

## Poetry.

## SOMETIME.

Sometime, when all life's lessons have been learned,  
And sun and stars forevermore have set,  
The things which our weak judgments here have  
Spurned,  
Will flash before us, out of life's dark night,  
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue,  
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,  
And how what seemed reproach was love most true.

And we shall see how, while we brown and sigh,  
God's plans go on as best for you and me,  
How, when we called, He heeded not our cry,  
Because His wisdom to the end could see.  
And even as parents disallow  
Too much of sweet to craving babyhood,  
So God, perhaps, is keeping from us now  
Life's sweetest things, because it seemeth good.

And if, sometimes, commingled with life's wine,  
We find the wormwood, and rebel and shrink,  
Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine  
Pours out this portion for our lips to drink,  
And if some friend we love is lying low,  
Where human kisses cannot reach his face,  
Oh, do not blame the loving Father so,  
But say your sorrow with obedient grace!

And you shall shortly know that lengthened breath  
Is not the sweetest gift God sends his friend,  
And, that sometimes, the sabbal path of death  
Conceals the fairest boon his love can send.  
If we could push aside the gates of life,  
And stand within, and all God's working see,  
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,  
And for each mystery could find a key.

But not to-day. Then be content, poor heart!  
God's plans, like lilies pure and white unfold.  
We must not tear the close-leafed leaves apart;  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

And if, through patient toil, we reach the land  
Where tread the feet of angels, may rest,  
When we shall clear the land and understand  
I think that we will say, "God knew the best!"

## The Fireside.

## A TRUE STORY.

It was growing dark in the city streets, men and women hurried along, eager to reach comfortable homes; the horses seemed to pull the heavy wagons with more willingness than usual, as if they too knew that the day's work was over, and enjoyed the prospect of rest. The lamp-lighters were going their rounds, and trying to make up for the lost daylight. Little children were safe and warm at home.

All but one, perhaps. A little boy stood on the deserted sidewalk, close to a great window of plate glass, through which he gazed with rapt face. The picture which he looked at was a beautiful one. A great room with painted ceiling overhead, and a chandelier which seemed to make real sunshine. The walls were covered with fine paintings. A marble table, heaped with delicious food, stood near the centre of the room. The bright light struck through the great chandelier, and made a big crimson stain on the white hand of a gentleman who sat at the table reading a newspaper. A large diamond ring on his finger seemed to wink and blink at the little boy outside. "I wish he would look up," the child was thinking.

Not that he waited and watched, the man did not move for a long time. Then he flung the paper down, and reached out the hand with the diamond for a wine glass which he filled and drank, and never once looked towards the window.

"Please, sir,"

That was all the boy said. He had stepped from the street into the wide hall; then without stopping to knock, he had opened the great door which led into the gentleman's room. On the threshold of the saloon he stopped, frightened at what he had done.

"What is it, my little man?"

Mr. Arthur Leonard had a pleasant smile, which came easily to his handsome face; but the child shrank back, although he looked into the big brown eyes as if he saw something there he had been looking for a great while.

"You came to beg, I suppose," and the gentleman's hand went readily into his pocket.

"Oh, no, sir, I never thought of that. I wanted—I mean—please sir, I will go now."

He moved back awkwardly, but Mr. Leonard stopped him with a gesture. The child's face lit up. He drew up on himself, and said:

"You are cold," he said, noticing that the child shivered, and that his garments were thin and poor. He rose, took the boy by the hand, and led him to the great fire which was dancing on the hearth—a big, jolly fire, which seemed trying to light up the room and make the chandelier notice how big and bright it was.

Mr. Leonard did not seem to think it queer for a poor little boy with patched clothes to sit in one of the crimson satin arm chairs, big enough for a throne. He drew up on himself, and said:

"Are you hungry?" he asked. "I will give you something to eat, and a little wine will warm you up."

"Oh, no, sir," and the child shrank further back into the big chair.

"You will tell me your name at least?"

"Yes, sir, my name is Eddie Boynton; and I am ten years old."

"Ah!"

Mr. Leonard was smiling now as he saw the boy's courage coming back.

"You will not be angry with me, sir?"

"Any why in the world should I be angry with you?"

"I didn't know but you might, sir, if I said what I wanted to tell you."

"Never fear, Eddie; I am anxious to know what you have to tell me."

The little boy stretched out his little hands, red with cold, towards the glowing fire, and said:

"I work in the dye-house now, and get a good deal of money—a dollar a week."

Mr. Leonard could hardly help laughing. The wine he had offered the child cost more than that. "I have seen this little fellow every night on my way home. I don't come again, though, because we are going to move. I like to look in here, because it is so warm and pleasant, and because you are sitting here, and have eyes just like my father's."

"What a strange child!" Mr. Leonard was thinking.

"He was so handsome and tall," went on the little fellow, looking back into the firelight. "We were nice clothes, too, like yours; and we lived in a grand big house, most as big as this. I used to sit at the table, and he gave me that to drink," pointing to the wine-glass. "Mother would cry some time; but he would kiss her, and tell her that good wine would make me strong and handsome. One day he went away for a long time, and mother said all the while he was gone, when he came back he struck her, and then he fell down on the floor. I screamed, because I thought he was dead. The black man, who drove the horse, came up stairs and helped to get him to bed. He said he was sick. He used to come and fight against that great man. It was the red wine that made him so, mother said. And then one night he died, and there was a great funeral. After that mother packed up our clothes, and went to live where she could get some money. We've only got two little rooms now. Sometimes she cries all night, I guess."

Mr. Leonard was talking very fast, but stopped suddenly.

Mr. Leonard moved uneasily.

"This is what you wanted to tell me?"

"Yes, sir. Every time I come by the window, and see you sitting here, you make me think of my father, and I wonder if you had any little boy or girl, and how he and his mother would feel if you should die because of the red wine?" and then the tears came, and Eddie Boynton slid down from the big chair and stood beside Mr. Leonard, who had turned his face away. Eddie wondered if the gentleman was crying, too. He could not see the big, brown eyes, for his head was drooping upon his breast.

"I'm going home now, sir. Mother will be my supper all ready, and be frightened if I don't come," and before Mr. Leonard roused from his painful reverie, the child had slipped from the warm, cherry room, and was running down the dark street, home to his waiting mother.

In all the years to come, Arthur Leonard and Eddie Boynton, man and boy, may never meet again. The room in the luxurious club-house is deserted; the fire is out, the room is dark, the heavy curtain drawn at the big windows; but in a beautiful home the brown eyes look lovingly at a sweet woman, and to the boy who hangs about his neck, the father whispers: "God bless you my child, and keep us from the destruction of the red wine."—*Congregationalist.*

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Let the earnest, growing boy play, even if the house is disordered, even if Mrs. Gossip and Mrs. Faulstich do say they "never saw such a topsy-turvy house." Ah, if we would only remember how fleeting their young days, how very, very soon, if they live, they will be strong bearded men, and our homes will be painfully orderly. Will not the memory of dear boyish forms come fraught with pleasantness if we remember that they were patient and loving and helpful? That it was our influence, blessed by the Omnipotent, that started the young feet heavenward? Let us exert ourselves to the utmost to have them feel as well as say, "There's no place like home."

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