

Poetry.

THE SEA IS ENGLAND'S GLORY.

The Sea is England's glory,
The bounding wave her throne,
For ages bright in story,
The ocean is her own.
In war the first, the fearless,
Her banner leads the brave,
In peace she reigns as peerless—
The Empress of the Wave!

The Sea is England's splendour,
Her wealth the mighty main;
She is the world's defender,
The feeble to sustain.
Her gallant sons in story,
Shine bravest of the brave;
Oh! England's strength and glory
Are on her ocean wave!

Thou loveliest Land of Beauty!
Where dwells domestic worth;
Where loyalty and duty
Entwine each heart and hearth.
Thy rock is freedom's pillow,
The rampart of the brave;
Oh! long as rolls the billow,
Shall England Rule the Wave!

Select Tale.

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

I am an old man now. Time has almost done with me. My limbs which once did their work so well in supporting my youthful frame, now totter under their weight, and my vision is now so dim that all nature is but an indistinct shadow to me. And among the scattered grey locks upon my head there remains only here and there a raven hair to tell of the youth now past and gone—sad remembrances of hours which can never come again!—and I soon shall sink into my grave, as others have done before me, forgotten, unknown, save to a few whose heart will still sadden at the recollection of me. Think not, dear reader, that these are the querulous complaints of an old dotard, whose last act is an effort to bring himself into notice that his name may live after him. It is not so. I do not murmur. I am well content that so it should be. I have a better object than the mere seeking of the "bubble reputation." I want to do you some good before I leave the world. Excuse, then, the simple style of an old man who has forgotten all his flowers of rhetoric, and whose first attempt at authorship is made when he can not even be inspired by Nature's beauties, when his head is bowed 'neath the cares and sorrows of seventy winters; but who, notwithstanding, has still a heart warm for those who yet stand upon the threshold of life inexperienced in the troubles and also with the joys which maturer life brings with it.

My life has not been an eventful one: the same path which I have trod others have trod before me. I have climbed its steep, and toiled in the burden and heat of its day; but I have, too, walked in its pleasant valleys, and been refreshed by its cooling streams. Occasionally a serpent has crossed my path, an adder has stung me. Sometimes a flower has smiled before me in all its beauty, and when I plucked it I have found treacherous thorns; but I do not forget the flowers without thorns which gave to me nothing but pleasure. There was, however, a turning from this well-beaten track—a passage in my life's history which redeems it from monotony, and which may win you as a listener for a little while. This one passage which, through a long vista of forty-nine years, quivers this aged frame with a sickening horror, will send a thrill through your young hearts which will be recompense sufficient for any trouble on my part.

My life began in the State of Georgia, where my father owned a large plantation. He had started in life with but little, but by those strange turns and quirks of fortune had amassed an immense property. It is not worth while while as it has nothing to do with my story, to enter into a description of the personal appearance, character, and mental qualifications of my dear father. Suffice it to say, that he was a noble, high-souled Southerner, warm-hearted and generous to a degree which, had Dame Fortune been less constant, would have made and left him a beggar. It might with truth have been said of him that he was without littleness of feeling, and it makes my heart swell with honest pride to call him father.

My mother! Oh, what streams of tenderness flow in at the very name, refreshing and making me young once more! What do I not recall of her that is beautiful and loving!—with her soft brown hair, and smooth pure brow, traversed, even as I first remember it, by lines of care; the deep eyes, too, with the shadow over them, showing that life had not been without its strifes to her.

She had rejoiced in the birth of many children; but bud after bud had dropped unblossoming from the parent tree until I alone was left, and upon me was lavished all the tenderness of her loving heart. There was one other member of our family whom I must mention; it was a ward of my father's—a young orphan girl, left to him by an intimate friend when she was but an infant. She was the only being who ever attempted to rival me in the affection of my parents, and we loved each other too fondly for jealousy. From being a pure, fairy-like little being, like, indeed, to a fair flower, we called her Lily. The name suited her well; she was just one to smile and rejoice in the sunshine but bend and droop before the storm. She was afraid of everything; and I do not believe that any soldier's heart ever throbbled in the excitement of the battle-field with more pleasurable emotions than did mine when Lily would look to me for protection against any imaginary danger. Sometimes it was a rabbit, as timid as herself; sometimes merely a stump, which, in her eyes, was certainly an old and very ferocious man; and sometimes it was but a harmless denizen of the poultry-yard walking toward her. These dangers did not, it is true, require any exercise of courage to enhance their pleasure to my boy's spirit; but it was real happiness to feel that I was looked to for relief, and I felt myself a man in giving it. Thus our happy childhood passed away, with not a cloud to obscure its brightness, until I was fifteen years old and Lily twelve. Then it was thought advisable that I should go from home to school, and take my first lesson in the minds and manners of my fellow-men. I shall never forget our grief in the separation; how Lily clung around my neck, and sobbed as if her little heart would break; and how my dear father took her in his arms, and laughingly bade her cheer up—that Willie would soon come home a man, and she should be his little wife. I saw the surprised eyes and blushing face of the little girl, heard my father's hearty laugh, and I started off into the world with a new idea in my head, and a new love in my heart. The suggestion was never absent from me afterward.

I looked upon her with different eyes, and peopled dream-land with her image. We wrote to each other; and when I went home at my vacation I found her grown more lovely, but I was conscious of a change in her manner to me. In her letters she would recall old scenes and bring up old associations, but when in actual presence she would avoid all renewal of them. If I wanted to walk she was sure to be in an industrious mood; if I proposed a private and confidential conversation, there was sure to be an interesting passage in some book which I must read to her. She was ever ready with an excuse, some device to prevent a renewal of our old familiar intercourse. With my father and mother she was the same mischievous playful child; but with me she was suddenly transformed into the grave, dignified woman. Her manner puzzled, annoyed, and distressed me.

It was the day before I was to start for Europe, where I must stay for two years. I had tried in vain to find an opportunity to tell Lily of my feelings toward her. With the utmost freedom, as I had been accustomed to do from a child, I told my mother every thing. It was my first real sorrow. Even now I feel the pressure of her soft hand smoothing my cheek as she tried to comfort me. It would be different. Lily was shy; I had grown so tall, and she had lost my identity with the Willie of former years. She advised me to seek an explanation. As I left her room I met Lily crossing the hall. I went up to her, and said, in a playful way, "Come, Lily, I want you to go to walk with me this last evening. We will awaken a host of recollections by a stroll in the grove. Now go get your bonnet, and come on?"

"Indeed, Willie, I can not go this evening. I am sorry to deny you, but I must finish this piece of work."

I was provoked, and said, almost angrily, "Lily, you are capricious, and, I almost believe, cold-hearted; I never did see any body so changed."

She looked at me in astonishment. The crimson tide rushed over her neck and face until the very roots of her hair seemed set in blood. "It is you who are changed," she said. "You are suspicious of me. You will not be my brother Willie any more. And I am to be tormented from year's end to year's end because I can not—" She stopped and hid her face in her hands, the flush upon her cheek deepening more in shame than anger. I drew nearer to her, but before I could touch her she had flown up the wide staircase, and I heard her door slam. The mystery was to me solved; she loved me only as a brother, had fathomed my wishes, and wished to avoid giving me pain. I started off with a heavy heart. My disappointment was a bitter one; but in my heart I had to acknowledge that she had acted rightly.

From Paris I wrote to her, telling her I appreciated her motives. I never received an answer to my letter; indeed she never got it.

It was far from my intention, dear reader, to make this a love story; and, after all, this is but to act as an introduction to the one grand event I have promised to tell you of. Neither is it my intention to give an account of my travels in Europe; what I saw there other travellers have seen, and put down in books. My heart was not in them.—My two years was spent in wild longings to get home. I had not been able to shake off or change the feeling I had for Lily. In spite of my most desperate efforts I had to acknowledge that I was still hoping on. I tried to improve myself in every thing, and did improve; it was all in the hope that her sisterly affection had worn out in my absence and would give place to another and tenderer feeling. She was the nucleus around which all my feelings clustered; in her all my thoughts centred. I mingled in society, but the dark-eyed daughters of Italy, and the sparkling vivacity of the French woman, only brought them into comparison with the infantine loveliness and infectious mirth of the companion of my boyhood, and I turned from them in utter dissatisfaction at the contrast.

Well, those two years flew by on leaden wings; but they passed at last, and I gladly returned home. I waited a day in New York, that my letter announcing my arrival might be before me.

It was a sweet, bright day in early May that I drew near to my father's house. The carriage had been sent some miles to meet me, and old Juba was winning my thanks and praises by his efforts to hurry me on my journey as much as it was possible. Every thing seemed to have been done with reference to my return; every where I recognized the hand of affection, and even Nature's self seemed to join in the general joy—the green grass, the smiling flowers, and the joyous note of the bird, all seemed to welcome me home. Oh, the magic of the word! My heart seemed to bound within me, and I could not restrain my disposition to leap from the carriage and return the greetings of my ebony friends with as much heartiness as they were given. Then came the silent embrace of my father, speaking more than volumes of words, and the tearful tenderness of my mother, as she thanked God for bringing me safely home. All this was happiness indeed, but I looked beyond. Behind my mother stood Lily, looking lovelier than ever, in her dress of skye blue, falling in such graceful folds around her slight but beautifully rounded figure. Her cheek was a little paler than when I left, but there was a light in her eye that made my heart bound. 'Tis true, she was dignified still; but there was a shy, timid consciousness of the possession of feelings which she feared to betray. I was perfectly happy. I had never felt in such spirits. I laughed and talked in the wildest possible manner. At last we separated, or at least Lily left us, and my father, my mother, and myself sat down for a quiet talk. How well do I remember it! We were discussing the changes which had taken place during my absence, and forming plans for the future, when my father said, with rather a meaning smile, "And now, my boy, you must begin to look out for yourself a wife. We shall sadly want a daughter when our little Lily is gone."

I was thunderstruck. I felt as if crushed by a mountain weight. I looked from one to another in mute amazement. At last I managed to ask "What was it—what did he mean?"

"Why, has not Lily written to you, the shy little minix! I thought she would have told you. She went to Richmond last winter and brought back with her an elegant, fine-looking fellow, a Dr. Allen, and she has taken a fancy to the name. I think she is doing well, no doubt, but still I shall miss my little lady-bird sadly. Well, good-night Will, my boy—I am glad you are at home once more;" and the old gentleman picked up his candle and left the room. I do not know how long I lay with my head on my mother's lap, all my hopes blasted, my dreams at an end. Not one word was spoken; but softly, softly moved the velvet palm over my fevered brow. I closed my eyes. I felt that she was reading my heart. She knew its agony, and if anything could comfort me her silent sympathy did. Every now and then she would stoop down and kiss away the scalding tears which in spite of my manhood, would flow, and say, "Dear child!" or "My poor Willie!" But the long hours we sat there she never pried into my secret, only gave me her silent sympathy. At last we parted, and retiring to my room, I threw myself upon my bed and gave way to my bitter grief. I had never had such feelings before. Heart and brain seemed crushed by one stroke. The thick darkness of night was nothing to the midnight of my heart. For hours I lay tossing, groaning, and lamenting that I had ever been born. The many blessings I had were as nothing. What were they

in comparison with what was denied to me? Like a spoiled child, I disdained all my toys because there was one beyond my grasp. Oh, how is that night written deep on my memory—burning into my heart! No soft hand to soothe away the anguish, and, alas! I knew not where to find comfort when no earthly friend was near.

Hours must have passed before, exhausted by my overwrought feelings, I fell into a strange slumber—so deep, that I was unconscious of my own breathing and yet acutely conscious of objects around. I had my eyes closed, but I felt the darkness pressing upon their lids. It seemed as if even my heart stood still. So horrible were my sensations that I longed to rouse myself, but, like a person in a nightmare, I was unable to stir; so I lay until it seemed to grow lighter around me, and I heard James (the servant) enter the room. I heard him step carefully and noiselessly for fear of disturbing my slumber. I heard him stop, surprised, at the foot of my bed, at seeing me still dressed as I had been the day before. He seemed at first to hesitate about calling me. He would walk about the room, and then return to the bed as if there was something in my appearance which drew him there. I longed for him to touch me, and arouse me from my horrible nightmare. At last he came close to me and called, "Mass' William! Mass' William!" I did not move—I could not move. He laid his hands on mine. It was icy cold against his, and he rushed, horrified from the room. All this I felt, but could not move. Then I knew that I was in a living death. Oh, why was it that the agony at my heart did not send the curdling blood through my veins? But no; the same awful stillness reigned through my whole frame.—Oh, what would I not have given to raise a finger, move a muscle! I felt that I was indeed a living soul in a dead body. My hands lay crossed serenely over my breast, as if to tell of quiet within; my features, I felt, were placid and calm. My frame seemed no longer a part of myself. My soul writhed in agony and silence within its shell. I heard my mother's shriek, my father's groan; and there was another sound—it seemed like a wail of anguish from a breaking heart. Whose was it? And the imprisoned feelings quivered and shook with something between pleasure and pain, but they gave no outward sign. I heard the confusion about the house; the physician, the minister sent for; orders issued with the greatest rapidity, but each one heard and felt by me. I seemed to be a mass of feeling, and each circumstance vibrated painfully against the tightly-strung chord descending through my whole frame, and in its descent touching each nerve, sending through me a thrill of the intensest anguish, the most exquisite suffering, but there was the same awful stillness reigning without.

They gathered around my bed—my father, my mother, the servants, all—I heard their deep sobs. I heard the grief too deep for tears—so sudden, so lately in health, and now dead! I shuddered at the word; but the shell upon the bed was silent—quiet as ever. My mother's form pressed the bed beside me, her agony giving vent only occasionally in words such as

"Oh! had he been a child of God, I could have borne it; but death without hope!"

The doctor came. My eyelids were raised.—Through those half-closed portals I gazed once more on the faces I so loved; but my feelings gave no expression to those film-covered pupils. My vest was undone. I heard the dead declaration, in tones of deep sympathy, "No pulsation—all over!" I felt my mother fall lifeless beside me—I heard my father's frenzied expressions of grief, and I was left to be shrouded for the grave. It was done by the tender, loving hands of our own domestics, amidst many tears over "poor Mass' Willie," but this did not prevent the thrill of horror, doubly intense because it only touched within. I was laid upon my own bed, each limb straightened, each fold laid in its place; the windows opened, to prevent, as I shudderingly thought, the quick ravages of decay; and with many a sigh and many an expression of grief they left me alone with my own dead body—the cool breezes sweeping over my silent frame—the sun, in its garnish brightness, peeping in and mocking at my sorrow. I remember, too, a dove outside my window, whose mournful note seemed to goad me to madness. They would drive it away but it soon returned and sang to me that live-long day. And now I must think how I must stare the evil in the face. I must look beyond the grave, to which I would soon be taken. I do not remember that I had one hope of being saved from my living death. There seemed to be such a fixed immovableness about my body that I could not realize motion, and I half-believed myself dead. The recollection of my mother's agonized cry of "Oh, had he but been