

Poetry.

THE CHILDREN'S BED-TIME.

The clock strikes seven in the hall,
The curfew of the children's feet
That calls each pattering little foot
From dance and song and liveliest play;
They say that in our wider light
Flows like a silver day-dream white,
Nor in our darkness sinks to rest,
But sets within a golden west.

Ah, tender hour, that sends a drift
Of children's kisses through the house,
And quick-notes of sweet "Good-night,"
That thoughts of heaven and home arouse;
And a soft stir to sense and heart,
As when the bee and blossom part;
And little feet that patter so fast,
Like the light droppings of the shower.

And in the children's rooms aloft
What blossoms shape do gaily slip
Their dainty shapings, and rosy run
From clasping hand and kissing lip,
A naked sweetness to the eye—
Blossom and bud and butterfly!
In watching one, so children's feet
An ecstasy of life and light.

And, ah, what lovely victories
Bestrew the floor in an empty sock
By vanished dance and song left loose
As dead birds' throats; a tiny smock
That, sure, upon some meadow grew,
And drank the heaven-sweet rains; a shoe
Scarce bigger than an acorn cup;
Procks that seen flowerly meads cut up.

The lily-dress in angel white
To mother's knees they troop and come,
The soft palms like the kissing dove,
And they are all so singing home.
Their bright heads bowed and worshipping,
As though some glory of the spring,
Some daffodil that mocks the day,
Should fold its golden palms and pray.

Then kissed, on beds we lay them down,
As fragrant-waves as clover's dais,
And all the upper floors grow hushed
With children's sleep, and dews of God.
And as our stars their beams do hide,
The stars their twilight, opaline dials,
Take up the heavenly tale and even,
And light us on to God and heaven.

J. E. Hopkins.

The Fireside.

ONLY WAITING.

BY H. L. WELLINGTON.

"You are looking as fresh and bright as the morning, Mrs. Anderson," said a friend, whose acquaintance she had made at Newport, as they accidentally met in the hall of the large boarding-house.

"I feel very happy, for I am going home to-day," she cheerfully replied.

"Indeed! I thought you intended to remain several weeks longer," exclaimed Mrs. Matthews.

"So I did, but I received a letter yesterday from my husband, saying that he wished me to come at once. So I am going."

"I regret that you are to leave us. We shall miss you sadly."

"Thank you. I am very sorry to leave you, but you know we are always glad to go home. I was just going to Edith Hamilton's room to bid her good-by. Have you heard from her this morning?"

"Yes, the disease is making rapid progress. I saw her last evening, and she was very weak. A servant-girl just told me she thought once last night that she was dying."

"Is it possible?" she exclaimed, as she shrank back with an instinctive horror. To her death, and everything pertaining to it, was a gloomy phantom.

"Perhaps I had better not go, then; I can do her no good."

"O yes, I would go. It will do you good to see how cheerful and happy she is. It makes me shudder to think of it."

"She has looked so appalling. The face, it is beautiful, angel, who is about to take her by the hand, and lead her up gently and lovingly to her Father's house."

"If she is in want of any comfort, I will gladly minister thereto, but I cannot look upon death; it would make me gloomy for a month."

"In this aspect it is beautiful to look upon. You have probably regarded it as a frightful, terrible monster; but you can now have this serene face displaced by the form of an angel. I am sure that the experience will cheer you through life."

"How strangely you talk! It cannot be possible that death is any thing but terrible."

"The phantom called death may be terrible to think about; but death itself is a kind messenger, whose office is to summon us away from a world of light and shadow to a world of unending glory and perpetual happiness. Come with me. Do not fear a shock to your feelings, for none will be experienced."

Thus persuaded, she consented; but she could not have a vague, undisturbed apprehension of some gloomy specter that she was approaching.

Mrs. Anderson was gay and thoughtful. But she had, however, under this mantle of frivolity a kind and benevolent heart. She had seen the pale, wan face of this patient invalid, as she sat in her easy chair on the veranda, or walked feebly on the beach, supported by her mother and faithful nurse. She was struck with her rare beauty—a beauty not so much of features, as of the pure spirit within.

She noticed her calm, cheerful manner, so inconsistent, she thought, with the unmistakable evidence of coming death. An impenetrable mystery involved her whole demeanor, and she watched her with untiring interest. Once she ventured to ask if she did not feel sad when she thought of death.

"O, no," she calmly replied; "it is only a step to a brighter and happier country."

They gently knocked at the door, and it was quickly opened by a woman somewhat advanced in years, on whose mild face sorrow and holy resignation were beautifully blended.

"How is your daughter beloved Mrs. Matthews?"

"Not so strong as she was last evening," she replied with a faint smile; "she is sinking heavily."

"Does she continue in the same tranquil heavenly state?"

"O yes," she replied, with a sweet yet touching earnestness in her voice. "Dear child! her life has been pure and unselfish, and now, when her final change is about to come, all is peace and hope, and she is only waiting, as she often sang, for the time to come when she can go home to be with Jesus."

"Is she strong enough to see any one?"

"The presence of others who disturb her will only walk into her chamber?"

They entered, and for the first time in many years Mrs. Anderson found herself in the presence of one who was about to pass the river of death. A slender girl, with large, mild eyes, and face almost as white as the pillow it pressed, was before her. The unmistakable signs of speedy dissolution were plainly visible upon her pale, sunken features; but there was a smile, radiant with heavenly light, that played about her lips.

"How are you this morning, Edith?" faintly inquired Mrs. Matthews, as she took the shadowy hand of the dying girl.

She opened her beautiful eyes, that were beaming with celestial radiance, and replied, "Weak in body, but stronger in spirit."

Mrs. Anderson has come to see you. She is going home to-day. You remember her, do you not?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, turning faintly towards her, and looking at her with a smile.

Mrs. Anderson took it, pale and unexcited as it was, with an emotion akin to awe. The whole scene oppressed and bewildered her. There was something so unreal, so visionary, that she could not comprehend it.

"Death! death!" she said to herself, "can this be dying?"

"Your day of life will soon close," said Mrs. Matthews, in a cheerful tone.

"Yes, or we might say," she quickly replied, smiling, "my morning will soon break. It is a kind of twilight here, and I am only waiting for the day dawn."

"You must be very happy," she continued, addressing Mrs. Anderson, "because I am going home."

"I am, but I wish I could see you looking better," she replied with much earnestness, as she bent over the dying girl. The novelty and strangeness of the scene had wrought upon her feelings that she could not repress their utterance. "Is it, indeed, as you say? I am inwardly so calm, so peaceful, so confident of morning! I forgive the question at such a moment, but I have always looked on death as something terrible; but now, as I see a fellow-mortal standing on its very brink, it fills me with wonder. Is it all real?"

Are you, indeed, so full of heavenly tranquility? Edith looked wonderingly upon her. The first of the soul seemed kindled into a brighter glory, and a halo of divinity surrounded her. Even in the waning hours of life her quickest impulse was to render service to another. Her desires were strong to remove from her mind the fear of death, even though she felt the waters of Jordan touching her own descending feet.

"I am only going home," she said, "and I thought little of my going. I have been traveling in a foreign country, but now I am going to the heavenly mansions prepared for me by a risen Saviour. And when he sends a shining angel to guide me there, shall I tremble and fear to accompany the celestial messenger? Do you, dear friend, shrink from the thought of going home or ask the waters to linger? O, no."

"But all is so uncertain," said Mrs. Anderson, eager to penetrate further into the mystery.

"Uncertain!" There was a tone of surprise in Edith's voice. "God is truth. He is unchangeable. Heaven and earth may pass away, but I am never happy, for I know that I shall soon be with Jesus, and live eternally in his presence. I am only waiting for the boatman to come and take me across the river."

"I wish I could think of it thus, but heaven does not attract me so. It is all a vague uncertainty."

The eyes of the sick girl closed, the long lashes resting like a dark fringe upon her snowy cheeks. For a time she lay silent and motionless, then looking up, she asked,

"Why is this thought of going home so endearing to me?"

"Because I have been so long, and my home is so pleasant," replied Mrs. Anderson.

"But what makes it so pleasant and attractive?"

"There are my dearest friends, my husband and my children, which make it doubly dear."

"That is why I want to go to my heavenly home. There are pure joys—my brightest hopes—Jesus is there—beautiful—glorious!"

"But do you not sometimes—" The words died on the lips of the speaker.

Again the drooping lashes fell, and the pale lips closed over those beautiful eyes. And now a sudden light shone through the transparent tissue of that wan face—a bright light, the rays of which came who saw needed to be told were but gleams of the heavenly morning just breaking for the mortal sleeper.

How hushed that room—how motionless the group that bent forward to the departing one! The faintest whisper, the slightest wing that penetrated the inward sense of hearing?

It is over! The spirit of that young girl, loving, true, and faithful, hath ascended to the God in whose infinite love she reposed a child-like and unwavering confidence. Calmly and sweetly she went to sleep like an infant upon its mother's bosom, knowing that the everlasting arms were beneath and around her.

"Is not that her new experience in life?" asked Mrs. Matthews, as they quietly retired.

With a deep sigh she answered, "Yes, and wonderful! I can scarcely comprehend what I have seen. Such a lesson I never forget. I shall be wiser for this, and I hope, better. O, could I but die as she died—what a more earthly good would not I cheerfully sacrifice!"

"It is for us all," calmly answered Mrs. Matthews, "the secret we have just heard. We must lay up our treasures in heaven. Then when the messenger comes to call us either we shall welcome him as an angel of light."

These words sunk deep into Mrs. Anderson's heart, and when she went to her earthly home, that she had learned to love so well, the thought that there was another and a brighter home still clung to her.

And now she can say with perfect confidence that this heavenly home is hers also. Through faith she feels that her treasures are laid up in heaven, and she solemnly hopes and trusts that when the last hour shall come she may be found only waiting—Baptist Weekly.

LITTLE CARL.

Like a beautiful picture, framed by symmetrical rounded mountains, lies the little settlement of —, in the centre of an almost limitless forest.

Martin Hand's house stood near a gloomy "divide" of the hills, and the pines and hemlocks cast their dismal shadows on the very door-sill. Little Carl sat on the door-step watching, with longing eyes, the retreating forms of a number of children, who were on their way to the swamps to hunt for May apples. His father forbade his going with them, and after they disappeared from view, Carl went into the house, and sitting down in a corner of the tidy little kitchen, began to roll marbles across the floor.

Light, painted floor for his little knuckles to chase in their rapid flight.

Mrs. Hand was a quick-motioned woman, rather inclined to be fretful, and she was very busy this morning, having a large family of farm-hands, besides her husband and child, to cook for. In crossing the room to put a pie in the capacious stove oven, Mrs. Hand stepped on one of Carl's marbles and spilled the contents on the clean floor.

"Four little Carl he had to sit in a chair half an hour for his marbles!" he said. Mrs. Hand had not been annoyed in any way by the marbles, or the loss of them, but she was angry at her little Carl for playing with them! Then he tried playing horse with the chairs, but his mother caught a rip in her dress on the step of his little high chair.

"There, now, I've torn my dress on that old chair! You're always under foot, Carl! Hand, I do declare!" Mrs. Hand's face was as disagreeable looking as the tones of her voice were harsh.

Little Carl, sat looking up in her face with a pitiful quiver of his rosy under lip. "What shall I do, mamma?"

"Anything, as long as you don't bother me," was the ungracious response.

"I can't go out doors, mamma!" pleaded the little boy, catching her eagerly by the sleeve, and thereby causing her to drop the cupful of sugar she was measuring for cake.

"I don't care where you go, if you keep out of my way," replied the irritated woman. She did not intend to be unkind or unjust to her little boy, but the mischief never sated her head.

"I wish I had a draughtsmen to play with, like Willy Sterling," muttered Carl to himself, as he slipped out of the back door. "I don't get out of it 'way, now," he said, as he entered his little track

that lashed off from the broad, open cart road, just beyond his father's house.

It was the first of June, and rhododendrons, the salix, and other beautiful wild flowers grew by the way. He filled his tiny hands with the bright blossoms, only to fling them aside as wild strawberries, or swamp apples, met his curious little gaze. He wasn't in any one's way out there, you receive; and he was enjoying his liberty. But about noon he began to feel hungry, and started to go home. His tears and wild cries for "papa" were useless; no one heard him, nor could he find his way through the tangles.

Mr. Hand had been "across lots" to the tanneries, a distance of three miles, and was late at home. He found his wife almost beside herself with fear, for little Carl was nowhere to be found.

"There has been harsh with the lad, Sophronia!" was all her husband said. Mr. Hand was born and bred a Quaker, but married out of the Society. Going to the door, he heard three ringing bells. The neighbors soon gathered, and, until morning dawned, they sought for the little wanderer. A ship-poor will rang clear to sleep beneath the shade of a morning pine from that where he sought him. Naught but the screech of a wild cat or catamount answered their calls. They spread to the other settlements, and a band of a hundred men searched the woods the next day. A year and three rattlesnakes were killed by these hardy men, night came and the little boy was not found. His mother's heart was torn by conflicting emotions; her child was dead and her cruel words had driven him to his fate. Again the lanterns flashed among the gloomy trees, and pale weary faces peered with anxious eyes into every hidden nook. They had about given up the search in despair when a joyful "Halloo!" woke the slumbering echoes far and near.

Over the hill, hunger and thirst, little Carl lay fast asleep on a natural bed of moss, beneath an old pine. "Safe!" ran the cry from lip to lip.

"Let us pray," said a gray-haired old man, and lifting his trembling hands to heaven, he thanked the Giver of every good and perfect gift for this unexpected blessing.

Little Carl was never in the way again.—Vermont Chronicle.

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"How many sides has a circle?" "Two," said the student.

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