

## Poor's Corner.

### Words Over a Grave.

Did she suffer long? Oh yes! and 'tis best  
To wipe our tears when such weary ones rest;  
Fond hearts watched o'er her for many a day,  
Lest life's torn petals should fall to their clay;  
But they fell to their clay.

Did she sorrow to live? When her husband was  
near,

There lay 'neath her eyelid an unshed tear;  
But it trickled not till her boy drew nigh,  
And asked his pale mother never to die!  
Never to die.

Did mind flit from her, with death afar?  
And left it, the gate of the grave ajar?  
While tenantless life outlived as before,  
Was the shadow of mind thro' that open door?  
Through that open door.

No! praise to Jehovah! for mercy thus shown,  
The light and its shadow at once were withdrawn,  
Yet she trimmed her Faith ere she went away:  
God grant there was oil in the lamp that day—  
In the lamp that day.

The funeral train like a gulf-stream wound  
Through the ocean of life that was heaving around,  
In silence it moved as the wreck they bore;  
Where the grave-stones pebble the church-yard  
shore—  
The church-yard shore.

We lingered long by that cold grave side,  
While back to the world swept the funeral tide,  
Far from the death-beach it ebb'd away,  
Nor missed from its bosom a drop of spray—  
A drop of spray.

And must dust absorb it? Ah, no! if she shone  
Among Christ's jewels—a precious stone—  
When judgment shall open the grave's rough shell,  
She may be a pearl—but we cannot tell—  
We cannot tell.

### An Episode of the War.

"If you had a brother there, I could understand it; or if you were going to nurse some old friend; but, as it is, I must say, Sara, this sudden resolution of yours seems to me a very wild goose scheme," said Mr. H— to his sister-in-law, as they walked before a handsome summer residence in the gray twilight of a quiet and pensive autumnal afternoon.

"Every Englishman is a brother to me, and a friend also, in one sense," answered Sara, gently yet firmly; "and you well know, George, that my resolution is not a sudden one by any means. Besides, you must recollect how many things have occurred to make me feel that it is right for me to undertake this duty. Remember how peculiarly I have been fitted and prepared for the work. You can not have forgotten that terrible accident at the coal-pits, and how much of the care of the sufferers devolved upon me. And then that awful cholera time! Oh, George! you cannot but feel that, far from embarking in a wild goose scheme, I am only following a course which, without any seeking of mine has been pointed out to me."

"But you seem to forget, Sara, it was your own people whose sufferings you relieved, and that the accident took place on Henry's estate. Again in that cholera time—awful you may well call it—all the sick were known to you; they were your brother's tenants. You have visited them in their own cottages, had made intimate acquaintance with every man, woman, and child among them, before those who were taken ill had been removed to the Hall—a rather Quixotic proceeding, as I still think it was, on Henry's part; but, of course, he is at liberty to do what he pleases. Yet, Quixotic as I have always thought him, I am really very much surprised that he should give his approval to such a scheme as this. What he and Edith can be thinking of to allow you to go, passes my powers of comprehension!" And here the worthy gentleman shook his head, and quickened his steps in proportion as his vexation rose higher, while glancing at the handsome but delicate-looking woman walking by his side, and thinking how unfitted she was, alike by nature and gentle nurture, for the scenes she must encounter in the hospitals at Scutari.

"What Henry and Edith are thinking of," said Sara, "I can readily tell you. They are thinking that I ought not to shrink from a work for which I have been, as it were, educated. They feel that, in becoming nurse, I am not forsaking duties of more paramount importance. They know, by experience, that I have strength and nerve sufficient for any demands that are likely to be made upon either. They have seen that it was not without a struggle I made up my mind at first, but that afterward I considered it the greatest privilege that had ever been bestowed upon me to be allowed to join that devoted band of women who are using

all their energies in the noblest work in which woman can be engaged." And while Sara spoke her deep-blue eyes brightened, even though they were filling with tears, and her mouth quivered with emotion. But she hastily wiped away her tears, and resumed her expression of calm composure, when her brother-in-law, in a slightly sarcastic tone, replied,

"Oh! if you are going to fly away on your enthusiastic wings, you must excuse me from attempting to follow you. I only profess to look at the common-sense view of the matter; and notwithstanding all your arguments, you have failed to make me see the propriety of an English lady, brought up as you have been in the midst of every luxury, and carefully guarded from the sight and sound of everything which, for one moment, might shock a woman's delicacy or refined taste, voluntarily exposing herself to the chance—nay, the certainty—of witnessing scenes which ought never to pass before her eyes, and hearing expressions which ought never to enter her ears. You do not know what soldiers are, Sara. You have no conception of the sort of conversation which takes place among them; you can not possibly form any idea of the wickedness and ribald conversation of their camps and barracks; and you must not expect that because they have been wounded, because they have lost an arm or a leg, they will be transformed into different men. On the contrary, it is in the midst of sickness and suffering that character often shows itself most clearly; and what the real character of most of these men is, I am certainly better able to judge than you. It is very different, let me tell you, from a lady's *beau ideal* of a *preux chevalier*. Then, when they are beginning to recover! Good heavens! that you should be exposed to the chance of hearing their coarse jests, their profane language! No; the more I think of it, the more I am convinced that you are all wrong. Your motive is a good one, but you will forever repent the delusion into which it has led you."

"If I had not prayed often and earnestly to be guided aright," answered Sara, in a low and reverential tone; "then, perhaps, I might have doubted whether I was not undertaking something which was beyond my powers, and out of my province. But ever since it was proposed to me to offer myself—you must recollect that the suggestion, in the first instance, did not come from me—I have met with every encouragement to proceed. I am not blinding my eyes to what I shall have to encounter. And if it should unhappily be as you say, it will only make me feel that it would have been far worse if women had not been there, in some degree to check it by their presence. As for the recollection of it, I have no doubt that it will very soon pass away from my memory."

"All very well, Sara, if there were not others better qualified for the work than you. Far be it from me to wish that our brave wounded men should not all have proper attendance and attention given to them. But this will be much better provided for the people who have been regularly brought up to the work—proper hospital nurses, endowed with more physical and mental strength of a certain kind than English ladies can boast, or indeed, I for one should wish to see them possess. You think, perhaps, you are doing these soldiers a kindness by going out to wait upon them. You fancy most likely that some of them will be gratified by the attendance of *real* ladies. You will find out that all this is nothing but a species of self-deception. Depend upon it, our soldiers will much prefer being taken care of by people selected from their own class of life, and will only feel awkward, uncomfortable, and constrained, under the nursing of persons so different in every way from those to whom they are accustomed."

"Oh, George! if there were a sufficient staff of proper hospital nurses, I should never for a moment have thought of offering my services. Do you fancy that it costs me nothing to leave this dear place, and still dearer friends? Do you think I would, for a moment, have acceded to the wish of those who have asked me to bid farewell for a time, we know not how long, to all that makes life pleasant or lovely, if I had thought there were others better qualified for the work than I? It was the conviction of the want of such properly-qualified people which mainly induced me to think of becoming a hospital nurse. Surely, if the common run of nurses are spoken of as 'persons accustomed to drown disgust in brandy,' they can not be the right description of people to send out as attendants upon our wounded men. Believe me, that, after all, arduous though our duties may be, they will not be half so trying or distressing as you are apt to imagine."

And Sara looked at her brother-in-law with a cheering smile on her face, which ought to have chased every doubt and cloud from his mind, if he had not been so wedded to his common-sense notions—and something more than common sense is needed to understand the motives which prompt to such undertakings.

"But consider what your going out entails," he continued; "you are obliged to take a servant to cook for you, and wait upon you, and separate accommodation must be provided for you; whereas, had common hospital nurses alone been sent out, they would have required no better quarters than such as the wounded men have assigned to them; and if they themselves had been attacked by sickness, they would not have felt the want of comforts which to ladies are indispensable."

"In that case we shall have our own servants to wait upon us, and they will see that we want for nothing that is really necessary. Besides, they will be able to give us help in many things, such as preparing little remedies for the sick, and assisting us in our care of them in more ways than I have to tell you of just now," said Sara, looking heartily weary of the discussion.

"Well, my dear Sara, I suppose a wilful woman must have her way. I am sure you will believe that, although I have thought it right to tell you some of my objections (I have still several others left, which I may give you at some future time), I fully appreciate the generous devotion and unselfish enthusiasm which induces you to leave a happy home, and friends who dearly love you, in order to go and soften the sufferings of our brave fellow-countrymen by your presence and care."

So saying he held out his hand, and fondly was its pressure returned by his sister, though the only words she spoke were:

"Ah! George! the sunshine of my life is over. It is long since I was made to know that I must try to live for the many, instead of devoting myself only to one. You understand me now."

Shift we the scene. Time has passed, and with it many brave souls have been borne on the sulphurous smoke of cannon from a field of blood to the judgment-seat of God. An awful change!—The battles of the Alma, Balaklava, and Inkermann, have been fought, and before the yet unbattered walls of Sebastopol a decimated, but undaunted army, lies intrenched. To the desperate and tenacious valour both of Frank and Anglo-Saxon, let the ravages of famine, pestilence, and war bear undying testimony. But, alas! the ends by which such glory is attained only put our civilization and Christianity to the blush. History dares not record, and the world strives to forget them.

History does not tell how many of France and England's bravest soldiery die with curses and imprecations on their lips, and murder in their hearts! History does not tell of the grief, anxiety, and final despair of widowed wives and orphaned children! History tells not the tale of long-protracted suffering, to which death comes as a blessed boon! History does not tell how many stout yeomen would forfeit their claims, even to courage itself, to be once more at their own cottage firesides! History does not truly paint the agony of a single dying soldier on the field! But we can see him. Now he raises himself wearily on his arm amidst a heap of hostile slain—man and beast. The sea of battle has rolled over the adjoining hill, and is hidden from his view. No succor is near. Mercy has mantled her face for very shame. Yet he fought like a Roman for his household gods in the very fiercest of that fiery charge! Damp dews are on the ground. His wounded limbs are already stiffened with cold, and the dusky shadows of night—the precursors of death—are creeping on.

Hark! the tumultuous tide is borne hitherward again. But what mockery to him is that shout of victory! What cares he, at such a moment to see the red cross or the tricolor carried triumphantly into the heart of the enemy's ranks! His eyes do not glisten now at the sight of those retreating masses of disordered chivalry. The tramp of horses, and the thunder of artillery, are no longer heeded by him; for the heart of the dying soldier, if heart he has, is far, far away. Home, wife, friends, pass in dreary array, to haunt and torment him to the grave. There let him rest. The "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war" have faded away; and the realities of this royal pastime stand unmasked. They are ruin, despair, death.

Ay, Famine, Pestilence, and War, in the allied armies of France and England, have not left their work incomplete. Ship-loads of sick and wounded are taken from the scene of carnage. Tossed

upon the stormy waves of the Euxine during several days, many die before they reach their destined asylum. But vessel after vessel arrives with its freight of human suffering, and the great hospital at Scutari is speedily filled.

The noble women who left England to nurse the wounded soldiers were already engaged in their arduous labours. Sara, too, was there. She had soothed the last moments of many a sufferer, and now looked pale and wearied with unwonted exertion. The sight of their agony was almost greater than she could bear—far, far more terrible than she had ever anticipated. She, too, found that there were realities in war over which history silently draws a veil. Man can face the battlefield, but with all his hardihood and courage he will shrink from the hospital. Woman's fortitude is required there.

Yet Sara did not falter in her self-imposed task, though words in unknown tongues, shrieks of pain, mutterings of prayer, and even execrations were often her only reward. Though uncounted, mutilated forms, which once gloried in the perfection of manly strength and beauty, constantly met her eye, she still persevered with unswerving fidelity to the cause in which she was engaged. A deaf ear was never turned by her to the sufferer's entreaties, especially when they came from one of her own countrymen. The same sympathy, care, and attention was bestowed upon all.

On the day of which we speak, many new patients were brought into the hospital. It was a solemn and distressing sight. Here was a tall grenadier who had lost both his legs, and though he was now dying in great agony, no murmur or other indication escaped his lips. It was the stoicism of a Spartan hero! From the damp perspiration collected on his forehead, you might conceive somewhat of the agony he endured.

Another near him—in the wild delirium of fever—fancied himself in a cavalry charge, trampling down the enemy's infantry, while he shouted again and again as in the frenzy of the fight. Further on, might be heard shrieks or low convulsive moanings, which told their own tale. A few seemed resigned to their fate, and others were silently praying their last prayer. Among these, was one brought in that same morning. He had been desperately wounded at Balaklava, and life was now fast ebbing away. Judging from his ghastly face and closed eyelids, he seemed unconscious of all around. He might have been thirty-five years of age, and was doubtless above the rank of a common soldier, for there was a noble appearance about his features, wasted and haggard though they were with suffering, which would have arrested the attention of the most casual observer.

"Who is he?" whispered one of the nurses to Sara.

"Which one?"

"There. He opens his eyes and seems to be looking at you. Do you know him?"

She half uttered a shriek.

"Why, what's the matter?"

But Sara was on her knees by the bed side. And while her companions were wondering at her emotion, she had placed her arm around the sick man's head, speaking fondly, passionately, and, as they fancied, incoherently to him. His eyes, turned with a troubled expression toward her, rested there long ere they betrayed any sign of recognition. At last the light of memory flashed over the features of the dying man. He could not speak, but he smiled; and it was a smile that death could not banish from his face. The struggling spirit had quietly severed the silver cord that bound it to earth even then, and the sobs of the kneeling woman were not needed to reveal the secret of a long cherished but hopeless love.

VICISSITUDES OF FORTUNE.—A writer in the London Economist sums up a very able article on Napoleon III, as follows:—

The same man who landed at Boulogne in 1840, with a single steamer and a few friends, on a desperate and abortive expedition, revisited it in 1854 to review a large army and receive the homage of countless spectators. The same man who, six years ago, lived in obscurity in London, scarcely able to pay his tailor's and quite unable to pay his horse dealer's bill, whom many looked upon as stupid, and whom none looked upon as wise, of whom few augured well, and whom few would trust much—we have just seen receiving the visits and compliments of the consort of our queen, entertaining three royal guests at his table, one of them the son-in-law of the very monarch whom he had succeeded, and admitted beyond all denial into the social circle of royal personages. Nor is this change in his singular fortunes the only one, nor perhaps the greatest. We can now imagine him smiling with even a