, but decidedly ornamental. Marrying a wife he used to say was attended with a great deal of expense even in the beginning; so he gave it as his opinion that it was undoubtedly best for him to marry not only a handsome wife but a young one, as the probability was that she would live to wait on him in his old age and he should never be troubled more in looking up a mistress for the renovated brown house, nor his mind be haunted by the thought that in life's decline when he most needed sympathy, stranger hands would administer his necessities for hire.

The more Uncle Silas revolved these subjects in his mind and looked at the facts in the case, the more convinced was he that if he could obtain such a life-partner it would be a decided hit. But would a young and handsome wife come and live in the brown house, thought the substantial farmer, even if he did have thousands in the bank and a good reputation beside? Uncle Silas said aloud, but he said mentally no, and this was why the village painter was engaged, and the house removed for a parlor, and the yellow gleams that used to sit in Aunt Debby's best room removed in

to the kitchen and the former kitchen chairs taken to make the tea-kettle boil. This was why the sand bank on the hill side at the extreme end of the farm remained unmolested now—sanded floors were no longer needed when Aunt Debbie outside the homestead, Ingrain, Brussels, and Tapestry had supplanted them on chamber, sitting room and parlor.

It was the anniversary of the day that Aunt Debby left the farm house forever, and Uncle Silas was sitting at his parlor window—looking away across the fields to that quiet corner where stood the withered old apple tree, and he was half a mind to be sad, for the thoughts would intrude themselves—Am I any happier now than I was when the old house was brown and the parlor and kitchen floors were sanded?

A distinct sigh escaped his bosom, and then he was interrupted in his musings by a white arm being laid lightly over the beautifully upholstered chair where he sat, and then a silvery laugh rung upon his ear and the little fairy like Mrs. Silas Bisbee Number 2, remarked playfully on her venerable husband's elongated face. A sound escaped the farmers lips, but it would be difficult to determine whether it were a laugh or a groan as he extended his hand to the rosy cheeked being before him.

Good Aunt Debby was the same plain being from her cradle to her grave, but as life advanced Uncle's taste took a different turn, and gradually as we shall see he became the victim of fashion and etiquette.

But he did not entirely depart from his good old style of dress and living; till he wooed and won Seraphina Gifford, the daughter of a neighboring farmer. Seraphina had spent three years in a fashionable boarding school in the city, and it was she who suggested that the old homestead and its surroundings must be modernized before she would consent to become its mistress and the step-mother of Patty, her former playmate.

Reader let us take a look at Uncle Silas the day his first wife bade him good by forever. He was a plain farmer with a large share of the fruits of his toil at interest, the wool and flax from which his garments were made were raised on the soil that his and his faithful wife's industry paid for.

Only one year later, and the black suit of cloth that he wore on the day of his second wedding was the first encouragement he had ever given to the importer; and now acting to Seraphina's advice he found himself in fashionable tights from top to toe. His hat gave him the headache, his imported suit made his heart ache, while his polished boots almost caused him to cease locomotion. From this time there were no more psalms sung at the homestead, for Patty seemed to catch the spirit of her youthful step-mother, and psalms and hymns were voted unfashionable. Former companions were invited from the village to spend days and weeks at the now inviting farm house, while Uncle Silas now and then found that it was very hard to get along without drawing funds from the institution where he used to make deposits. If he attempted to retrench Seraphina told him fine but not welcome tales of how others lived in the village or the city, usually ending with a request for more means to help her to support the fashions.

Poor Uncle Silas! scarcely a year went by after his second marriage before all his former dreams of bliss in the society of his handsome young wife vanished, and deep sighs of regret would well up from his heart when he thought of his plain home and the unfashionable wife of his youth; but it was too late to recall the past now, and a few years later Uncle Silas did not have to torture himself into fashionably fitting suits of broadcloth, for he too went to rest under the old apple tree by the side of Aunt Debby; while Seraphina sold what remained of the estate and returned to her paternal home a few thousands richer for her mercenary marriage.

Patty—we beg her pardon,—Miss Martha Bisbee became the wife of one who was worthy, but our pen refuses to indite that she was a type of her mother; the renovated brown house and the influence of the young step-mother had made her also fashionable. Wealth with those individuals produced a very different effect from what it did on Aunt Debby, and I opine from what would have done on me,—for all the love I have for gold is based on the fact that it emancipates the owner of it from the thrall of fashion.

MODERS AND GOSSIPS
ARE NEVER WELCOME ANYWHERE.

"If ever I wished, prayed for the entire extermination of any fraternity of human beings," said Mrs. Pease, "it is of that class called idlers, hangers-on, engaging in no honest calling themselves, they don't seem to even imagine that anybody else has anything to do but to listen to their tales of woe and sorrow and poverty. There never does one of these human vampires enter my domicile but I begin to feel the strength of Samson coursing through my muscles, and I can hardly control them from ejecting the intruder from my sight by giving her the benefit of the fresh air. Just as an industrious person grasps her sewing and begins to employ her time profitably, I should like to know what right these idlers have to break in upon you and begin their daily round of rehearsing all the ills that flesh is heir to."

Mrs. Pease was a dressmaker, trying to assist her husband to prosperity, and as she uttered the above sentence half aloud she laid her baby in the cradle and took her work that she might gain time while he slept, when as if in confirmation of her words, in comes Mrs. Chaffee without even the ceremony of a ring at the door-bell. "The needle drops nervously from her right hand, and with her left she grasps the side of the cradle and rocks it with such force that one might think steam power had been suddenly applied."

"The baby sick?" exclaims Mrs. Chaffee interrogatively.

"Yes," says Mrs. Pease, and a chill creeps over her and her face lengthens to most unnatural dimensions, for past experience teaches her that an icy bath in January could not be more ungrateful to her feelings than will the coming remarks of Mrs. Chaffee.

"Why, bless me! he is sick," ejaculates the caller, pulling down the bright patchwork quilt that till now lay so cozily over the little sleeper.

The cool air coming in contact with the restless one's face, his resentment is shown by a shrill cry that thrills through the mother's nerves as does a spark of electricity along the charged wire.

"How pale he looks, Mrs. Pease!" she continues.

"O, what a feeble cry! Poor little thing! (Mock sympathy.) I guess he's not long for this world. Mrs. Patten's baby was taken sick the other night—just about his age, and looked very much like him."

"How is he now?" questions the mother with a trembling lip.

"Oh, he's dead," replies the caller; "died that same night." Mrs. Chaffee cringes about as much feeling as though a defunct dog was the theme of conversation.

The mother, after a strong mental effort, recovers sufficiently to say—"Oh, Willie was so very sick—only got a little cold, he coughed and played with his pa this morning, but I got him to sleep."

"Is that all, Willie?" and the husband bursting

Mrs. Chaffee draws a long sigh (the hypocrite), and says dejectedly, "O, disease comes on so gradually sometimes in children, that they are grappling with death even while the inexperienced mother thinks they are recovering."

Mrs. Pease feels so strangely that she don't know whether she is going to be taken from the babe, or the babe from her, and she lifts it hastily from the cradle, clutches its feet to see if they are cold,—ascertains they are not, so she takes courage again and says with more firmness, "Well, if our little Willie is very sick we shall have the best of physicians; and I trust he will not die."

And now Mrs. Chaffee goes off on another track, saying, "Well, it would be better for the poor little thing if he should die now in his infancy—he would get rid of the hardships of this troublesome world." She wishes she had died when she was of his age, (Mrs. Pease wishes so too) for she has seen nothing but trouble and sorrow since she was born.—And it is my honest conviction that she never will see anything but trouble and sorrow till she leaves off gossiping and makes an effort to be useful in society. If she is poor what right has she or any other individual to idle away his or her time and monopolize the hours of others if they are too lazy or contemptible to make themselves useful? Let them for mercy's sake stay at home and leave others alone who have a mind to employ their time usefully and profitably—the time that God has given them to provide for their own necessities and to work in his vineyard, the great world where be one's situation in life what it may there is plenty for willing hands to do.

A word of advice to you, meddlesome gossip. Could you realize what an unwelcome guest you are in every one's home,—if you have one spark of self respect remaining you will stay beneath your own roof till time the great reformer makes you better. You never will go again to anxious watchful mothers who sit beside a sick or restless babe, and detail with a relish all the harrowing scenes your memory and imagination can furnish, like a quack doctor of the modern time who enumerates all the diseases in the calendar with a view to advertise his wonderful nostrum, some all healing Panacea which can cure every one of them.

Don't call on your industrious neighbors early in the morning, or indeed at any time, consuming all the best portion of the day in detailing all the minutiae of your domestic affairs, beginning with what you had for breakfast and ending with what you intend to do next summer if your husband has his salary raised. These things only bring you into contempt among the honest and industrious, and cannot cause you enviable reflections after such unprofitable visits.

It seems to me that the tongue of a gossip is endowed with more than common capacity. I have seen them talk, talk, till my half crazed brain was all of a whirl and almost unconscious that I was created for any other purpose than to hear their everlasting talk. I knew one once,—she was a Mrs. Buzz, and O! how she did afflict my poor Aunt Jane! I have known her to drop in of a morning when the thermometer was fast sinking to zero, and stand in the door way, between my Aunt's kitchen and the entry with her hands braced on her sides, and go on with her domestic rehearsal till my little nervous Aunt in her bewilderment seized the cat and tried to put her into the fire instead of the chestnut sticks that lay beside her,—hung a pail of water on the crane instead of the good old fashioned dinner pot, and then emptied into it the pan of mealy potatoes that were designed to grace the breakfast table.

A few minutes later Aunt Jane thinking only of present relief turned the contents of the sugar bowl into the baby's lap to prevent a medley of noises and feeling regardless of consequences so that she could stop misery from one source at least. At this moment Mrs. Buzz caught a glimpse of my uncle coming around the corner of the porch with a horse whip in his hand, and as if conscious of what she deserved she vanished so quickly that a close observer could hardly tell whether she departed serially or bodily into the road. Uncle came in and giving a scrutinizing glance around the kitchen he perceived the singed cat, the scorched water pail, and the baby's cheek distended with sugar he inquired who had been there. "Mrs. Buzz," meekly answered his little wife.

Oh, wasn't it well for Mrs. Buzz that she had the presence of mind to disappear when she did, for the muscular husband when he heard the name mentioned clenched tighter the whip he held in his hand, and I do believe that if the gossip had been before him he would in his anger have forgotten that she was of the opposite sex, thinking only of the fact that Mrs. Buzz made it a regular business to commence early every morning and make all with whom she came in contact as miserable as possible. Uncle didn't say anything more, at least not aloud,—but Mrs. Slater who sat at the further window—doing the family sewing said she heard him mutter an expletive that was never fashionable among the Puritans.

Well, after all, when I come to reflect seriously I don't know but I could forgive a female gossip; but a male gossip, one who will stop his business acquaintances in the street, seize them by the button hole and pour into their unwilling ears meaningless nothings that consume their time and keep them from their duties, bah! It is my private opinion that such individuals ought to change situations in life with some of those poor beings who pine away, victims to diseases that render them incapable of benefiting their race.

And O, gossip! male or female, especially don't you go into a printing office and afflict the poor editor who toils early and late to lay before the world new truths or draw new ideas from old facts. That careworn, brain-harrassed editor may carry a smiling face, for the fraternity generally are constitutionally polite; but believe me if you could read his thoughts when you are indulging in that incessant gabble and lounging about his office unemployed in anything useful you wouldn't feel flattered: so keep out of there unless you have reasonable business,—or if you do go into the office do your business promptly and pay full price for the newspaper that you extract from the pile on his table, remembering that he has to pay the paper manufacturer, his compositors, his correspondents, to say nothing of the rent of his office often an exorbitant one, and the support of his family, and—And—O! an editor's expenses and trials are too numerous to mention, so don't add to his ills by borrowing his papers and uselessly monopolizing his time.

I don't know that the editors will thank me for exposing these facts, for they are a patient race usually preferring to bear their trials in silence.

A few more words concerning Mrs. Pease and her caller, and our sketch is ended. Mrs. Chaffee stayed and talked till the mother's nerves were so unstrung that she had no relish for work and hardly any for life, for she fancied that if little Willie recovered now he was liable to be taken at any moment with some other disease and snatched from her with scarcely a warning. But oh! what a relief it was to her when her visitor left and she could indulge in tears freely. Half an hour later her husband opened the outer door whistling Yankee Doodle, but how quickly his time stopped and his countenance changed when he opened the door that led to his wife and babe, and now Mrs. Pease related the tale and remarks of the morning caller.

"Is that all, Willie?" and the husband bursting

into a loud laugh, for he believed in treating gossip in a different way from what my uncle did,—and he took little Willie in his arms who seemed suddenly to recover from his fatal cold, while the young mother began to think that half of the ills of life are imaginary.

An hour afterwards the recollection of Mrs. Chaffee's call had about passed away from the Pease family, for the husband's motto always was throw care to the winds.

THE TRUE MOTHER,
Or, Fast Young Men.

"A mother is a mother all the days of her life."

Reader, did you ever realize how much meaning there is in that line of an antique song? "A mother is a mother all the days of her life." We are speaking of the true mother, whose soul clings to her offspring with all the tenacity that it adheres to its hopes of Heaven. Watch the mother as she kneels beside the cradle of her babe; see her incline her delective ear to his half closed lips, that she may catch the echo of his soft breathing, and learn if disease be stealthily approaching, and if no fall monitor be hidden there, with what looks of love towards the sleeper does she rise and remove all obstructions to his slumber.

Denying herself the pleasure of meeting with her friends, she remains by his side, and by the gentle motion of the tiny rockers, woos him to longer rest. How her heart leaps with joy when some friend, who can read the mother's soul, praises the babe, and tells of his (all imaginary) wonderful powers! Comments on his broad forehead and piercing eye, his muscular strength for one so young, and prophesies that away in the future the infant will become a vigorous man both mentally and physically. Could the innermost recesses of that mother's heart become transparent now, how you would see love towards the speaker visible in every fibre of her frame! The true mother can never hate any one who loves her child.

Most of the best years of woman's life while in the meridian of existence are devoted to her family. Sickness and sorrow are borne for them almost without a murmur. For them she toils—her duties and cares endured cheerfully, asking nothing in return save encouraging smiles from those she loves. And does she always obtain the boon she craves?

Ah! would that I could say yes, but I cannot; for here is a type of too many after childhood has passed and they no longer wish to seek maternal care. The bright eyed little Benny is of commanding figure now, smokes aromatic cigars,—has raised a glossy imperial though of downy softness,—pays the highest prices for mint juleps and champagne,—in short he is a fast young man. Talks of his meek loving mother who sits lonely and late watching for his return, as the old woman who tries to be on the lookout for him now as she used to be in years gone by, and says with a swagger and an oath that she can't come it—he will go where he has a mind to and return when he pleases. Around him are a group as hopeful as himself, and together they swear and drink and smoke and tell how—we use their phrase—they pull the wool over the old women's eyes and will do as they have a mind to in spite of them.

O Benny! Oh, fast young men! did you ever see a pauper funeral or a pauper's grave? If you have I pray you may have the reflective organs large. I have seen a pauper funeral where the occupant of the half stained pine coffin grew prematurely old, and so deeply was I impressed with the scene that I inquired of one who stood near me—concerning his history. The stranger told me that the pauper was once a fast youth, who boasted long and loudly of his deeds of daring in lawless sports.

The sacred name of mother never passed his lips unless it was to tell his companions how he had outwitted the old woman, and made her believe that he went to church when he only went to the restaurant and partook of champagne and oysters; but deception will not last always. The bloodshot eye, the unsteady hand revealed a tale that broke the mother's heart, and then the youth quickened his speed in his downward course till white locks lay thin and scattered on the head that was once pilowed on a loving breast. The night winds alone had echoed his last sigh of agony, while his shrunken form lay stretched on the cold damp earth with no one to care for it—with no one to take it to its last rest save those who did it for hire and were paid from the city treasury.

Mothers! though your arduous tasks so lovingly performed do not bring gratitude from your children, shrink not from duty, for it cannot make you happier nor your child better to neglect him. Continue to use kind words to the wayward and make home attractive. It is my opinion that the sunshine of love will melt the hardest ice that ever encircled the human heart, but the length of time those flinty passions take to melt will depend very much on external influence. It is not necessary to have tapestry carpets on the floors, glittering candelabra, choice luxuries or gay society to make home pleasant. O no! begin early to let childhood enjoy itself in a childish way; don't be afraid to let empty noddles lie here and there on your well swept carpet, nor don't scold at Jenny because you see her mutilated little favorite scattering sawdust all about where you wish to keep it so nice and clean. You love your children—your labor for them,—yes, and would die for them if need be; so don't be too neat and drive them away from home for enjoyment. Remember that life is made up of little things; therefore make home to the husband and children the pleasantest spot on earth, for when once they stray away there are enough outside who envy others' happiness and will gladly show the husband, where wine can be bought cheap, or accompany the children to haunts where the sacred name of mother connected only with pure thoughts is never spoken.

This is sketch Number One on this subject; at another time we will talk this matter over again.

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