

MISUNDERSTOOD.

If death could write on every heart
The cause that drew its blood.
How many would be written o'er
With this; "Misunderstood"?

Lo! every deed has latent cause;
O critic, seek that first;
The laws of nature cannot change—
The weak are not the worst.

Should we condemn the tiny flower
Which blooms upon the hill,
Because the mighty oak above
Remains a monarch still?

A law divine demands the oak,
Nor less demands the flower.
Shall we, in passing 'neath the one,
Ignore the varied power?

Creating weak and strong alike?
Look deep, O man, and know
That God hath formed our minds too small
To know as He doth know.

The feeling of a human heart
Are far too vast and grand
For other hearts to stand aloof
And boast: "We understand."

Ye cannot know each other's hearts:
The mold of each he breaks,
And forms anew the clay and mold
With every heart He makes.

Then why should man, a finite work,
Be bold and quick to say:
"I grasp the all of yonder man;
He, too, is formed from clay?"

—EUGENE ASHTON.

SURSUM CORDA!

The ceremonies were over, the flowers were fading, and Decoration Day was drawing to a close. The crowds who had thronged the paths of the National Cemetery were fast disappearing, and the train just leaving the little station was filled to its utmost capacity.

In one of the cars an elderly man of imposing presence, wearing the uniform and badge of the Grand Army, and a young army officer, whose face was a youthful counterpart of the other's, sat side by side.

Just before the train pulled out a woman passed down the aisle. The worn face gave pathetic evidence of past beauty, and the rusty garments of bygone elegance, while the tiny empty basket she carried proclaimed her accomplished errand. She glanced wistfully from side to side, but every seat was occupied. The young officer rose, and with a bow proffered his own.

She gave him a grateful glance and a gentle "Thank you," as she slipped into the desired haven.

The elder man glanced at her casually, then more intently, and finally, leaning toward her, said in a low tone, "Laura!"

The woman started, and half rose from her seat. "John, is it really you?" she gasped. They gazed at each other in silence, shocked at the changes time had wrought.

"I thought you were dead—at Wilson's Creek. They told me—"

"I left part there," replied the man, glancing down at his empty sleeve. She shrank back a little, noticing it for the first time, and her eyes grew wide and dark.

"It seems but yesterday," she said; "the longing and suspense and pain—"

"And yet you could send me away." "Ah, I was angry! You were on the wrong side—"

"The other side," he corrected her, with a faint smile. She acknowledged the correction with a smile still fainter.

The winning side—and my heart was sore; but I thought it would break, afterwards.

"Yes, yes; I know!" he sighed.
"I have scattered my roses every year, thinking that some might fall on your resting place. In those old days when life was hard to bear it eased the pain to think so."

"And now?"
"And now," she continued with a tremulous smile on the faded face that unconsciously belied her words—"now the pain and anger are gone, with the love that gave them birth. There remain only ashes."

Suddenly she leaned forward with tense features and parted lips. The young officer was coming down the aisle. Something in the swinging step, the carriage of the shoulders, and the handsome boyish face, stirred her heart.

"Almost home father," he called cheerfully.

There was a trace of awkwardness and embarrassment in the elder man's manner as he turned to his companion. "Allow me to introduce my—my son, Lieutenant Keith." He drew himself up and squared his shoulders, all embarrassment lost in fatherly pride. "Jack, Miss Hollywood is a very old friend."

She looked up into the smiling face bending over her, and her words came slowly: "I used to know your father when he was about your age. You are very like him—very like."

The lights of the city were all around them, the train was slowing up, and people were gathering up their wraps and bundles. Turning to the elder man with sudden resolution, "I am going back to my old home tomorrow," she said, lingering on the words with tender longing. "It is not likely that we shall meet again. Let me wish you good by now, and God bless you—and yours."

For a moment their hands were clasped; then she flitted through the crowd and was lost to sight.

"Who is the old party, father?" inquired the young officer carelessly.

"Old!" He roused himself with a deep sigh. "Well, I suppose she is old; but when I knew and—in Kentucky she was the toast of two countries!"

Through the crowded station a woman made her way. "It is wrong, wicked," she murmured and her eyes grew dim; "but I wish—yes, I almost wish that he had died instead!"—L. N. Pritchard. In the Munsey for June.

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