

LIFE.

BY MRS. M. J. SPARKS.

Life were done, when still, cold hands
Are crossed upon the pulseless breast,
If all were o'er when death-dimmed eyes
Are closed in their unbroken rest,
Well might we shed the burning tear,
As in the anguish of despair
We stand beside a loved one's bier,
And mourn the loss of one so fair.

Life were done, when eyes that beamed
With tenderness in days gone by
Are closed in death; their brightness dimmed—

Their beauty veiled from mortal eye—
Well might we say, with aching heart,
"Tis but a mockery to live.
When all must yield to Death's fell dart,
Their forms to his embrace must give."

Life were done, when willing feet,
That oft on loving errand went,
The throbbing heart, whose every beat
With love and kindness were blest,
Are stilled in death; their mission done,
Then might we mourn with bitter grief
That friends must leave us, one by one—
Might weep that life should be so brief.

But far beyond the shores of time,
Beyond life's billows tempest driven,
There beams a hope, a joy sublime,
Those cherished ones we'll meet in heaven.
For life with them is just begun;
Earth's prison bars are burst in twain
Their conflicts o'er, their battles won,
In joy bright clime they live again.
Marion Hill.

A Home Missionary.

According to my usual custom of
spending a night once a week with
my niece and her husband, I pack-
ed my bag one cold morning and
started for the city.

Arriving at the Florence I as-
cended the elevator to the fifth floor
with the usual sensation that my
inner consciousness was dropping
into the cellar, while I rose in space
with the celerity of a bomb.

When the elevator box reached the
fifth I stepped out with the
feeling of relief that must have made
my countenance radiant, if it in any
way expressed my feelings. I touch
the button of my niece's door, and
she usually does the rest in way of
entertaining, but on this visit it was
different; but, as the novelists say,
I anticipate.

I found Annie in her little rose-
bud of a bedroom (a flat bedroom is
always a bud of a room). Annie had
a sunny window (it was a corner
flat) and was all pink and palest
green with rosebuds all over the
wall, and she, the queen rosebud,
threw her arms around her old
auntie and held me closely to her
warm heart.

I loved Annie as I would have
loved my own daughter if I had had
one.

"I am so glad to see you, auntie;
I am feeling so lonesome."
"Lonesome, my child, in this
pretty room and the best man in the
world coming home tonight."

Her face hardened a little and
she laughed (unnaturally, I thought)
and began to ply me with questions
about the old home, with minute
inquiries about every cat, kitten
and chicken on the place, as was
her wont, and yet she did not seem
herself. "But I want ask. She'll
tell me when her heart flows over."

So I talked on and we had a
merry day, only the difference I
spoke of—Annie was not her usual
bright self. We drew up to the
fire for our five o'clock tea.

It was snowing fast and the wind
howled like a demon.

"A bad night for anyone you
love to be out," I said, drawing the
curtains, after a look into the wintry
street.

Again the hard look in her face.
She has had a quarrel with Dudley,
I'm sure. Dear heart, she thinks
she has trouble and she doesn't know
its meaning.

When Dudley came home I man-
aged to be behind a portiere in the
hall; I wanted to see them meet,
but I was disappointed.

Annie sat toasting the point of a
dainty shoe by the fire, and Dudley
went in and stood with his back to
it, man-fashion, and I heard him
asking for me.

I came in from my eavesdropping
and was greeted with a hearty kiss
and handshake.

We sat by the fire talking until
late, that is, I talked and they talk-
ed to me, but not a word or look to
each other.

There is serious trouble between
these two, I said to myself; it will
out, and I must wait till it comes.
Just as I was comfortably tucked in
bed that night, and in that wonder-
ful border-land when you don't know
whether you are dreaming or
thinking, I heard some one enter
the room and stand by the bed.

"Are asleep, auntie?"

"No, dear child."

"She was in my arms in an instant."

"Dudley won't like you to desert
him, dear," I said, patting her.

"He won't care; he doesn't love
me any more, nor I him. Our mar-
riage was all a mistake, and we will
live apart hereafter."

"What?" I cried, "you are not
going to separate?"

"Oh, no! We will live here to-
gether for the world's sake. We do
not want to make talk, but we have
separated in our hearts forever."

"How did this happen?" I asked,
holding her close.

"Oh, I cannot tell you, auntie.
A thousand little things have oc-
curred to separate and show us that
we were unsuited, unmated, incom-
patible."

"Stuff and nonsense," I said to
myself, but I only petted her as I
used when she was a baby and
fretted.

"He will have his way in every-
thing and I want my way in some
things. He goes to the club very
often lately because he says I don't
love him. He doesn't seem as he
used to before we were married. He
reads the papers all the evening, and
when I tell him he does not love me
he just says he is happy to know I
am near him and he doesn't think
it worth while to tell me he loves
me all the time; I know it without
the telling. Oh! he is so different,
auntie; I know he is growing in-
different to me and our happy mar-
ried life is over." Here she broke
down and cried herself to sleep.

Young people cry their heartaches
to sleep. I laid awake and thought;
that is elderly fashion. It is the
old story. I crooned to myself, the
reaction from its honeymoon; poor
children, how they do love each
other, and how much they do suffer.
I hope Dudley is asleep. I'd like to
comfort him, dear boy. I heard a
noise in the next room. Dudley
was moving about, then I saw the
library gas was lit.

He is going to read the night out;
he feels it worse than she does, dear
foolish children—then I went to
sleep.

The following day the same icy
indifference covering aching hearts.
Annie told the story over again. I
said I was so sorry, so sorry. I
could not say more, words were use-
less, their hearts were steered against
each other. At twilight I opened
the piano and began crooning over
some old melodies. Annie lay
among the cushions on the divan.
Presently my fingers strayed into
the sweetest and tenderest of all
Scotch songs.

"Douglass, Douglass,
Tender and true."

I sang it low but distinctly and
when I came to the words:

"And, would I could have you
back again, Douglass," my old voice
quavered, a chord in my heart that
had long laid silent vibrated with
the wistful longing of the song. I
heard the door shut, and knew,
without seeing, that Dudley was by
the fire. I rambled in and out of
several melodies, not singing but
playing softly. I found my fingers
were straying among the Scotch airs
again. "Annie Laurie" came out
of the throng and my voice took up
the words. When I reached the
second verse I heard a sound on the
divan. Was it a smothered sob and
a caress? I hoped so, but I still
sang on.

"For my bonnie Annie Laurie,
I would lay me down and die."

Then my fingers strayed into
"Home, Sweet Home," and I stole
softly away with a side glance at
two figures so close together on the
divan; the sight made my heart
leap for joy. Later I entered.

"Why, you here, Dudley. When
did you come in?"

"Oh, auntie!" and they both
hugged me until my breath gave
way.

"You did it, you dear old con-
spirator, with your blessed songs.
We love each other just as well, no
better than ever."

When the elevator dropped me
down five stories the following
morning my inner consciousness,
instead of going to the cellar, lifted
itself in sheer joy to the very top of
the house.—Carolyn Hicks, in
Brooklyn Times.

Telling the Truth.

I just wish I could help you to
understand this morning the mean-
ing of that one big word—character.
When a man says he will pay a
debt next week and does it, when
he is county treasurer and no one
is afraid that he will run away with
the money, and when he is a good
neighbor and does well his part in
the church work, people say that
man has character. But if nobody
trusts him and he doesn't obey God,
he has not character.

You know when a workman is
going to put up a building he must
first lay a foundation, and character
is like a building; it must have a
foundation. One of the stones that
must be put into the foundation is
truth-telling, or what my little
boy calls "trulies," and it must be
put in at the bottom or by-and-by
the building will topple over.

I heard a story about a boy who
was brought to school by his father.
The father said to the teacher: "I
don't know whether you can pos-
sibly get along with my boy or not,
he is so full of mischief."

"Well," said the teacher, "does
he tell the truth? Can I trust him
when he tells me anything?"

"O yes," said the father, "he
will tell the truth even if it is
against himself and he knows he
will be punished."

"Then I shall get along with
him," answered the teacher, "and
I know he will make a reliable
man."

You know that at school if one
boy rolls up his sleeves and another
boy runs, the boy who runs away
is sometimes called a coward,
though there is often a chance to
wonder which is the bigger coward
of the two. But the biggest coward
of all is the boy or girl who has
done wrong and then tells a lie for
fear of what will happen if the
real truth is known."

Did you ever play with a wooden
ball at the end of a long rubber
string, which you held in your
hand? You throw it out and catch
it in your hand as it bounds back;
but sometimes when you throw it,
has it bounded back, and instead of
catching it in your hand it hit you
in the mouth? How it hurt! Well,
a lie is like that wooden ball; it
always bounds back, and is sure to
hit where it will hurt. Sometimes
it bounds back just as soon as it is
told. Perhaps you remember being
sent out into the woods to cut
something, and then what was
done with it? To be sure, it doesn't
always bound back right on the
spot, because people haven't found
out about it, but by and by it is
sure to come back and hurt you.

I think boys and girls often say
what isn't true without meaning it,
like the boy who came down stairs
one morning and said: "Why,
there were more than fifty cats out
under my window making music
last night." When questioned
about it he said: "Well, there
were lots of cats; anyway, there was
our cat and another cat." And did
you ever hear somebody say—"I
thought I should die a-laughing,"
when you knew they hadn't even
needed a doctor?

Some people at a breakfast table
one morning agreed to say nothing
that day that was not true. Pretty
soon one of them asked another:
"Why were you late to breakfast?"
"Oh I couldn't," she began, and
then remembered and added: "Well,
to tell the truth, I was lazy and
didn't hurry." Before long one of
them said of another: "She is the
honestest girl in town." Then she
thought she had not spoken the
truth and she added: "Well, she's
rather plain-looking, anyway."

But these unintentional wrong
stories are bad, and a man over in
England has told what they are like.
Have you ever been down town
walking along the street when some-
thing fell on your face, and when
you rubbed it there was a black
streak? You knew that it was soot
from those big chimneys, and it
made everything smutty that it
touched. Well, this Englishman
says that even a slight accidental
falseness is "an ugly soot from the
smoke of the pit."

Don't talk about little lies and
big lies; the smallest lie is big and
ugly and black; and a wrong story
can be told with the eye or the hand
—just by a smile.

We do not need to tell everything
we know. Nobody besides your
mother has a right to ask you if you
have a hole in your stocking. So
there are a great many things you
do not need to tell, but when you
say anything at all tell the truth.

A Miser Baffled.

A miser, having lost a hundred
pounds, promised ten pounds re-
ward to any one who should bring
it to him. An honest poor man,
who found it, brought it to the old
gentleman, demanding the ten
pounds. But the miser, to baffle
him, alleged that there was a hun-
dred and ten pounds in the bag
when lost. The poor man was ad-
vised to sue for the money; and
when the case came on to be tried,
it appearing that the seal on the bag
had not been broken or the bag rip-
ped, the judge said to the defend-
ant's counsel: "That bag you lost
had one hundred and ten pounds in
it, you say?" "Yes, my lord," he
replied. "Then," said the judge,
"according to the evidence given in
court, this bag of money cannot be
your property, for inside there are
but a hundred pounds. Therefore,
the plaintiff must keep it till the
true owner appears and proves his
claim."

Lowly Fidelity.

A tender and beautiful story of
lowly faithfulness is told by a late
writer. It was on one of the
Orkney Islands where a great rock
called "Lonely Rock"—dangerous to ves-
sels, juts out into the sea. In a
fisherman's hut on this island coasts
one night long ago sat a young girl,
busy at her spinning wheel, looking
out upon the dark and driving
clouds. All night she toiled and
watched, and when morning came
one fishing boat—her father's—was
missing. Half a mile from the
cottage her father's body was found
washed upon the shore. His boat

had been wrecked on Lonely Rock.
The girl watched her father's body,
after the manner of her people, till
it was laid in the grave. Then
when night came she arose and set
the candle in her casement, that the
fishermen out on the waves might
see. All night long she sat in the
little room spinning, trimming the
candle when its light grew dim.
After that, in the wild storms of
winter, in the quiet, calm summer,
through driving mists, illusive
moonlight, and solemn darkness that
coast was never one night without
the light from that one little candle.
As many banks of yarn as she had
spun before for her daily bread she
spun still, and one more to pay for
her nightly candle.

The men on the sea, however far
out they had gone, were sure always
of seeing that quiet light shining to
give them safe guidance. Who can
tell how many hearts were cheered
and lives saved from peril and death
by that tiny flame which love and
devotion and self-sacrifice kept there
through the long years?—J. R.
Miller in The Baptist.

Facts in Natural History.

Frogs, toads and serpents never
take any food but that which they
are satisfied is alive.

When a bee, wasp or hornet
stings, it is nearly always at the
expense of its life.

Serpents are so tenacious of life
that they will live for six months
and longer without food.

Turtles dig holes in the sea shore
and bury their eggs, covering them
up to be hatched by the sun.

Lobsters are very pugnacious,
and fight severe battles. If they
lose a claw another grows out.

A single codfish produces more
than a million of eggs in a season.

A whale suckles its young, and
is therefore not a fish! The mother's
affection is remarkable.

TEACHING TRUTHFULNESS.—There
is an old adage which runs "Be
patient if you would have patient
children." If I might be allowed, I
would add, "Be truthful if you
would have truthful children." A
prominent clergyman once said:
"Give me a man who, I know, tells
the truth, and I may make some-
thing of him; but, if there is no de-
pendence to be placed upon his
word, I am unable to do anything,
—there is no foundation upon which
to build."

So many persons think little ones
do not see through deceptions, and
often take advantage of their credu-
lity. I prefer that a child should
have confidence in me rather than
love me: if I have the former, it is
an easy matter to win the latter;
but, let the childish faith once be
shaken or destroyed, and it will
take many long weeks to rebuild it,
when possibly it may have been
shattered by a moment's carelessness.
—The Mother's Nursery Guide.

Little Things.

The smallest crust may save a
human life;
The smallest act may lead to human
strife;
The smallest touch may cause the
body pain;
The smallest spark may fire a field
of grain;
The smallest deed may kill the truly
brave;
The smallest skill may serve a life
to save;
The smallest drop the thirsty may
relieve;
The slightest shock may wake a
heart to grief.
Naught is so small that it may not
contain
The rose of pleasure or the thorn of
pain.

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