

Poetry.

"LIFE'S REWARD."

Have you found your life a shadow,
And your fondness for a dream?
Have your pleasures turned to sorrow?
Casts your smiling sun no beam,
That reminds you of bright moments,
Golden moments, quickly sped?
Is there not one ray of gladness
In your heart so cold and dead?
Has Fate dealt with you so hardly,
Turned all love for you to hate,
And at last is Hope forbidden
Longer in your breast to wait?

Life has much of sun and shadow,
And must have some cloud and rain,
Every heart its sorrow knoweth,
Every soul its secret pain.
Let not care nor disappointment
Mar your short life's brightest hour,
Let not "hope deferred" e'er darken
Still all love's sweetest power.
For to him that overcometh
And a perfect faith retains,
Looking upward, striving onward,
An immortal crown remains.

—Godey's Lady's Book.

The Fireside.

STEP BY STEP.

BY SILVER GREY.
"Hallo, Bernie; want to take knives?"
"My, but that's a beauty! Where did you get it, Edgar?"

"Bought it in town the other day; it's none of your country-store knives. But I've got tired of it, and I'll trade it for a new one."
"But I haven't got anything but this," and Bernie pulled his poor little, battered, one-bladed knife from his pocket.

"Never mind; that'll do. I'll trade even, if you will."

"Will you, really, though?" Bernie's eyes sparkled; and when he found himself the actual owner of a white-handled knife with three gleaming blades, he felt at least twice as rich as before.

A few days later he came to Edgar with a doleful face, and holding the knife in his hand.

"See, Edgar! I've broken the biggest blade."

"How in the world did you do that?" said little youngsters are so careless."

"I was only cutting a stick," replied Bernie, sorrowfully.

An older boy, standing near, took the pieces from Bernie's hand and looked at them carefully.

"Not metal!" he said as he gave them back, and began to whistle.

"What's that?" asked Bernie, innocently.

"It's what your knife blades are made of."

"Just mind your own affairs will you, Charlie Dayton!"

"Oh, certainly; but I hope my affairs will never be as small business as cheating a little fellow like Bernie."

Edgar's eyes flashed; but before he could answer, Spire Burleigh's bay pony dashed by the school-yard, and the Spire himself called out:

"Here, boys; one of you!" Run down to the post-office and mail these letters for me."

Edgar was off in an instant, and reached the post-office almost as soon as the pony. He took the letters in, and brought back the contents of the Spire's box.

"You are sure you got everything?" inquired the portly old gentleman.

"Yes, sir; sure."

"All right, then. You've saved me the trouble of climbing down from this rig. Here's five cents for you," and he tossed down a coin which fell on the sidewalk.

"Stingy old miser!" muttered Edgar, as he stooped to pick it up.

But his face changed as his fingers touched the coin, and he glanced uneasily at the Spire, who was talking to the proprietor of the store and post-office, and presently drove off.

"He'll never miss it," said Edgar to himself. "He has piles of money; and it's no more than he ought to give me any way."

So he slipped the twenty-five cent piece in his pocket, and walked away, and Spire Burleigh was never any the wiser for it.

The firm of McAllister, Rogers & Co. was counted among the strongest in the city. The partners were all cautious, substantial business men; and whatever went through their hands was expected to be a success. Nevertheless, a dull time affected them as well as others; and, when business was slack, they were among the first to retrench.

"We can spare at least one clerk," said the senior member of the firm, in consultation with his partners, "and I suppose it must be either Foster or Arnot."

"We can't spare Foster," replied Mr. Rogers. "He knows the business, already, almost as well as I do. And he's sharp as a needle; nobody will ever get ahead of him."

"Not too sharp for our good you think?"

"No, indeed; I would trust him to any extent."

"Very well; no doubt you are right. Let it be so then. But Arnot must go."

That evening Henry Arnot, walking homeward, with the words of his dismissal yet ringing in his ears, heard a rapid step behind him, and a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"What's your hurry, Arnot? Are you walking for a wage?" asked Edgar Foster's voice.

"I may as well walk, I've nothing else to do," replied the young man, bitterly.

"Oh, now, my dear fellow, don't be downhearted. Something will open for you, before very long. I hope. I am truly sorry for you, Arnot, and would do anything to help you."

"I know you would, Foster; but there's nothing to be done. If it were not for mother and Nellie, I wouldn't complain; but—"

"Yes, I know; but keep up your courage, and don't look so woe-begone. Mr. McAllister will speak a good word for you, I am sure; and, with his recommendation, you may find something very soon."

Henry shook his head, but his face was brighter; and, when their ways parted, his hearty "good-night" sounded almost cheerful.

Walking on alone, Edgar was accosted by an elderly gentleman—

"Good evening, Foster. Are you still with McAllister & Rogers? If so, you can save me a little time, which is precious, just now."

"I am still with them, sir. What can I do for you?"

"Just pay in this little amount for me, if you please. It's only a trifle, but it's not on their books, and I am so thoroughly forgetful that I fear it will slip my mind entirely. I want to get everything settled up before I start off, and I find it takes a good many steps to get ready for a three years' absence from the country."

"Certainly. I'll attend to it for you, Mr. Sterling. So you are going abroad?"

"Yes, with Wednesday's steamer. Well, I'm glad I have this little bit of my mind. Good-by."

Edgar Foster felt the bill away in his pocket-book with the full intention of handing them to his employers in the morning.

The early mail, which was delivered soon after he reached his place of business, brought him an urgent demand for the payment of a dentist's bill that had been standing against him for a few months.

"I'll call in and pay it on my way back this noon," resolved Edgar. "This money of Mr. Sterling's will come handy, for pay day is less than a week off, and I can just as well hand it in after that."

But Edgar's salary was small, and pay day

brought almost as many ways for the money to go as there were dollars in the sum received. And, after all, what was the hurry? It was only a small amount; the firm did not expect the money, and they were lucky to get it at all.

So he reasoned, and so it went on, until several pay-days had passed, and Edgar, when he thought of the matter at all, felt the difficulty of paying over the money, after so long a delay, without making some explanation.

One morning, some five months after the evening that he had walked home with Henry Arnot, he noticed, when he took the letters in to Mr. McAllister, a thin blue envelope among them, which bore a foreign postmark. Mr. McAllister saw it too, and immediately drew it out from the pile that his clerk laid on the desk before him.

"Ah, here's news from Sterling, at last. I thought the old gentleman had forgotten us; he is so terribly forgetful."

Edgar's heart gave one great bound, and stood still.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. McAllister, noticing that the young man did not move to go back to his duties. "Why, Foster, you are as white as a sheet. Are you ill? Here, sit down and drink this water. Don't stir until you are better."

Edgar obeyed with the despairing conviction that he was condemning himself in advance. But not to save his life, or his reputation, which was dearer, could he have acted differently.

Mr. McAllister took up his letter again; and, after a hasty glance at it, turned to his partner with a laugh—

"What a pattern of integrity Sterling is! Here, he has sent us fifteen dollars, which, he says, he forgot to pay before he went to Europe. I remember the circumstance, now that he recalls it. It was a little transaction between him and myself, and I made no record of it at the time. It seems that last is what has troubled him, and quickened that treacherous memory of his."

"And if you don't send him a receipt, and set his conscience at rest, he'll forget all about this, and pay the money twice," returned Mr. Rogers.

"Very likely; I'll do it at once. You're better, aren't you, Foster? Your color is coming back. Don't overwork yourself, man. We don't want to see you break down yet."

"It was a narrow chance," said Edgar to himself, when he was outside of the door of the counting-room. "Of course, I can never pay that money now; but I'll take good care not to get in such a fix again."

"What can keep papa? It is almost half-past six. I am afraid we can't go, after all."

"Don't fret, Bella; a girl who is getting to be a young lady should have more self-control. Your papa is often detained by business. Make yourself as happy as possible until he comes."

"But, mamma, we shall be late, and, perhaps, have to give up the concert; and it will be such a disappointment."

"Well, child, I shall be very sorry for you if you are disappointed, now that we will not borrow trouble. Come, your sister's hat is on the rack; follow her example, and the time will pass more quickly."

"There's papa, now," exclaimed little Wilhelmina. "But why does he ring, instead of using his key?"

"Mr. Arnot, ma'am," announced the girl who had answered the bell; and, following her closely, a gentleman entered the room.

A strong, broad-shouldered frame; a head crowned with dark hair thickly sprinkled with gray, and a face on which many lines were traced. Mr. Arnot looked as if he might be the father of the girl who thirty years before had been dismissed from his clerkship, and had been cleared by Edgar Foster's sympathy.

The girls started eagerly forward to greet "Uncle Henry," but something in his manner checked them.

"You are all well, I hope?" he asked, nervously. "Quite well, thank you; sit down. Edgar will be in presently."

Mrs. Foster spoke cheerfully, though her heart was full of misgivings.

"Have you seen papa?" demanded little Wilhelmina, who had been studying her uncle's face closely.

"He lifted the child to his knee, and kissed her, without speaking. But reading the growing anxiety in his sister's face, he answered the look—

"Your husband is quite well, Nellie, and—perfectly safe."

"Then, what have you come to tell us?" asked Mrs. Foster, steadily.

"Send the children away," said Mr. Arnot hoarsely.

But the elder girls, thoroughly frightened, now clung to their mother; and Eddie who had been so quiet that his uncle had not seen him until now, came out of his corner, and stood silently at his mother's side.

Mr. Foster paid no attention to them. She only looked into her brother's face, with eyes that were full of tears.

"Your husband has been—trough—that is, there are some who think that—that he has used money that he has not his own; and he is detained at his office at present—will be detained from you until this matter can be cleared up," he added, reluctantly answering those questioning eyes.

"How dare they?" cried Bella, bursting into hysterical sobs. "Oh, papa, papa!"

"Eddie," said the mother, quietly, "go to my room, and let the children see my medicine chest. Eddie has fainted."

Uncle Henry lifted the young girl and carried her to a sofa, and Bella checked her tears to help them chase the cold hands. No one noticed that Wilhelmina had slipped out of the room. Her father supposed that she understood nothing that had been said; and they had only just begun to miss her, when, twenty minutes later, she was walking up the steps of her father's office.

Two or three gentlemen were talking earnestly in an outer room. They were her father's business friends, and knew the little one well. But through the open door into the inner room. Her father was sitting, still and white, beside the table; some gentlemen were standing around it, and an officer stood at a respectful distance. The child walked up to her father, and placed her hand on his arm.

"Papa."

Mr. Foster started and looked up, and then covered his face with his hands.

"Oh, Willy, my little Willy! What made you come?"

"I came to be with you," said the child, firmly; and then she turned a flashing face on the group around the table.

"How dare you say that my father does nothing wrong? How can you be so wicked?"

More than one head was turned away to hide the starting tears, but no one could find words to answer the child.

"Why don't you tell them, papa? Why don't you say that you didn't? Everybody knows you're good. Speak, papa!"

What would Edgar Foster have given to be able to look into those pure eyes and say that he was innocent? He shook with an agony, and the clasp of Willy's arms around his neck, and the touch of her lips on his cheek, was agony.

"Take her away! This is killing me," he gasped, as she repeated over and over, "Speak, papa! Tell them you didn't!"

But Willy only clung closer to him, and raised her hands that would have drawn her away from her miserable father.

"Willy, mamma sent me to look for you."

It was Eddie's voice, and the strong man groaned, as he caught sight of the boyish form on the other side of the table. The boy did not even glance at his father's face; and his own was flushed, yet set and hard. He had heard his sister's last appeal, and his father's silence stabbed him to the heart.

Mr. Foster undressed Willy's clinging hands, and

carried her to her brother: "Take her home, my boy," he said, huskily.

Eddie struggled for an instant to control his feelings, and then with a burst of childish sorrow threw himself into his father's arms.

Those standing around turned one after another and walked to the door, and the father and children were left alone.

In that hour of bitter anguish, Edgar Foster met a penalty tenfold heavier than any that could have come upon him for his early wrong-doing. But who shall say that, even at this late hour, remorse may not be followed by sincere repentance, and the man yet be saved?—*Examiner and Chronicle.*

THE CASTLE BUILDER.

A gentle boy, with soft and silken locks,
A dreamy boy, with brown and tender eyes,
A castle builder, with his wooden blocks,
And towers that touch imaginary skies.

A fearless rider on his father's knee,
An eager listener unto stories told
At the Round Table of the nursery,
Of heroes and adventures manifold.

There will be other towers for thee to build;
There will be other steeds for thee to ride;
There will be other legends, and all filled
With greater marvels and more glorified.

Build on, and make thy castles high and fair,
Rising and reaching upward to the skies;
List to the voices in the upper air,
Nor lose thy simple faith in mysteries.

—Longfellow.

THE NEW GIRL.

We were brought up together, and we often,
Caroline and myself, say how glad we are that we do not have to be separated at all in this life—only this patch of green meadow lying between our homes. Be sure we have a "meadow path," as full of sweet thoughts as the poet's "River Road" and "Mountain Road." Not a day passes in which our feet do not walk over it—a winding brook thread, as full of curves as a meadow path, and we started out to tell about Caroline's new girl.

"Caroline, good fellow, said: 'Now, Caroline, look about and get a good girl, and we'll keep her right along; an do try and save yourself. You are wearing out, dear, and I can't help but notice it; and it most kills me to think of it, so it does.'"

The good girl was found after awhile, a smart, young lass, trained by a discreet, industrious mother; and you would be surprised to see how much we two have learned from the wisdom of the Home Circle, homely little things, some of them, but, as Carrie said, "it is the little foxes that spoil the vines." A fat chicken was killed for dinner. When Achah picked it, without asking any questions, she put the feathers, all but the wing and tail feathers, into an old pan and stood in the kitchen left beside the stove-pipe, saying: "Chicken feathers never come again; they'll go for a chair-cushion, or to make a soft pillow to put over grandma's feet in a cold winter's night." When it was nicely picked and singed, she laid it in a pan of water and washed it with a rag, rubbing it in an awkward dexterity, and wash out the bluish places left at the roots of the pinfeathers. Now, any of us would have boiled the chicken and made plenty of gravy, and had mashed potatoes, and called it a meal and done with it; but Achah, brought up in a home where economy was practiced, did not do this way. After it was boiled, she took out the legs and wings and a few other bits and set them away for tea, in a cool place. There was plenty of good, rich broth, and she put aside a quart of it in a large bowl. Then she cut the breast in pieces, and the back, and removed the bones, and with milk and baking-powder, made a paste quickly, and soon put together a chicken potpie, seasoning it as she made it, placing a cover of the paste over it with a hole in it for the escape of the steam. Just as she was ready to put it into the oven to bake, she poured on enough of the boiling hot broth to nearly cover it. It baked a delicate brown, and was done nicely in just one hour. There was more of the potpie than the small family ate, but that made a nice meal, after the fashion of the old city.

"And what they could not eat that day,
The next morning fried."

Fried it in a spider, in hot, melted butter, until it was brown, then turned and fried on the other side. So that was two good meals out of one fat hen, but that was not all. The legs and wings and other bits were fried in the same butter, and then she took out the legs and wings and a few other bits and set them away for tea, in a cool place. There was plenty of good, rich broth, and she put aside a quart of it in a large bowl. Then she cut the breast in pieces, and the back, and removed the bones, and with milk and baking-powder, made a paste quickly, and soon put together a chicken potpie, seasoning it as she made it, placing a cover of the paste over it with a hole in it for the escape of the steam. Just as she was ready to put it into the oven to bake, she poured on enough of the boiling hot broth to nearly cover it. It baked a delicate brown, and was done nicely in just one hour. There was more of the potpie than the small family ate, but that made a nice meal, after the fashion of the old city.

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