

POETRY.

ACROSS THE WAY.

"Have you no friends across the way?" My little city darling said;

"And when there comes a rainy day, Can I look out and nod your head To some one else, as I can do To Will and Fred and baby Sue?"

"But I have friends—dear friends," I cried, With quick, remorseful thought of home. A band of brothers, side by side, To greet me if I go or come.

How dear they are, I cannot say; Nor how it cheers me day by day To see across the valley far How strong and beautiful they are!

"And you should see the robes they wear— Their mantles thick and soft of green, Then rainbow-tinted, yet more fair, On ermine wraps with silver sheen.

But yet I think I love them best When, all in somber shawls and dress, Their broken ranks in silence lie, Beneath the solemn midnight sky.

"Sometimes a misty curtain draws Between us hides these friends from me; But when at sunset it is gone, Dear child, how fair the sight is! For where the nearer ranks divide, The gates of glory open wide; And lo! in that unearthly light The further hills transfigure quite!

White yet another and another, Peeps o'er the shoulder of his brother, And smiles through rosy mist and seems to say, "Heaven lies beyond us—such a little way!"

"Such friends are nice," she softly said, "For any one as old as you; And when I'm old and you are dead, Perhaps I'll go and see them too. But now I'd rather watch you see Children across the street from me; And nod to Will, and play peep-bo with cunning little baby Sue."

SELECT STORY.

AUNT STAFFORD'S LEGACY.

BY CHARLOTTE M. STANLEY.

"Earn your own living!" cried Ralph Stanton, earnestly, as he looked down with loving, pitying eyes, on the little, fragile, black-robed figure, standing, with an air of most pathetic patience, before him.

"No, no, Estella, that must never be. You are not fit for rough contact with the world, my child. How hard it is to those who seek to win a place in it unaided and unknown may you never know!"

"My position is a poor one yet—so poor that, had you any better prospect, I should hesitate to ask you to share it; but your prospects are altogether sorrowful, my dear. As my wife will at least have a home, however poor, and be sheltered and cherished by the heart that loves you best, instead of being exposed to the insolence and caprice of strangers. My gentle little love," he added as he took her tenderly in his arms, "how could I ever bear to think of you toiling alone? We will be married, dear, at once, in spite of your bad bernaissance; circumstances make our haste excusable; and we will be happy, too; will make our happiness, Essie, notwithstanding our poverty."

Essie never doubted that. She was the kind of woman for whom love makes up all the happiness of life. She nestled closely to her lover's breast. "Oh, could she but cling and rest there evermore!"

But she was as unselfish as she was loving, and her conscience told her that this must not be. "It would not be fair to you, Ralph," she said, with patient sweetness. "If I can't be a help to you, I won't be a burden, dear. When I promised to marry you, I supposed that Aunt Stafford would leave me the little fortune she talked so much about; you know she always taught me to believe so. I can't think why she should have deceived me. It wasn't like her to deceive. And in that case I should have helped you, not added to your difficulties. But when she died, we found that she had nothing except the annuity, which died with her. Even the furniture of the house had to be sold to pay her funeral expenses. Nothing was left for me but a great, big chest of clothes, most of them too old-fashioned to be of any use; and yet—yet—she seemed to attach the utmost importance to that stupid old chest. It was in her thoughts to the very last. 'For my niece,' she said to the clergyman and the friends who were with her—'the trunk and all that's in it for my niece.' And afterwards she whispered me—'It is your fortune. For aunts! I suppose that her mind was wandering at the last.'"

"I'm not so sure of that," cried Ralph eagerly. "She was a very eccentric woman, and did peculiar things sometimes; times it would be just like her to have hidden money in the old trunk. Why did you never tell me this before, Essie, dear?"

The girl smiled sadly. "Because I knew you would form this idea, and it pained me to disappoint you. To tell the truth, she never told me anything of the kind; for I had read of such things sometimes; and I searched—oh! most carefully and thoroughly; there's nothing at all but old clothes, Ralph, dear—nothing but worthless old clothes!"

But he could not be satisfied so easily. "One will succeed where another fails," sometimes," he said. "Look again, dear, and let me help you. Think, Essie—if we could find only a few hundreds, how happy we might be!"

So they searched again—this time in company—and examined closely the contents of the old chest. "A motherly collection of old rubbish," Ralph pronounced it, disappointedly. "If there's money, it's hidden in the chest itself!" he decided. "A lumbering old thing! Let me break it up, Essie. Don't let us throw a chance away."

She consented. Aunt Stafford's old clothes could be just as well at the bottom of her own trunk she thought. And, oh! if they only could find some money, so that she could help Ralph!

He was an artist. Talented, ambitious, possessed of a genuine love of art, but very poor. The well-worn, shabby clothes, the anxious, harassed expression of his handsome face, attested that painful fact quite sufficiently without one spoken word.

"Oh, to help him! To win for him a chance—an opportunity—to let his work be seen and judged!" Her pale cheeks flushed and her hands clasped each other nervously as she watched him. "No use," he said, when after half an hour's hard work, the chest lay in fragments on the floor, and he arose from the task of examining them. "She was either wandering in her wits, as you think, Essie, or her riddle is too hard for us to read. The chest will do for firewood now, and if I were you I'd burn the rest of the rubbish with it."

Essie looked at him with eager, glowing eyes. "No," she said. "I will puzzle over the riddle a little longer before I decide to give it up. Auntie's last words were: 'The chest—in the chest!'—and she died while speaking them. I haven't so

much property in the world, dear, that I should refuse to keep poor auntie's legacy for auntie's sake."

So the things were stowed away again, and the lovers parted, with many kisses and some tears, and went each to the performance of their duties. Estella to fill the position of companion in the house of a widowed lady friend, and Ralph to renew the good fight against "iron fortunes" and gain, in spite of poverty, obscurity and long discouragement, a footing on the ladder of fame.

"And if I succeed," he said, "if my picture, which will be on exhibition in the winter, should meet with approval and a purchaser, I'll come to you once more and ask you to marry me, and then, Essie, you must not say me nay."

In the winter, it was summer now, and he had several months of hard work and privation before him, but his spirit was a brave one, and the thought of Essie gave him strength. He put the remembrance of her worthless legacy steadily away, and bent to his work with a will. A little before Christmas the picture was finished, and sent to an art academy for exhibition.

Oh, the hope, the joy, the pride, with which he attended on the opening day! At last he would have a chance to be seen and judged. At last he should compare his work with that of others. At last he might hope for admirers, patrons, the promise of future success, the certainty of a good living, and, above all, the thought of his worthless legacy steadily away, and bent to his work with a will. A little before Christmas the picture was finished, and sent to an art academy for exhibition.

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"Yes, yes, yes!" she threw herself into his arms. "Our sorrows are over; good fortune has come to us both—thanks to poor auntie's legacy!"

They were married in the following spring. There was a pretty, modest little house, where Ralph proposed to work as hard in comfort and happiness as he had already done in poverty and sorrow. His picture had been taken from the Academy to Mr. Brush's gallery, and had achieved a genuine success. Larger sums had been offered for it than the one for which it had been sold, but the purchaser steadily refused (through Mr. Brush), either to part with it or let his name be known.

An eccentric fellow, evidently, Ralph decided, and his pretty wife agreed with him heartily. "Eccentric enough to be a relative of Aunt Stafford's," said she. One day, when he returned from some business in town, she came to the door to meet him; she slipped her little hands around his arm and looked up into his face.

"Don't be angry with me," she said. "I have been keeping a secret from you, but now I want to tell you all the truth. Come to the parlor. I have been making a purchase, and I want you to see what it is."

He followed her, wondering. There, in the parlor, his picture smiled down on him from the wall. He turned to the door to meet her; she slipped her little hands around his arm and looked up into his face.

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MINNIE'S MISCHIEF.

BY RUFUS HALE.

Captain Walker, a grim-looking seaman, took with him on his voyage to the coast of Alaska, his daughter Minnie, a rosy, bright-eyed girl of seventeen.

Minnie was a good girl in most every respect. Her only fault was a certain penchant she had for teasing those who were fond of her. In that way she was full of mischief, and at times she caused both her father and lover no little anxiety.

The latter personage was the second officer, a rather grave young man, named John Tombs.

Although Minnie loved him very much, she would often torment him in a fashion which would have put some men out of patience, but which Tombs, who was very good-natured, endured with great resignation.

Her father, however, often reprimanded her for her fault, but, perhaps, not so severely as some parents would have done.

Twice during the voyage Captain Walker and Mr. Tombs, had been driven away to distraction, with the fear that Minnie had been lost overboard and was drowned; but each time, just as they were about to leave the boat to look for her, she popped, laughing, from the round-house, where she had hidden herself amongst the balls of twine, and heaps of spars—each of which were kept there.

Mr. Tombs, concluding that marriage would have the effect of making her more womanly, "proposed" to her as soon as possible.

This happened one evening while the schooner lay at anchor off Alaska, the captain, with all the crew and officers, except the second mate, who had been selected for ship-keeper, was ashore after seals. The wife of the first mate was aboard, but she had discreetly withdrawn into the companion-way that the lovers, who were now on deck, might be left to themselves.

"I love you," said Tombs, earnestly. "I know that very well," answered Minnie.

"And I want you to marry me when we go to the Sandwich Islands, a few months from now."

"What's that about sandwiches?" inquired Minnie, suddenly, looking up.

"Why, what can you mean? Your health is perfect."

"Yes; but somehow I have a presentiment that I will never reach the Islands—that I shall be lost overboard or something of that kind."

"It grieves me that you should indulge so gloomy a fancy," said her lover.

"Nevertheless," she answered, a mischievous light in her averted eyes, "I cannot help it. Go below, John, as I would for a while be left to my own sad thoughts."

Tombs, looking much distressed, went down into the cabin.

"Now," murmured Minnie to herself, "I will have some fun. The boy to which father and his men have gone for seals is only about three hundred feet from here. I will get into the sealskin canoe and paddle off to sea. That big rock on the edge of the bay will hide me from John by the time he comes up. Missing me, and not being able to find me anywhere about the ship, he will think of what I said about my presentiment, and will conclude that I have been lost overboard, and then he will think I got into it, that it got loose, and that I have drifted off somewhere and may be lost."

The canoe to which she alluded was a light one, made of sealskin drawn tightly over a frame of walrus ribs, and was one of the natives of the coast, and it was now in the water, stern secured, to a pin on the after rail. This pin was a loose one, and the mischievous damsel, as soon as she had stepped into the canoe, pulled it out from the anchored schooner.

Seizing the paddle she urged the light vessel on, and twenty minutes later she was behind the huge rock which, projecting on the edge of the bay, would screen her from the sight of any one aboard the anchored schooner.

It was a clear night, and a full moon lighted the shore ahead of her; but she could see nothing of her father and his men.

They have gone somewhere else to hunt for walrus, now beginning to feel afraid. "I must hurry back to the schooner."

Scarcely had she spoken when something sprang, with a loud splash, from a hollow in the rock into the sea. The young girl caught a glimpse of a great, shining body ere it went under the surface, and in her terror she dropped her paddle, and forgot to try to recover it ere it drifted out of her reach.

As she gazed at the sea, now beginning to feel afraid, "I must hurry back to the schooner."

more than four feet intervened between it and the canoe.

It was impossible to express Minnie's feelings at that moment. Of course, all mischief—all thought of the mischievous fun she had anticipated, was gone the instant she saw the great body leap from the rock.

Terror—wild, unreasoning terror had possession of her, and she could think of nothing but her danger.

But just then something descended upon its head with tremendous force, and it let go its hold of Minnie, who seized the gunnel of the dingy—her lover's boat, in which he had been searching for the girl, after missing her.

Attracted by her cries, he had arrived at this critical instant and now, as he battled with his savage antagonist, he told her to get on the rock, and not into the dingy.

A spear of the rock was close to her; she seized it and pulled herself upon a rugged shelf, where, shivering with cold, terror, and anxiety, she crouched, watching John Tombs as he fought with the fierce monster in front of him.

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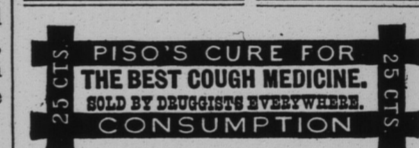
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