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[WHOLE NO. 221.]

[From the Raleigh Progress.  
NOBLE WORDS.

"The State is now trying to provide food for your families, and each county is making a similar provision; and as your Chief Magistrate I promise you that the wife and child of the soldier who is in the army doing his duty shall share the last bushel of meal and the last pound of meat in the State."—Gov. Vance's Proclamation.

Noble words and nobly spoken,  
Springing from a noble heart:  
Receive them, soldiers, as a token  
That your chief will do his part.  
He has shared the soldier's camp,  
He has braved the battle's danger;  
To the foeman's deadly tramp,  
In war's array he is no stranger.

He does not deal in idle words,  
And tho' the storms of battle lower,  
He courts no governmental lords,  
Nor bends to arbitrary power.  
Of all he will maintain the rights  
So far as power within him lies,  
And usurpation, in its flights,  
Falls at his feet, and strangled, dies.

How it will nerve the soldier's arm,  
How it will cheer the soldier's heart,  
To know that in war's wild alarm,  
Their gallant Chief will act his part,  
That he protects the loved at home,  
And sees that wives and babes are fed:—  
Let Yankee swarms like locusts come—  
We'll give to each a gory bed.

"The wife and child!"—what dearer names  
Could fall upon a soldier's ear?  
They kindle all the purer flames  
That home and peace were wont to cheer;  
They stir the deepest depths of soul,  
They wake each energy of life:—  
"I'll back the cursed invader roll,  
He seeks to harm my child, my wife."

And ye who heard your meat and bread,  
Ye vipers viler than the devil,  
Hark! listen to the soldier's tread,  
And tremble from a sense of evil.  
Bolt your doors and bar their well,  
Preserve your stores with utmost care,  
Neither give, nor lose, nor sell,  
But in the soldier's name, beware!

Soldiers of the old North State,  
Ye are covered now with glory,—  
Onward! and whatever your fate,  
Ye shall be renowned in story.  
Let the shock of battle come—  
Let the deadly missiles fly—  
You'll think of those you left at home,  
"Vance and advance!" your battle cry.

No hireling tools of reckless faction  
Can your well earned fame undo;  
You have won it by your action—  
God and history are with you.  
Of you your State is justly proud,  
She knows with you her fame's secure,  
And base defamers ne'er can cloud  
Your sun of glory bright and pure.  
Edinburgh, N. C., March 2, 1863. F. I. W.

## THE BROKEN GERANIUM. A REMINISCENCE OF VIRGINIA.

We had a flower-garden—my friend Leonora and myself, and it was very beautiful; I cannot tell you how beautiful. We had the loveliest roses, the sweetest geraniums, the most captivating verbenas—heart's-ease, cape jessamine, fuschias, heliotropes—in short, whatever was lovely, sweet and pure; in such a glorious profusion that their luxuriant blooms were woven together with all the cunning of Arachne's fabled web. Leonora's mother had assigned us the plot on account of its peculiarly favourable position for the growth and highest development of plants, sloping northward and westward, cut off, perhaps, too much from the morning sun by the rear wall of the old mansion, but yet when watered by silver dews and gentle rains, and kindled into fecundity by the warm breath of the air and the golden sunlight, a garden of whose blooms a king might have been proud; yea, and a queen also, if, at the hazard of shaming her jewels, she had dared venture there.

This garden was, in verity, our Paradise. We visited it in the morning, at noon, and in the pale twilight, cherishing the frail, restraining the too luxuriant, and in dry seasons carrying fresh water from the wells to moisten the parched lips of the sweet sufferers. Leonora had a peculiarly happy gift with flowers: I believe it was born with her, for surely no instruction could give that felicitous touch and intuitive sense of what each flower needed, which were characteristic of her ministries. She made her leaf-cups wherein she bore away the noxious insects that annoyed the flowers—bore them away in love, too kind in heart ruthlessly to kill any creature that God has made—with delicate fingers she trailed the festooning vines up the lattice or upon the wall, and, as an angel-warrior over holy children, kept watch and ward, as far as possible, against any adverse contingencies, or melancholy casualties.

Oh! sweet to my mind, in the memory of the garden. Sweet are the recollections of the delightful talks we had over it, discussions, of its state, misfortunes, (for it had such now then, as

we shall see) and prospects; wondering much if the roses would ever bloom; if the verbenas would spread too much and overshadow the more modest flowers; if the seeds sown in names would come up properly, and forming a hundred other like conjectures. What splendid bouquets Leonora gathered from those circular beds! And oh! with what adroitness she used to weave them of flowers and leaves, until they stood completed a perfect realization of her own bright, beautiful fancies; artistic creations of her own soul!

Among all our flowers there was one which deserved to be called, "our favourite." It was a rose-geranium, which a sweet, invalid girl had given me, to be kept as a memorial of her when the flowers of her youth should know her beauty and excellence no longer. When her white fingers placed it in my hands one beautiful morning, it was small; but under Leonora's kind care it soon flourished apace, and cheered us with its beauty and sweetness. Ere the frost fell on the leaves and meadows, she took it from its bed and transferred it to a sheltered niche in the large library, where all winter long ministered to and guarded by her watchful love, it spread its leaves wider and higher, until they rested their soft cheeks against the smooth widow-panes.

When spring came again and the crocus unfolded its sweetness and the violet glistened in the woods and gardens, she planted it again in its summer clime where the heart's esse might comfort and the regal rose encourage, all through the hours of dejection that come alike upon flowers and mortals in the circles of life.

Ah! an hour was coming when none of its kindred could comfort—when neither wind, nor sun, nor dew, nor even Leonora's love could avail anything for the life of our pet rose-geranium.

Early in the morning we discovered it, but alas! too late, lying upon the bed where so long it had flourished in beauty, a broken fragment, dissevered at the ground. There were no traces of the ravager visible—no foot-prints, nor finger-marks—the other flowers were all inviolate—but our pet was forever destroyed.

It was a gift from Alice Gray, and she was daily drawing nearer to the unseen world. It was a bitter disappointment to us both—a disappointment which no one can appreciate in its fullness unless they, too, have received a gift from a dear friend just on the grave's verge, and watched it with a long year's care and love, only to hold it in their hands dead.

It was dead. Dead! there is something terrible in that word even when applied to a flower. Dead! Ask the bleeding heart by the grave of that word! Ask the gay child with its hoop and song; the Preacher in his surplice, the bride at the altar! Dead! the sound is the most terrible of all knells.

The word was ringing in my heart and brain when a messenger came bearing a note, snowy-white, but sealed with black, from the mother of her who gave me the geranium. *Sweet Alice was dead.*

"At what hour did she die?" I asked of the messenger. "Last night, just before morning," was his reply.

"Is it not strange," I said afterward to Leonora, "that in the same night, perhaps in the same hour, the geranium was broken?"

"Who can tell," she answered me, "the connection between her spirit and that flower? The Soul is a mystery, and all beauty is one." We cannot conjecture how our flower was destroyed, whether gently or violently. It may be its unknown principle of life departed as sweetly as the soul of Alice Gray.

"How did she die?" I asked.

In the quiet night, just before dawn, they say, she was lying white as marble on her couch, not asleep, but with closed lids as though dreaming or wrapped in pleasant reverie. They thought her better, and the physician held out hopes of a temporary recovery. The lamp burned low in a distant corner of the room, and the nurse sat alone, shading her eyes with her hands, half-tempted to sleep. Without all was still: the holy calmness of a mid-summer night when the moon is full. Suddenly the pale dreamer arose upright on her couch.

"Did you not hear it, Jane?"

The half-slumbering nurse sprang up in alarm.

"Hear what, darling?"

"A church-bell tolling. I heard it plainly. Listen! I hear it again!"

The terrified woman peered in the direction indicated by the girl.

"Do you not hear it now?" And she caught her by the arm and drew her close to herself.

"There it sounds, slowly, solemnly, I can count each stroke. It is tolling for a funeral."

Then she said in a subdued voice, as though addressing her own inner spirit, "Can it be for

She sank down upon her couch. Her head drooped low between her white, sculptured arms, now emaciated by disease; her golden hair

covered them with a cloud of glory. She spoke calmly in a sweet, low voice:

"You can sit down now, Jane. If I need you again, I will call."

Alas! she never did call. In the sweet morning, when the robin came to her window to sing his song, came her friends to ask how she passed the night. She had indeed passed the night, and passed the glory of ineffable day, and bathed her pure soul in the radiance of another world. They found her placid in death—a sweet, calm smile upon her lovely face—the lids closed gently over her eyes, and her head still encircled by her white arms, covered with the glory of her golden hair.

Two days after, when the warm earth held in her bosom the beautiful tabernacle wherein dwelt the far more beautiful soul of Alice Gray, I being comparatively a stranger in the lovely green valley of Old Virginia, asked of Leonora a simple narrative of the history of the young girl whose death we still deplored; not suspecting for one moment the humble, yet painful drama in which she, in her physical weakness and woman's mightiness, bore the prominent part.

This is the unobtrusive history of that true heart as I received it from the eloquent lips of Leonora. And I would for your sake, oh, my reader, that those same lips might send it glowing to your heart, that you might know how the humble life of a wronged girl is revenged in the full soul, and thrilling words of one of her own sex.

Alice Gray was an only child. From childhood, having no playmates at home, her constant companion was a Henry Browne, whose father, a man of wealth and influence, dwelt in the large old house, whose tall chimneys are visible from the front windows of Mr. Gray's mansion. There are no other houses to be seen for miles; and from the line where their lands meet, far away in every direction, run their large, fertile fields. "A fine stroke of policy it would be," said Mr. Browne to himself one day, "if my only child, Henry, could win Alice Gray; for then you perceive"—with a hearty rub of the hands—"all these forestreaching acres would belong to the house of Browne."

Truly, circumstances favoured greatly Mr. Browne's darling plan. Alice without a playmate found one suited to her age and taste in the boy, Henry, and besides, both, according to a wise plan of his father's, studied under the same teachers. Uniformity of pursuit, and their segregated state, alone were sufficient to bind them closely in friendship, and moreover, there was in the two that contrast of taste and disposition which always in children, especially where there is an opposition of sex, acts as an attraction to make hearts cohere. Together in the spring they hunted the earliest wild flowers in the woods; in summer wove garlands under the trees, or watched the little fledglings fluttering in the nests, or essaying flight from the boughs: in autumn strolled over the hills or through the woods to gather the large chestnuts whose burrs the yesternight frost opened, or stood hand in hand, gazing at the mist-veiled mountains or listening to the merry songs of the huskers at work in the fields. And in winter they sat by the blazing log-fire and told each other fairy tales and tasked their weak imaginations in a cheerful rivalry.

Thus their childhoods passed, and unconsciously they loved each other. By no words had it been said, but each took it for granted; just as the little brother may not say a word concerning his love to his little toddling sister, and yet all the time love deeper than death. There was need of a revelation to show them that they loved, and moreover that their love surpassed the simple affection which often passes under that name; and that revelation came.

One cold morning in early winter, when a slight crust of ice was on the ground, word was brought to Alice that Henry Browne, by the fall of his horse on the ice, had shattered his arm, and received other injuries of a deeply serious nature. Mr. and Mrs. Gray had just before driven to the neighbouring town on business, and there was no one to prevent Alice from executing her resolution to walk over to Mr. Browne's and ascertain for herself the nature and extent of her friend's injuries. The servants were unanimously of the opinion that "Miss Alice must have her own way," and offered but a trifling resistance. Wrapping herself in a cloak, forth she went, delicate girl as she was, along the slippery road, buffeted and chilled by the rude, cold winds that ever and anon drifted masses of snow in her face. Yet she was undaunted. On she went until she reached the house, and saw for herself the shattered arm and the cuts over the forehead; that left no room for doubt concerning the truth of the reports she had heard. At the sight her childish nature lost its control and as she stooped to kiss Henry's pale forehead, a flood of tears broke from her eyes and ran down upon his face.

The revelation was made. The children (for they were such) knew for the first time that they

loved more deeply than children generally do, and the knowledge sent smiles over Henry's fine face. Mr. Browne and his wife saw not in vain; and beneath those idle tears of children, discerned afar the realization of their oft-discussed project.

The winter passed slowly away. And when the spring came with her birds and flowers, Henry was strong enough to walk out with Alice to these old nooks in the woods, where they knew the earliest wild flowers grew. And there, on the first of their spring-day excursions, he told his love, and encircling each other with their arms upon a mossy throne of rocks, they vowed eternal constancy and fidelity then and forever.

We ought not to despise the loves of children. "The child is father of the man," and the loves of childhood swell and expand in after years with the mature fruit of the vine, whose pure juice is the most glorious intoxication which the human heart feels upon earth. And I hope to show here that, on one side, this love, pledged by two children in the shade of the woods, was more enduring than life.

Years passed on, and Henry's disposition, always adventurous, began to inflame with a desire for doing exploits for something to break up the old monotony of his country life. His blood boiled with a passion for heroic achievement, and every wild, thrilling story that could be found in newspapers or history, was read again and again with morbid avidity. His old passion for horsemanship and hunting grew fierce, became almost distasteful, and home with its code of manners, nay, even Alice's love, weighed little in the balance against this dominant passion.

Finally, wearied out by a fruitless resistance, his father and mother consented to his project to join a party of gentlemen about to embark for California. Sorrowfully they bade him adieu; their only son and hope—but they consoled their hearts with his oft-repeated promise, that after he had distinguished himself and satisfied his desire for honour, he would return, marry his dear Alice, and settle down to live upon the ancestral acres.

It was in the sweet spring-time that he rode over to say, "Farewell" to the girl whose life was bound up in his—whose faithful heart beat only for his happiness. Day, like a sweet majestic song played to the lyre of angels had died in "long, sequacious notes" over delicious, sunset-piled scenery, and tender twilight, as if a tear wrought by the melancholy of the strain in Nature's eyes, glistened over the long stretches of the greening landscape. He lingered in the parlour long, as if loth to start on an errand that woke the slumberous energies of passion, though his horse pawed restively under the large looust; he mounted at last, but yet curbed his horse's ardour, and compelled him to walk along the smooth road where erst he struck fire from his noisy feet. What aileth him? Who can tell? But can it be that along the face of night move the solemn shadows of the Future—the long procession of coming days of sin and nights of disquiet, terminated with a sable hearse and a small, fresh grave? I know not. But if the Future be fixed, an occult Alp-land—and man alone be progressive, why may not glimpses of her awful front be disclosed through a cloud-rift, or a long shadow at times smite the face of him "who farther from the East must travel," attended by visions of Heaven and phantoms of terror from Hades?

Alice sat in the long porch, watching the gathing shades upon the distant mountain. The book, with which she had beguiled her fancy, lay by her side; her head rested on her hand, as in statues I have seen, and the delicately lashed lids shut in the yearning sweetness of her meek eyes. She was dreaming, but sleep folded no pinion over her senses. Oh! Poets, tell me what it is when a maiden dreams, for I turn with eagerness from the painful memories of the night-dreams of my fancy to the conception of a sweet maiden's dream, painless, blessed? I know she felt no pain, for her face was as placid as a seraph's in that dim twilight.

But she started. The gate was swung open and swift as a bird's flight Henry Browne spurred his horse along the broad avenue, under the drooping boughs of the old trees. She sprang to meet him.

"You are late," she said, "very late—my heart was sick waiting for you."

"But it is better late than never, darling. I was delayed by the innumerable preparations for my departure in the morning."

"Must you go, indeed. I have been hoping so fondly that you would yet stay. Why, to-night as I sat looking at the sunset, I dreamed that you would stay, and live at your old home, and we would be so happy. But what am I saying! You long to be a distinguished man, whose name shall shine as a star in the chronicles of your race, and I would die to make you so. Come, my dear, and let us have a good talk this last night."

"That's sensible, Alice. I will not stay in

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