

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

THE CHILD OF EARTH.

BY MRS. NORTON.

Death's hand is heavy on her dark'ning brow; Yet doth she fondly cling to earth, and say, 'I am content to die; but oh, not now!'

The spring has ripened into summer time; The season's viewless boundary is past! The glorious sun has reached his burning prime: Oh! must this glimpse of beauty be the last?

Summer is gone: and autumn's soberer hues Tint the ripe fruit and gild the waving corn; The huntsman-swift the flying game pursues, Shouts the hallo! and winds his eager horn.

The bleak wind whistles; snow showers, far and near, Drift without echo to the whit'ning ground; Autumn hath passed away, and cold and drear, Winter stalks on with frozen mantle bound.

The spring is come again—the joyful spring! Again the banks with clustering flowers are spread! The wild bird dips upon its wanton wing: The child of earth is numbered with the dead!

From Godey's Lady's Book for February.

LENA GRANT.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

It was an old brown house, standing about half a mile east of ours; I shut my eyes, and I can see it almost distinctly as I can see by opening them the butternut-trees waving solemnly in the summer wind.

There was nothing picturesque about the building; it stood all alone, with the moss growing thick on its blackened roof, and the blinds creaking backward and forward whenever the wind blew.

And so, Mrs. White, you have some new neighbours? 'New neighbours,' repeated mamma. 'I did not know it. Who are they?' 'Why, pray tell us, did you not know a family had just moved into the old brown house down here. They came last week. I can see them from our back windows. Nobody but an old woman and a little girl, however, seem to be around as yet. They, of course, can't be any-

body living in that old place, concluded Mrs. Miles, who had a penchant for wealth and high social position.

I sat there, turning over my drawings and listening to all this, half-indifferently, never dreaming what an influence the people of that old brown house were to exert over my future destiny.

One morning, about a week later, we had just taken our seats, and the school exercises were about commencing, when a little girl walked into the room. Every eye was riveted upon her as she went up awkwardly to the teacher's desk; for such another outlandish dressed Christian had never been seen in all Moss Farm.

There was a deep silence throughout the whole room until I caught Jane Davis's roguish eyes, and then there was no more control for my refractory risibles; I laughed outright. Miss Mervin gave me a reproachful look as she put out her hand to the child.

You are Mrs. Grant's granddaughter, Miranda, I suppose, she said, in those soft tones of hers, which must have found its way to any child's heart. 'Do you think you shall like to come to school here?'

I don't know, answered Miranda, rather sullenly, twisting her bonnet string.

Well, I suppose we must wait till you are better acquainted before you can decide about liking us. How old are you, Miranda? 'Twelve, next October.'

Then followed several questions respecting the girl's previous studies, in which, though not far advanced she evinced considerable intelligence. Miss Mervin assigned the new scholar her seat, and then requested her to hang her bonnet in the hall. Miranda's reappearance nearly upset my risibles again; her thick, red brown hair lay in bristling masses about her face.

There was little playing at recess; for the new scholar occupied all our thoughts that day. Harriet Morse, whose father was the richest man in all Morse Farm, declared, with a curl of her red lips, that she considered the rest of the girls insulted by having such a creature admitted to the school.

All this time, the object of these remarks stood at one corner of the school-house, looking sullenly toward the green where we were assembled to pronounce her verdict.

Three days had passed. The new scholar had been punctual in her attendance at school, and evinced considerable intelligence in her recitations; but she had in nowise advanced on the good-will of her companions.

New girls, can't we find some name that'll just suit her, something real odd and funny? asked Jane Davis, as we paused from our play in the late August forenoon, and sat down in the cool shades of the maple-trees.

How would Firebrand do? I suggested. 'I can never think of anything else when I see her flaming dress and red hair.'

The girls shouted loudly, and Jane Davis cried 'Good! Good!' From that moment, the cognomen was adopted.

'But where can she be?' I asked, looking at that side of the building where Miranda always stationed herself.

Suddenly, I saw Jane Davis start at some object back of me; I looked round and there stood the new scholar. She had heard all we had said; I knew this at the first glance into her wild, angry face. For a moment she stood still, glaring at us fiercely; then she started for the school-house, and as she hurried across the green, and the sunbeams fell on her red dress, she looked almost as if she were enveloped in a cloud of flame.

That night I went to sleep with swollen eyelids and a very heavy heart. The little golden head of Charlie, my baby brother, lay on a bed of sickness, which before the next morning was one of death. One day, he was sporting under the trees of Moss Farm—the next under those greener ones whose boughs wave in the winds of the eternal summer. Ah me! What a blank there was in the house when the little curly head danced no more through the rooms and the voice which was our daily joy was learning the songs which the angels teach the little children in the kingdom of heaven! His death, however, was to my heart what the May

rain is to the harvest; for the good seed came up afterwards.

The memory of every unkind act of mine to Miranda Grant came back in that time of heart-melting, which the bereaved alone understand to reproach me. I resolved to make ample amends to the despised child for all the wrong I had done her. Pity took the place of my former aversion, pity that almost grew into affection.

One night, I laid my head on my mother's lap, and told her all that had transpired between the new scholar and myself. She did not reproach me; she only strengthened my resolutions to let the future atone for the past. I did not return to school for nearly two weeks.— Aunt Lucy, my mother's sister, and Cousin Leonard came to visit us after Charlie went away. Dear Cousin Leonard! He was almost eighteen, and not my cousin after all, for he was the son of Aunt Lucy's husband by a former wife; but I loved him just as well.

Thank Heaven, whatsoever may be the defects of my character, infirmity of purpose is not one of them! I had resolved to conciliate Miranda Grant; and through every obstacle I was pretty certain to achieve it. I found on my return to school, her position there by no means improved; if it were possible, the aversion to her had deepened in my absence, and she was now universally recognized by the unflattering cognomen which I had bestowed upon her.

It was recess again; and the girls gathered under the cool shadows on the green, for the day was very warm.

There stands old Firebrand in that same corner! said Jane Davis. 'I should think she'd get a pretty good scolding in this hot sun.'

The girls laughed, but I looked grave and said; 'Don't Jane, don't make fun of the poor thing.' And when they looked up in surprise, I spoke further. I cannot remember what I said; but I know I was very earnest. I took most of the blame to myself in our relations with Miranda Grant. I pictured her unfortunate circumstances, with nobody to care for her but her old grandmother, her coming a stranger among us, only to be met with scorn and unkindness. 'Now girls, I'm going to ask Miranda to come here and sit with us. I hope you'll all speak pleasantly to her, and not make fun about her any more.'

School-girl's prejudices are the hardest in the world to overcome, for they are the result of feeling, not of reason; still, my remarks were not without effect. Harriet Morse only curled her lips, and said, 'If low people would stick themselves among their betters, they couldn't expect very good treatment.'

I went to Miranda; and my schoolmates drew near the green railing to watch our interview. The new scholar greeted me with a dejected glance, of which I took no notice.

Miranda, I said, gently as I could, 'its warm standing here in the sunshine: won't you go and sit under the trees with the girls?'

No, I won't! she answered fiercely. 'I know what you want me for; you want to make fun of me. Oh, I hate you, I do!' And she struck me by no means a light blow on the arm and then disappeared round the school-house in to the field behind.

The girls raised an indignant shout, and were about following the offender to inflict summary punishment, I suppose, when I eagerly stopped them.

Leave me to go alone, I said; I can manage it the best so. And they complied.

I found Miranda had taken shelter under an immense oak tree, which grew in a pleasant little lane just beyond the field.

Miranda, I said, coming suddenly upon her, 'I'm sorry you're so angry with me; but I want us to be friends now. What made you strike me so?'

She sprang up quickly, for she had seated herself on the grass; and her large wild eyes beamed like sparks of fire through the tangled hair she pushed from her face.

I don't believe you want to make friends with me, she answered; you want to make fun of me with the girls. I know you, and I hate you! I wish I'd killed you when I struck you just now!

Miranda, I answered calmly, 'it would be very wicked of you to kill me even if I meant to make fun of you, as you say I do; but why won't you try me this time, and see? You need not come again, you know, if I don't tell you the truth.'

You can't cheat me so. Didn't you tell the girls to call me Firebrand because I wore a red dress? Oh, I hate them, too! I hate everybody and everything in the world; and I love to hate them! But I'll strike you again if you don't go off and leave me.'

If you could have seen her inflamed visage, her small figure trembling with passion, and heard the angry words through her grated teeth, you would have pitied her, as most certainly I did; but I began to despair of success this time.

Well, Miranda, I said, 'if you won't believe me, I must leave you; for I don't want to be struck again. I know I called you Firebrand just for fun; and I've felt very sorry about it since. Won't you forgive me?'

The tears came into my eyes as I asked her. She looked on them, and an expression of won-

der came into her face; the angry flush went out from it. Her features worked a few moments as though she were struggling with herself; and then, with a heavy sob, she sank down on the grass. I went up to her and put my arms around her, for I knew there was no more danger; and, to tell the truth, I had stood a little in fear of her. How she cried there! Sob after sob came up from her heart and shook her little frame; and a fast torrent of tears rolled through her fingers. I laid her head in my lap, and stroked back the hair from her forehead.

We will be friends now, Miranda. She clung tighter to me, and sobbed, sobbed, as if her heart were breaking.

At last the ball rang. 'No matter,' I said. 'I will tell Miss Mervin we couldn't get back any sooner; and she'll excuse us. I'll go and get some water from the brook in one of these mullen-leaves: and you can wash your eyes.'

She lifted her head. 'I'm sorry I struck you,' she said. 'I'm sorry I said I hated you.'

'Well, we won't ever speak, ever think of it again. We're friends now, Miranda, you know.'

She smiled, and her eyes shone softly through her tears; for the first time, I thought they were pretty. We went back to school arm-in-arm; the girls stared at us—that was all.

That night Miranda Grant and I walked home together, for our dwellings lay in the same direction; and I had signified to the girls my wish to accompany her alone. She was very gentle, and really seemed to cling to me. We talked all the way; and I found she was quite intelligent.

'Don't call me Miranda,' she said; 'call me Lena. Mamma used to before she died; and her eyes brimmed with tears. Grandma does sometimes; but she's old, you know, and forgets when I ask her.'

'Well, Lena,' I answered, 'you see I'm your friend now; and I want the other girls to like you. If I were you, I'd curl my hair, for they like to see curls; it would look so pretty, you know.'

I had struck a chord that always vibrates in the heart of women.

'Do you think so? Do you really think so?' she said, with a sudden out-flashing of her deep eyes. 'I thought it was such red, awful hair.'

'No, it isn't; it is almost auburn, and if you would comb it out smooth, wet it, and then wind it just so round your fingers, it would curl beautifully.'

'Yes; following my manipulations with her eyes, I can do it. To-morrow, I will come to school with it all curled.'

We had now reached the point where our paths diverged. Lena flung her arms around my neck, and kissed me very fondly.

'I shall love you always,' she said; and I went home with a new song in my heart.

After supper that night, I was sitting under our apple-tree when Leonard opened the garden gate. He had been passing the day with Albert Morse, Harriet's brother; they were intimate friends, and expected to enter college together. Leonard came up to me and kissed me.

'You are a good girl, Maggie,' he said.

'How do you know I am? Because I let you kiss me just now? I shouldn't if you weren't my cousin, you know.'

'Then I'm a lucky fellow; and he flung himself on the grass by me. 'Maggie,' after a short pause, 'how many yards does it take to make a girl's dress?'

'What an idea Cousin Leonard! What in the world has set you to thinking about girls' dresses?'

'Oh, several things! Information on all subjects is valuable, you know; and if I should ever have any girls' dresses to get, it would be well to know how much it would take.'

'Well, couldn't you ask the merchant, then? Of course, the quantity would depend upon the fashion and the material.'

He clapped me on the shoulder, and looked into my eyes with his dark, roguish ones.

'Sure enough, Maggie, you've hit the right idea. I could ask the merchant; why didn't I think of it before?'

'So, your mind is relieved at last, is it, on the subject of girls' dresses? I said, laughing gleefully; and Leonard joined me, and the echo in the glen caught up our mirth and rolled it off to the mountain.'

The next day, Miranda Grant came to school with a complete metamorphosis effected in her appearance. The tangled mass of red-brown hair now lay in rich, heavy ringlets round her face and neck; she was really pretty. We began to discover this at last, and that her eyes could change from a soft, mellow brown into that deeper, warmer, darker splendour which is sometimes on the edges of sunset clouds.— That day, Lena went with me to the green; several of the girls spoke kindly to her. I cannot tell whether the curls or my example had the greater influence; but I am inclined to give the laurels to the former. Every one knows a school-girl's passion for the outward and visible.

It was evening again, or rather it was that beautiful time when Day marries himself unto Night; it was a beautiful hour, too, as the bri-