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"Be true to God, to your Country, and to your Duty."

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TERMS:

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Poetry.



"WE ARE BUT TWO."

"We are but two"—our brother sleeps
Beneath a Southern sky,
For from the friends who loved him well,
He went to sleep and die!

Fall off we think upon the scene,
That made our childhood gay,
And all the bright and sunny hours
When we were wont to play.

And then, as ripen years now light
Upon our pathway shed,
Ah, little thought we that so soon
He'd sleep among the dead!

"We are but two"—'tis but a day
That he has left us here,
And yet we feel as if we were
Forever parted from his dear.

And when the bright and sunny Spring
Shall gladden earth and sky,
And nature's busy, with gentle strings,
Is tuned to melody.

Our hearts a sadder song will sing—
A mournful, sacred strain,
And the sighing of the spirit's lyre,
Shall wail the heart to pain.

"We are but two"—alone we stand
Beside our mother's tomb,
And scatter o'er the grassy mound,
Bright spring flowers in their bloom.

And pluck the sweet and thornless rose
To deck the hallowed spot,
Where sleeps our sainted mother dear,
Who never can be forgot.

She's welcomed to the spirit's home—
Her loved and cherished one,
And Heaven hath granted one jewel more—
Bright, sparkling as the sun.

Miscellaneous.

THE HIDDEN CRIME.

On a bright June day, nearly two score years ago, a thrill of horror ran through a quiet New England community. There were no clouds in the sky; the face of Nature was decked in summer loveliness; no potent had presaged this terrible calamity. Yet a storm seemed to have swept over the scene, leaving illness and desolation in its track. There were no busy groups of workmen in the fields or workshops, and the faces of women and of children that looked forth from the vine shaded windows of farm-houses, and of cottages that stood in their villages along the village street, were white with terror.

Around the great white house upon the hill, the mansion built by the once proud owner of all the adjacent tract, and since occupied by the long line of his descendants, swarmed a black, shifting crowd—all the men and well-grown boys of the village and country round.

His eyes, so rare and mysterious as fearful. Within the house were gathered other groups of men, with expectancy upon their stern faces. In one corner sat the Coroner of the county and his jury, and in another, a dark pool of his own blood, lay the body of his wife, only the right breast, had been the master of the mansion.

He was a bachelor, living there alone with his servants, who all slept in apartments remote from his own. He had retired to his chamber at his usual hour the evening previous. In the morning, when the man-servant went to spread the table in the library, which was Judge Fletcher's usual breakfast-room as well, he found his master lying there stark and dead.

The tidings spread rapidly. Mrs. Wood, the Coroner arrived, had selected his jury, and commenced his inquest.

That the man was dead, all could see. That the life had been let out through two deep wounds in the side; that one hand had been nearly severed from the arm, is a probable attempt at defense, and just as apparent. But who had done the deed, or for what motive, remained, for a long time, fruitless inquiries.

None of the treasures of plate or jewels, of which there were great store in the old house, had been removed. No trace of the exit or entrance of the assassin could be found, until late in the day, when a pryling lid discovered in the rock garden mold at the end of the verandah, which ran beneath the library windows, a footprint, small, well-shaped, and well defined, evidently that of a man of slight proportions.

Through the long French windows of this room, then, the murderer must have made his entrance and exit.

There was no verdict on that day. The next morning the inquest was recommenced. On this occasion the nearest male relatives of the deceased were present—two young men, his nephews, and coming to each other, the two young men so dissimilar in aspect, in

the same name. Arnold Fletcher was tall, though slight, with a certain dark but terrible beauty of countenance. He might have sat for the portrait of one of Milton's fallen angels. He was clad in garments somewhat coarse and ruder for use withstanding his descent from this old, and proud, and rich family, he was poor. He had never been a favorite of his rich uncle, though he had many traits of the family about him. Of these, the most noticeable in person was the small, well-shaped feet and hands, which distinguished the rare. In mind he had all their sternness and haughtiness, without the justice and self-control which had so powerfully distinguished the best specimens of that long line.

Claudius Fletcher, on the other hand, had no pretensions to beauty, beyond those of a frank, ruddy face, beaming with cheerful good nature, a well formed person, and the family ban and fear of stately mould. He had been the dead uncle's favorite, and this had been sometimes shown in a marked manner, though Judge Fletcher had always distributed his gifts alike, with indolent justice, to the two orphan sons of his dead brothers.

The demeanor of the young men on this occasion was quite in keeping with their characters, though, to the ordinary observer, it did not so appear. Arnold Fletcher was loud in his lamentations; tears rolled down his swarthy cheeks; and, with eloquent hand applied to his forehead, he yoked vengeance on the cowardly assassin of his good uncle. There was a bluster and bravado in his manner which impressed the crowd of rustic people who had gathered, and gave them the idea of strong love for his uncle, great grief at his loss, and a determination to discover and bring to justice the murderer. It was not mentioned, till long afterward, that he never once entered the room where his dead uncle lay, but still readily about the house, peering into closed apartments, and more than once fingering the seals which the Coroner had caused to be affixed to the repositories of papers and valuables belonging to the deceased.

Claudius Fletcher, on the contrary, no sooner arrived at the house than he proceeded at once to the apartment in which his uncle lay. He knelt by the side of the body, and kissed the cold hand which had so often grasped him lovingly. No tears bedewed the cheek, whose ruddiness had given way to almost mortal pallor. Scarcely speaking to any one, save to inquire if any traces had yet been discovered of the perpetrators of this deed, he went slowly

and seated himself in a lonely corner of one of the rooms, and there remained with his face buried in his clasped hands.

The day wore on. The little testimony had all been taken; the servants carefully examined; the statements of physicians recorded; and the Coroner was about addressing the jury when an excited group of men burst into the room. The foremost held in his hand a blood stained sleep-knife, which he had just discovered hidden beneath the shrubs which grew in a distant corner of the garden. Near the spot were other distinct footprints, corresponding exactly with those found at the end of the verandah.

The investigation was resumed. The knife was found to be the property of Claudius Fletcher. Indeed it there, plainly engraved upon the silver plate that ornamented its side, his name.

At once suspicion, the angry suspicion of the crowd, fastened upon him. He calmly acknowledged the knife to be his, and asserted that on the day before the murder he had, when on a visit to his uncle, lent it to him, and the deceased had probably conscientiously retained it. He had left home that night on a visit of business for his uncle in a neighboring city, going in the stage at midnight, spending one day in the city, and returning on the following night. All this was corroborated by the testimony of others, but still there remained to be accounted for the time previous to leaving home on his midnight journey. His widowed mother and sister were compelled to acknowledge that his bed had not been occupied that night, and that they were not retired to their room early, with the agreed intention of sleeping for an hour or two; and they, having gone to rest as usual, did not hear him go out.

Only himself and Arnold had an interest in the old man's death, and the murder had evidently not been committed by a person in search of plunder. Suspicion therefore turned upon the young man. His life, so dissimilar to all around him, in that hour with those who, until then, had been his friends. And a voice suggested that his boots should be measured with the footprints, and they were found to fit them exactly, a gross of horror burst from all present. For an instant all shrank from the unfortunate man, and he stood white as a mill, wonder and grief, more than fear depicted upon his face, the center of that angry crowd. After that momentary hush followed the fierce clamor of many voices. Only for the interposition of the officers of the law, only for the respect for law which is a part of the New England character, he would have been torn in pieces, or hanged upon the nearest tree, by that crowd of his neighbors now suddenly become an excited mob.

Claudius was arrested. The verdict of the Coroner's jury fixed suspicion of the crime upon him. All processes of the law were duly followed out. He was indicted, arraigned, tried for the crime of murder. The evidence was all circumstantial—the footprints, the sleep-knife, bloody and bearing his name, and by himself acknowledged to be his own, the unexplained employment of the two hours before midnight of that fatal night, who did indeed prove that fastened the crime upon him. And when it was considered that his uncle's death would, in case a will had been found, have probably made him heir of the larger portion of his large estate, a sufficient motive was discovered.

But the New England character is just, though stern. There was no positive proof, and the jury, conscious, therefore, was not death, but this life in death, incarceration within prison walls for thirty years.

He, the strong youth, in the budding prime of his manhood, was borne away to his prison. His mother and his sister assumed the woe of mourning, for to them he was dead. Neither scarcely dared to hope that ever they should look upon his face again.

The crime of Claudius and his motives deprived him of all rights. So when Arnold administered upon the estate of his deceased uncle, it was decided that he was the heir. By his great generosity a small sum was given to the mother and sister of Claudius, a life interest in certain property, and then he assumed possession of all the rest.

He did not take up his abode in the white house on the hill. The old mansion was closed and deserted, save by a couple of ancient servants, appointed to care for the house and grounds; and the new proprietor built himself a costly residence in

the neighborhood of the city, here he shortly after brought a bride—a gentle, sweet, and lovely girl, whom, some dared to whisper, his gold had won from her parents, but was chosen hardly being recognized in the transaction; and here he dwelt—rich, influential, and very respectable, having cast aside all his old habits of dissipation, and become a most estimable member of community. His charities were large; he was noted as a public benefactor in agriculture and more than once high political trusts were bestowed upon him.

Meanwhile poor Claudius pined in prison, and his mother and sister dwelt in their lonely home, in those narrow circumstances that were scarcely above pauperism, and mourned for him with a grief bitterer than if he were dead. No doubt of his innocence of the crime so mysteriously thrust upon him, ever troubled them. But through all their perfect faith in him the shadow of his fearful degradation, of the unutterable sorrow and shame of his lot, persisted in gloom that no sun could brighten.

And, in silence she dared not break, another heart pined for Claudius. No words of love had ever been spoken between them, for Claudius was poor, and dared not ask her of her parents. On his return from the journey he had undertaken on that fatal night, he had intended to ascertain the secret of his love in his uncle's study, to bid him in some manner that should insure the independence which would enable him to marry, if indeed he might win her. Of this, though humble, and different of his own attractions of mind and person, he had small doubt, for there is a subtle magnetic influence between the spirit of those who mutually love, that often betrays the heart long before their lips have dared to utter it.

It was beneath her window that he had spent those fatal hours. He had avowed that he was watching, but something had reassured him from saying more. Per

haps he had seen, for some mysterious influence had kept her wakened on that night, and she had watched in the darkness the tall, slight figure that, lighted only by the vague radiance of the stars, had passed for hours before her dwelling.

The weary years rolled on, full of change, and yet to one with a fulfilling monotony. Next up with the prison walls, he felt the alternations of cold and heat, of light and darkness. He marked the weeks by the recurring Sundays that permitted him to join in the prison worship. For him there was no other change. No tidings from the outer world ever reached him. He passed his days in ceaseless toil, and only knew that he was growing old when, after a weary time, he felt the wrinkles in his cheeks, and saw that the locks, periodically clipped from his head, were streaked with gray.

In the meantime the shadow of his disgrace had fallen upon his household. His mother pined and died, broken-hearted, when he had been five years in prison—her last words asserting her belief in his innocence. His sister was then left alone; but she was marked. Her brother's disgrace affixed a stigma to her, innocent as she was, and her positive beauty attracted no offers of marriage. And she was not sure to sorrow at this. Long ago she had made one firm resolve. If it pleased God that she should live until her brother were free once more, she would devote the remainder of her life to him.

There was another in whose heart the same resolve had been formed—the young girl whom Claudius had loved. She had left the village with her parents, soon after his imprisonment, and since had been living in the West, but her resolve never faltered. Her constancy shrank not at the long delay of thirty years. She knew that she should welcome Claudius Fletcher with a love as fresh and warm, and true, as that of eighteen, when at length he should walk forth free. So these women, widely separated, yet with one aim, waited for the time when, with entire self-devotion, they should welcome to his home the enfranchised Claudius.

Their lives formed an impassible barrier, and at length mingled; for when her parents died, and left her sole heiress of their handsome property, the woman he had loved returned to her native village, and, going straight to Alice Fletcher, told her all and she, without the least momentary delay, and with her arms around her, and her eyes fixed upon his, she said, "I have waited for you, and I am here."

At length he came. The long years of exile and suffering were past. He had expiated to society the crime of which he had been accused, and came more he was permitted to step forth into the air, and sunshine, and upon the earth, a free man. His sister met him, and behind her lingered that other woman, no longer the fresh and sweet young girl he had known, but wrinkled and pale, with lines of gray in her dark hair, and traces of the age that was creeping on, in her thin and slightly bent figure, so unlike the rounded form that had been deemed so beautiful in his eyes.

I dare not portray the meeting. There are passages in every human life that sacred for words, and in the lives of those who have so deeply suffered there is a mystery of grief, and a pathos of joy; in each reunion, that it were daring to invade by aught as poor as language. It is enough that the barriers of those silent years were all swept away, and Claudius came home at once to the hearts that had loved him so long. And Alice Fletcher completed her life long sacrifice when, laying aside all jealousy of a love greater than she could claim, she yielded upon the late bridal of the long loving pair, and felt herself more devoted than ever before, since there was nothing left to hope for.

For she dared not hope for that which was to come to pass.

Arnold Fletcher, with all his wealth, had not been a happy man. He had been despised, his friends were soon to say, and then they would, as consolation, remind him of his innumerable treasures laid up above.

His wife had faded from his arms in the fourth year of their marriage. She had brought him three children. All had lived to adult years. In the needs of conversation, their father's disease, seemed to have been born at their birth. They did just upon the threshold of womanhood, fading away as the mother they so much resembled had done. The other child, the eldest—a son, inherited the dark beauty which had distinguished his father's youth. He inherited, also, his unusual nature, his taste and aptitude for low vice, with, apparently, scarcely a redeeming trait. He died, struck down by a violent passion in a tavern brawl, on the very day that set Claudius Fletcher free.

Thenceforth, Arnold Fletcher, always of gloomy and stern disposition, shut himself closely into the privacy of his own house. He made no attempt to welcome in person his long-imprisoned relative, and though he penned a letter of congratulation, which he expressed his oft repeated belief in the innocence of Claudius, he refused to see him, even when his ailing health gave warning of approaching death.

Two years passed away. The stain of his crime was still upon Claudius, and he lived secluded with the two women who had devoted all their lives to him. All things that ever his innocence would be made clear had long been given up, and they waited only for the revelation of eternity. And then Arnold Fletcher died. Not in his bed, with weeping attendants around him, as became so worthy and rich a man, but alone in his study, in the midnight hour, and interrupted by the unwelcome messenger in an employment evidently reserved for the last work of his life, but destined never to be completed.

A secret door of his cabinet, never opened but by himself in all those thirty years, lay open then, within reach of the hand that had suffered while clutching the mysterious, the long-preserved evidence of his life as a criminal. Shards of a half-burned willow smoldered upon the hearth; in the dead man's hand, half dragged from their repository, were the remaining articles of a suit of garments of a longer past fashion, all splashed and stained with dark spots, which, though time had bleached them, were unmistakably human gore. And there, beside them, lay a pair of boots—small as became a Fletcher, with the dark mold still adhering to them, and not yet, in all those years, crumbled into dust. He had assayed to destroy the last and only proof of that long buried crime for which another had suffered, but death, stern and relentless enemy, had prevented him.

There were young men, now grown old, who still remembered the murder of the older Fletcher, the manly bearing of Claudius, and his unshaken grief and horror, and contrition sorrow. All at once his innocence seemed to shine forth luminous and clear, while the dark life of Arnold Fletcher, haunted always by his terrible remorse, and

the memory of the gallows prisoner, seemed to them in that hour a greater punishment than the dread and long ordeal of those gray prison walls. The innocence of Claudius re-established, many a gleam of joy shone over his later pilgrimage. His cousin's great wealth became his, and, with his wife and sister, he went back to dwell in the white mansion upon the hill, now renovated and restored to its pristine beauty.

He perished miserably the wretched man, and, on the ruins of his character, built upon another's downfall, that other rose to a light in the public esteem which might have been crowned by any public testimonial. But after all his castings pains was the only boon he craved, and was the sweetest joy for him and for those who had so truly loved and trusted him through all.

THE RESULTS OF THE BATTLE OF CHICKASAW BAY.—The Vicksburg Citizen, of January 14, in summing up the results of the late battle of Chickasaw Bay, remarks thus:

Now that the smoke has cleared off, we are enabled to examine the fruits of the great victory at Chickasaw Bay and to estimate its precise value. It was a signal achievement to the illustrious leader; it was a gratification to the great heart of the Confederacy; it weakened the enemy by fifteen hundred to two thousand of his best troops; it secured for us some fifteen hundred of the best guns; it placed in our possession five stands of color, and five hundred Yankee prisoners, and drove the enemy away from the place.

THE HARRIS LANE.—Gentlemen recently from Texas, says the Richmond Whig express the conviction that it was neither the Alabama nor the Florida which sunk the Harriet Lane, but the fleet. It is known that General Magruder, as soon as the Harriet Lane was taken, thoroughly repaired her, and without waiting for Mr. Mallory's orders, sent her to sea under the command of Captain Isaac Smith, as bold and adventurous a spirit as the Continent can boast. Known facts render it highly probable that it was the d.ing pirate who sent the Harriet to David Jones' locker.

THURSDAY'S SPEECHES.—The New York Tribune, of the 16th inst., opens its summary of news with the following:

Jeff Davis' Message to his Congress is printed in the Richmond papers of yesterday, and an abstract reaches us by the telegraph. Its key-note is the entire independence of the so-called Confederacy, and upon that stipulation only can there be any attempt at peace. He has no idea of armistice or arrangement on any other basis.

At Sharpsburg, Gen. Lee hailed one of the many stragglers, and inquired:

"Where are you going sir?"

"Gone to the rear."

"What are you going to the rear for?"

"Well, I've been stung by a bug, and I'm what they call demoralized."

This was enough. Gen. Lee had not the heart to say more to an innocent who had been "stung by a bug"—meaning, perhaps, that he had been stung by a bomb.

THE ABOLITION GUN BATTLE.—The morning Star has engaged Friday morning's edition from their gun boats at a sarge on Cole's Island. The firing at the site was given rise to a number of rumors entirely without foundation. Our account reports Pinckney, Dawfuskie and Ball's Islands, all clear of Abolitionists.

A FATAL TORY MISTAKE.—Seven Union troopers of East Tennessee, who had passed Grate Gap, near Clinton, on their way to Abbe's dominions, were on Monday last, killed by their own friends, the Union bushwhackers, who mistook them for rebels. We presume when the bushwhackers found out who were the ruffians that "mistakes" will happen in the best regulated families. —*Andover Register, 24th.*

YATKES SOMERSET—will soon be pretty unsafe. The Alabama doubled the rates of insurance; the Florida will still further increase the risk; the South has just about as much affection for the enemy as Semmes, and the Harriet Lane, commanded by some dare devil Texas, will do more service for us in a month than she did for Lincoln in a year.

ROW IS NON-PROFIT.—A report is in circulation that a desperate row occurred recently in Norfolk, Va., between the soldiers and citizens, in which three men named Boote, Wash and Buckley were killed. These individuals had been for some time regarded as "good Union men."

A collision is threatened between the military and civil authorities at Indianapolis. The Judge of the Supreme Court of Indiana gives the Federal authorities intently to understand that he will have the writ of *habeas corpus*, and try whether the military or civil power is triumphant.