

# The Carleton Journal.

SAMUEL WATTS, Editor and Proprietor.

VOL. XIII.

Our Queen and Constitution.

WOODSTOCK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1860.

TERMS, \$2 if paid in advance, \$3 at end of the year.

NO. 6.

## Poetry.

### THE SNOW SHOWER.

Stand here by my side, and turn, I pray,  
On the lake below the gentle grey,  
The clouds hang over it heavy and gray,  
And dark and silent the water lies;  
And out of that from midst the snow  
In wavering flocks begin to flow:  
Flake after flake,  
They sink in the dark and silent lake.

See how in a living swarm they come,  
From the chambers beyond that misty veil:  
Some hover awhile in air, and some  
Rush prone from the sky like summer hail.  
All dropping swiftly or sailing slow,  
Meet and are still in the depth below:  
Flake after flake,  
Dissolved in the dark and silent lake.

Here delicate snow-stars out of the cloud  
Come floating downward in airy play,  
Like spangles dropped from the gleaming crown  
That whiten by the milky way:  
There broader and bolder masses fall—  
The salted water makes them all:  
Flake after flake,  
All dissolved in the dark and silent lake.

And some, as on tender wings they glide  
From their chilly birth-land, dim and gray,  
Are joined in their fall, and side by side,  
Come clinging along their misty way:  
As if with friend, or husband with wife,  
Makes hand in hand the passage of life;  
Flake after flake,  
Soon sinks in the dark and silent lake.

Lo! while we are gazing, in swifter haste  
Stream down the snows, till the air is white;  
As, myriads by myriads, they descend,  
The things themselves from their shadowy height  
The fair frail creatures of mid-air,  
What speed they make, with their gossamer light,  
To lie in the dark and silent lake.

I saw in thy gentle eyes a tear—  
They turn to me in sorrowful thought;  
Thou thinkest of friends, the cold and dear,  
Who were for a time, and now are not:  
Like these fair children of coal and frost,  
That gladden a moment and then are lost,  
Flake after flake,  
All lost in the dark and silent lake.

Yet look again, for the clouds divide;  
A gleam of blue on the water lies:  
And far away on the mountain side  
A sunbeam falls from the opening skies;  
But the hurrying host that flew between  
The cloud and the water no more is seen:  
Flake after flake,  
All met in the dark and silent lake!

## Select Tale.

### THE WORD IN SEASON.

"Thank God!" said the widow Blake, as a friend communicated the information that her boy, a youth of sixteen, and an only son, had obtained a situation in the bank. Tears flowed from her grateful eyes, nor were they checked by the joyful exclamation of Wallace Blake, who came bounding into the room a few moments after.

"O, mother! such a splendid place! and five dollars a week!"

For ten weary years the mother had been toiling for her boy—yes, from the day the little child of five years was held over the coffin lid to look in on the cold, pale face, the loving eyes never to smile on him again, the gentle lips sealed forever. She had wept for him at school. She had many good chances to make him a shop-boy, but she wisely said, I will not buy his intellect with my ease, and kept him in the beautiful halls of learning till the day he was sixteen. Meanwhile a friend had been applying for a situation for the widow's son, and had at last succeeded.

"It isn't so much on my own account, I care," the boy said, on that happy day, more than sun-lighted for him, "but I do want to see you rest, mother. I want to see that face lose its old, care-worn look, and grow young and cherry again."

His mother smiled.

"Young, it can never grow," Wallace; but if thankfulness to God that he has blessed my efforts can make it more cheerful, it has already changed."

"Five dollars a week seems like a little fortune, mother," he said thoughtfully.

"Yes, to us who have been so straitened it seems a large sum. We shall need no longer to pinch and save so painfully. Besides, it may be but the beginning of greater things. Should you give satisfaction to your employers, Mr. N— says they will in time enlarge your salary, and it only his with you in preserving your integrity, to make the situation life long."

"O, never fear for me!" the boy's eyes shone as he spoke (pleasant eyes they were, with a depth of merriment in them,) but what I'll preserve my integrity. Prudence would enable me to that. I am too proud of my father's good name to do an unworthy deed."

Alas, pride is a poor safeguard, my child—it troubles me to hear you talk so. Only the love of Jesus Christ, only the principle emanating from that love, will enable you to preserve pure your spiritual garments. Wallace, I shall pray for you from henceforth as I never prayed before. You will be in the midst of new temptations, and I fear, my boy, that you have not yet given your heart to Christ, where only it is safe from the spoiler."

"Mother, I hope you don't doubt my honesty," said Wallace, his face growing flushed.

"Heaven forbid, my child! I have never doubted you, because you never gave me occasion. But home is a narrow sphere, where only loving angels seem to gather. Over the threshold of the Christian family the dark spirits of evil are fearful to enter. Out there, my son, in the brazen world, among men of various tempers and low habits, in the midst of confusion, hurry and turmoil, beset by the pleasures, wealth offers, by the alluring front that vice puts on—O there, the struggle will come, and if your soul is not safe in the fold of the Great Shepherd, who knows how the ravening wolves of sin will watch for and beset it?"

"Mother, you draw a dark picture," said the boy, almost shuddering.

"I love you so well, Wallace, I would not let you go unwarmed. O, my boy, seek first the kingdom of God and Christ's righteousness, and then I shall have but little fear for you." So his mother left the room, and the youth sat there alone. For a time he mused on her admonition, then came other and more ambitious thoughts and feelings, aspirations and longings, more of the world than heaven. To be rich, and in some manner great, had always been his fervent desire. He loved his mother, and was anxious to free her from care, to place her in a home of his own earning, to be to her all that a son

could be. He knew she longed to see him a decided Christian, but with many another, he put her earnest pleadings with—"There's time enough yet."

A few months saw great changes in the widow Blake's household. A luxuriant arm-chair had some how found its way into her little parlor—a carpet of bright colors usurped the faded remnant of better days—new books were occasionally brought home, and many papers laid upon the little table by the side of which the widow sat with her knitting. Wallace generally sat the evenings out at home reading to his mother or giving descriptions of his fellow-clerks.

"Augustus Hartley is a fine fellow," he said one night, "and very rich his father is. I wonder why he takes to me so, I'm sure I can't begin to dress as he does. I tell you he lives in great style, and they say his father paid something handsome to get him into the bank."

"What are his principles?" asked Mrs. Blake.

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"Very good I dare say; he's rich you know, and perhaps lives a little faster than some young men, but I assure you," he added, seeing his mother's countenance change, "I never heard an oath on his lips, and his manners are those of a true gentleman."

"If he is 'fast' as you call it," said the widow, gravely, "I think he is not fit associate for my son."

"Well, mother, there's no danger of any great intimacy. He is rich, and I am poor, so there's a barrier between us, but I must treat him civilly, you know."

"Of course I don't object to that," said his mother; and there the matter dropped.

In spite of the barrier, however, Wallace Blake gradually became intimate with Augustus Hartley. It was pleasant to accompany him in a leisure hour on a drive—it became gradually delightful to listen to his stories of gay life, the fascinations of places only known to him heretofore by name, and it was not long ere these things engrossed his thoughts, to the exclusion of his mother's counsel. One summer there came a pressing invitation to Mrs. Blake to spend some months with a sister, and as her health really required a change she decided to go. Her fond eyes had seen no difference in her son, save that he grew in stature and manliness, and perhaps, to her partial vision, handsome—like his father!

She did not feel the old dread now; it seemed to her as if Wallace could not be far from the kingdom he had lately grown so serious, so tender and gentle in his ways!

Thus it happened that Wallace was left alone, and at the end of six months his mother wrote that illness in her sister's family might detain her through the winter.

On the day that Wallace received this letter, Augustus Hartley wrote his depression.

"What's gone wrong?" he asked; you look as if you had just come from or were going to a funeral."

Wallace explained.

"Well, it must be hard to do without one's mother, when a mother is all one has. How in the world do you manage at home?"

"There is a good old lady there who prepares my meals; somebody my mother has taken in for charity," replied Wallace, "and it is all well enough except evenings, then I am lonesome."

"Shouldn't you like to be—that's rather hard society for a young fellow. I'll tell you what, Wallace, I've got a room to myself, and do you come around evenings. Why isn't all a prayer-meeting, old boy; you ought to see some of the sights! No excuses, you must and you shall."

For the sake of companionship, Wallace, allowed himself to be urged, and finally compromised the matter by dividing his evenings, Augustus to spend half at his desolate home. This agreed upon, this one step taken, the way, paved with so many good resolutions, was far more trodden, but it tended not upward. One barrier after another was broken, until Wallace had gone further than he dared confess even to himself.

Another year passed away, and again Mrs. Blake was summoned from home to spend several months. Had it not seemed to be her imperative duty, she would have preferred remaining with her son, for even her eyes were opened to the fact that something was going wrong.

He was, if it could be possible, more attentive to her than ever when at home, but many a long evening she sat alone. Lectures were so frequent through the winter months, and Wallace was a man grown. She could not as of old question him or command. She only grieved sometimes, thought and prayed the more, and did what was the best thing she could do, commended him fervently to God.

Again Wallace and Augustus were thrown almost constantly together, but a terrible stroke impended. Mr. Hartley died suddenly, and it was found that the report of his wealth was entirely fabulous; he left his family poor. This affliction had the effect to make Wallace cling yet to his other friend, and the young men became inseparable.

One stormy night in March they sat together—Augustus had been gloomy for several weeks, but now an air of buoyancy was observable in his demeanor.

"Wallace, said he, 'I have thought of a glorious plan. We might become rich you and I.'"

"How?" queried the other, in his matter-of-fact way.

"My uncle offers to invest money for us in the T. stock; says we can treble it and more, in six months."

"Yes, but where is the money coming from?" asked Wallace. "I have only what I earn from week to week, and what little I have put away for my mother—that is sacred."

"O, we could get money easy enough. As we are so sure of returns, why not borrow it?"

"I know of no one to borrow from; besides, if I did, I don't like the principles, it's a bad one."

"I'll tell you what would be a safe thing, returned Augustus; 'say we borrow, just borrow, you know, a couple of hundred from the bank, for a few months. The starting capital is what puts a man up; after that we go on the money we make.'"

"Borrow money from the bank?" echoed Wallace, and his face crimsoned, "you mean, take money without leave?"

"I mean with the intention to replace it; of course we could do that in a very short time."

"No," said Wallace, with decision; "that is dishonesty."

His companion gave him a peculiar look.

"You know how easily it could be done," he said, "and how easily returned; and he went on to argue the matter—held it up in all manner of lights, and contrived to place before him with so much skill the probabilities of ultimate success, that when they parted he was almost persuaded to do the deed of dishonesty. He went home rapidly that night, his brow clouded over. It was almost the time of his mother's return, but that thought now gave him no pleasure. When quite near his dwelling, some one touched him on the arm. It was strangely enough his mother's pastor.

"I recognized you by your walk," said the latter, "and thought I would speak to you. I have just come from the dying-bed of an old man—old Father Hartley, and he said to me, 'Tell the first young man you meet to keep the garments of his soul from the soil of sin. Every spot of impurity grows more indelible and harder to remove.' I did not know I should repeat my lesson so soon, but perhaps God has sent me. Ah, here is your home, good night."

Only a brief sentence, but how full of meaning, of warning to the soul it was spoken to! How rushed over his memory his mother's prayers, and pleadings, and warnings! She knew not how far he had gone from the days of his innocence, but God did. How terrible that prescience seemed to him now! He rushed up to his room in the darkness, writhing under the stings of conscience. The right word had been spoken at the right time, and God had set his seal to it. All that night Wallace slept none, and haggard and unfreshed, he lifted himself from his bed in the morning.

"Augustus," he said, as he met his friend, "I have decided to let that scheme alone."

"Perhaps you will turn informer," responded the young man, in an excited manner.

"No, not if you promise to have nothing more to do with it," was the reply.

"I shall promise nothing of the sort," said the young man, in the tone of one ill-used.

"Then you must not say another word to me about it," was the response of Wallace.

Things went on as usual, save in the intimacy of the young men. Wallace felt keenly that he had lost the confidence of his friend, but he had determined to set his feet on firm ground, and he could bear the cold looks and averted glances. One day the senior teller of the bank called him into the counting room.

"I regret to tell you that we find a deficit of one hundred dollars," he said sternly.

"Well, sir, and—"

"And in your account, sir. You need say nothing for yourself, for we have sufficient proof. Still, out of regard for your excellent mother, and friends who have been pleading for you, we shall take no steps to night the matter legally, nor shall we ever speak of it again; but, sir, you are at liberty to find another place."

The man would not listen to a word. He was one of those set, rigid persons, who make up their minds, and there the matter must end. Wallace left as if he had been struck. He turned mechanically, and like one in a dream, he reached his home. There was a trunk in the passage, a cherry basket, his mother had just arrived. She turned towards him with a joyous cry, but he—only sobbed—he had no heart to give away. "O, mother! mother!" and fell into her outstretched arms. He was a little child again, and she was soothing him. In a voice broken by anguish, he told her all his wrongs, steps he took up by one—all his errors of habit, and even of thought, until he came to what seemed just now his crowning sorrow. She heard him patiently, and with hope as well as tears, for she saw that God was lending him. In her own gentle way she soothed him, talking as only a god mother knows how. 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