FOR THE YOUNG

IRENE.

BY ELDER JOSEPH WALKER.

No person (if there be any who read this who can, from personal experience, can imagine the desolation of a woman's heart when required to surrender a son or a brother to be immolated on a battle field. The dark side of the picture is ever present to her mental vision, and the hope that the last fond sigh died away on the yet listening ear, he is regarded as virtually dead. Or, if he should survive the conflict of arms and return, he is the same but of old he will be with a shattered constitution and impaired morals. Mrs. Forester did not fear that the morals of her son would suffer from the associations and temptations of the camp, but if he should not be slain, she never expected to see him a healthy man again. No wonder, therefore, that she lamented over his departure as one who had no hope.

Irene, always patient and remarkable for her fortitude, parted from her brother on this occasion with manifestations of the deepest sorrow. Her grief is not only visible in every line of her features, but she gave way to sobs and groans which betrayed the profound wretchedness of her soul. She had parted that day from two of the companions of her youth—one an adored brother, and the other a friend in whose welfare she could not but feel a deep interest. They had gone to fight, if need be—not a foreign foe, but with brethren of the same kindred, living under the same laws, and who had been, till lately, protected by the same flag.

Why was this so? why could not a people of the same blood and the same language live together in peace? and why must the demon of war be allowed to desolate, ruin, and to vitally cast, utterly destroy the peace and homes of a once happy and united people? Surely the times were evil, dreadful, and the anger of heaven was upon the land!

By degrees her thoughts turned upon herself. She was now a young woman who would soon be passing her prime, and doubtless would be numbered with those young women with whom there is no immediate prospect of a husband. As to a husband, she had no great concern on that point, and yet the question would she ever be married was an interesting one, and if so, about when, and to whom? She laughed aloud at these childish inquiries of her mind, and yet, they seemed to solicit a few reflections. They were common to her sex in every age and in every country, for from the time that she was a child she had heard of girls [illegible] glance at the image of their future husbands, and of others who had poured melted lead into cool water to judge by the forms it would take, of their dispositions and eccentricities. Why might she not spend a few thoughts upon the same subject, a subject, it was true, in which she felt no special interest; but as the question of matrimony had several times been obtruded upon her attention, and by worthy young gentlemen of good social standing, it was worth while to look back to see what she had gained or lost by discouraging their addresses.

Wimberly and Melvil were the first to pass in review before her, and after them Billingly and the heroic (?) yankee officer, who had conducted her to General Lane's camp. Besides these, there were others who might have been lured by her smiles, had she chosen to set the coquette; but of this sin, she felt that she was free. Of all these, however, no matter, however, may notice, that the beautiful, the highly educated, the accomplished and elegantly cultured Irene Forester had a heart which yearned for a congenial heart, and that threw out its invisible tendrils towards some soul of the sterner sex, which soul of the millions who people this earth, she did not choose to tell. This is human nature, and this is the reason why young people read love-stories, and why old people only tolerate them; others, after having read them themselves. Love still buds within their somewhat withered hearts, but because it can no longer bring forth the fruit they desire, selfishness culminates in envy, and they essay in vain to transfer their own grizzled graniums to the round, plump shoulders of youth. This is unmanly. Let us rather remember what we were. How we helped to build baby houses, rode sticks for horses, dressed and carried doll babies, had each one his sweetheart in the old field school, and in vain to read the simple stories of juvenile heart-working. Love is the best but that blossoms in social life, it is the first recognition which the mother sees from the misty eyes of her infant, it is the cord which binds families together, and would, were it cherished universally, be the bond of nations. Keep it beneath the sway of reason, and it would hurt no one, but bless a teeming world.

We return to Miss Forester. Alone in her boudoir, her head resting between the palms of her hands, and her elbows upon her cushioned dressing-table, her thoughts ran on this wise:

'Am I doomed to old-maidenhood, or would I better avoid that state of life which in the estimation of man is accounted a reproach?' She paused, looked into the mirror before her, shook out her curls upon her shoulders, and as she smiled, a lovely, symmetrical, animated countenance smiled sweetly upon her from the glass, and she laughingly questioned herself.

'Can that be my face? Pro, my chances are good yet, but looking-glasses flatter, as men do, and I would like to see myself precisely as I appear to others.' Just here a dash of vanity jarred through the soul of the fascinated beauty, and a moment afterward, Irene felt the sting which it left behind.

'What a sin I have said to herself, to be admiring myself before glass. If indeed I have better looks than most girls, God gave them to me, and he can as easily take them away. An accident, or a disease, such for example as the small pox, could mar my countenance for ever, and make that which is now perhaps pleasing, displeasing to all observers. And moreover, it is a question whether beauty is on the whole a blessing or a curse. In nature at large, it is undoubtedly a blessing, and it illustrates the goodness of God; but to man, as a depraved mortal, it is a snare which beguiles to sin and ruin.'

Thus she soliloquized as Irene the philosopher, but she soon returned to speculate on the all absorbing subject of a woman's heart, matrimony.

And it was proper that she should examine her heart carefully to ascertain its state on that subject. She had never made the foolish affirmation of some girls, that they never intend to marry; when they are only too anxious for an opportunity to contradict their assertions by matrimonial entry, but she had adopted certain views and certain principles which were in themselves, if not insurmountable barriers in the way of marriage. She would not marry a soldier, at least while he was engaged in active warfare. Not a man who was not a christian. Not a man who had been divorced from a wife, who was still living. Not a man who had nothing to commend him but wealth. Not a man of loose habits, whatever might be his elevated position or the rings of his distinguishes. Not a man whom she could not love with an undivided heart. These were her resolves, which things to say she had made when only sixteen years of age, and which had, in the last ten years of her life, given rise to many a wonder between the supremacy of principle and the natural inclinations of the gentle female. On the departure of her brother for the seat of battle, she felt that she was left alone, and there arose within her breast an anxious desire for a friend, a confidant, a companion, in a word, a protector, to whom she might look as a husband. Her position also among the magnates of her father's guests with Melvil had in a measure deepened this desire, or at least, it had led her to re-examine her principles to see, if under certain circumstances, they might not be ignored.

Two hearts, noble hearts, had been voluntarily tendered her. The fine presence and noble bearing of Lieutenant Wimberly, on his first visit to her father's house, when she was but a child, had impressed her tender heart with a respect for him which had deepened into a stronger feeling whenever they had met since, and at their last meeting he would have declared his love for her, had she permitted him. But he was a man of war and not a christian, and a strict appreciation of her principle must necessarily prevent a matrimonial alliance.

Captian Melvil she had esteemed from her youth. He was the associate of her childhood, and now a young gentleman of whom any lady in the land might be proud. He was without a southern man, high toned and magnanimous, and he had laid his whole heart at her feet, and she had refused it on principle alone! To love him would have been easy, had she not restrained her emotions. But he too, like Wimberly, was a man of war and no christian. Thus the inflexibility of her principles had bereaved her heart of a choice between two of nature's noblemen, and despairing of ever finding a man who in addition to the noble qualities possessed by these noble suitors should have the more important one of believing in Christ, she flung another look at the glass, and said to herself:

"Well, I shall be an old maid! Christianity itself will not suffice; but it must be christianity in connection with the intellectual and manly qualities possessed by Wimberly and Melvil, and all these in some person, I never expect to find,'

Just as she had arisen to arrange her toilet for evening company, should any come, Nettie, her mother's servant woman, appeared at her door with a card from the Rev Henry Honeyspeech. The sending up his card intimated his desire to see Miss Irene alone, and she called after the woman.

'Nettie, who gave you this card?'

'Sure, and the gintleman himself gave it to me,' in a broad Irish brogue.

'Where is the gentleman?'

'Sure, an he's in the parlor, honey.'

'Is any one with him?'

'No, sure.'

'Did he ask for any one else?'

'Not a bit uv it, honey; but it's yourself he wants to see. And he's a nice person, he is; as nate as cur praist, Father Craferty; and that's saying a good dale,' with a proud leer out of her catholic eyes.

'Very well, Nettie. Tell him I'll be down presently.'

'Better hurry up, honey, or he might lave.'

'I wish he would,' sub voce to herself.

Irene was in no hurry to go down. Her acquaintance with Mr. Honeyspeech had been brief, and she felt that his assumption in sending her his card, went a little beyond the bounds of propriety, hence she called to the retiring servant,

'Oh! Nettie.'

'What's it mane?'

'Ask mamma to keep him company awhile.'

'Sure an I will, but it's you he' wants, ef you'll plase to 'blave me.'

'No matter, ask mamma to go in, and I'll be down presently.'

The reader has been introduced to the Rev. Henry Honeyspeech, but it may be well to give a brief discription of this person. He was a young man of about twenty-six years of age, tall, handsome, liberally educated, and with a good opinion of himself. On the occasion referred to, he was dressed in a glossy suit of black, with a white neck-tie, black kid gloves upon his hands, and holding in his right hand a small cane, which was ornamented with a gold head. He had been preaching in Forestville, occasionally, for about three months, under the direction of the Episcopal bishop of Missouri, and claimed to be indissolubly attached to the 'venerable' worship of the church—that is, the Episcopalian church. He had seen Irene Forester, heard of her accomplishments, of her propriety and of her purpose never to marry any man but a christian. He felt an interest in her, did not doubt that she would be glad to be better acquainted with him, and that she would coincide with his views of whatever subject which might be introduced for conversation. If he had any additional motives for calling on her at that particular juncture, they will be developed by the conversation between them which followed.

Finally, after the parson had looked at his gold watch several times, Irene entered the parlor, when the young prelate—that is the would-be prelate—arose and advanced to meet her, extending his hand, and wreathing his lips in a patronizing smile,

'How is Irene to-day? Hope you are well.'

'Mr. Honeyspeech? mamma, is it not?' to her mother.

'Certainly, my love, I thought you had been introduced.'

'Never, that I remember,' lisped a sweet voice.

'Not formally, perhaps,' said the parson, 'but I feel acquainted with you, Miss Forester, from having heard so much of you, and having noticed you in my congregations several times, I thought I would do myself the pleasure of making you a call, without standing on conversational cut ons.'

'Thank you, sir, but customs rule society, and ladies generally expect the civilities which are current in the places of their abode'

'I leave you both to settle the etiquette of customs, and will retire to attend to some domestic duties,' said Mrs. Forester as she withdrew.

'Well, Miss Irene,' said the parson with a smile of vanity on his lips, 'the next time I call, I will bring a friend to introduce me.'

'The next time it may not be necessary as you have just disposed of that ceremony yourself.'

'Very well, then, let the introduction of to-day—irregular I admit—suffice for all time to come, and you and I will be friends, will we not?' drawing his chair a little closer towards hers.

'I have no occasion or desire to be unfriendly towards any one.'

'Of course not, Miss Irene, but there is that in the exhibition of your mental and moral qualities which pleases me, and if we were only of the same faith, our friendship might be more intimate than it is, or possibly can be.'

Irene saw, as by a flash of light, through his design, and resolved, contrary to her tastes or habits, to spread out a lure, that she might the more easily and effectually cut down his vanity, and rid herself from his officious obtrusion at once and forever.

'I do not apprehend your meaning when you intimate that we are not of the same faith, nor if we were, how that fact could make us more intimate than we are.'

'Oh! well, you know that I am an Episcopalian, and you are, or profess to be.'

'A christian, sir, if you please. If you are none of mine then a christian, then we are not of the same faith.'

'Well, I trust Miss Irene, that the term Episcopalian implies that I am a Christian, and a Christian of the true church, whose bishops have descended in an unbroken line from the Apostles; but my purpose in visiting you to-day was not to discuss with you any question of theology, but to make you acquainted with certain feelings and purposes which I have for some time cherished concerning yourself,' looking at her intently as if to read the impression which the last sentence had made on her mind.

'Feelings and purposes to unify our lives, do you mean?' glancing out of the window as if suddenly attracted by something without.

'Well so, Miss, not with reference to a unity of faith on the subject of religion, though that is desirable; but I should be very glad indeed if we could think alike, and believe alike on another subject, which with your permission, I shall be happy to disclose to you.'

The silly parson was appreciating a serious subject in such a vapid and business like way, that Irene was for a moment disconcerted, and did not answer; but bent her eyes upon the floor as if they would admire the color of the carpet.

'Silence gives consent,' he resumed, 'and now I wish to ask you Miss Forester, if it is your purpose ever to marry, provided you should have an eligible offer, say from a christian man?'

'I should certainly never marry without an offer, and that I would with an eligible offer, is, I presume, in the minds of gentlemen generally, a foregone conclusion,' retaining a smile, while at the same time she was disgusted with his freedom of speech, and had thought of leaving him abruptly.

'No,' said he that does not follow as a matter of course. Ladies have the right of choice, and it is not every woman who would marry simply for the sake of entering the bonds of wedlock.'

'Thank you, Mr. Honeyspeech, I am glad that you regard us women as not, under any circumstances, very anxious to marry—that is to say, you believe we'd prefer to remain single rather than run the risk of an unsuitable match.'

'Of course, I really concede as much as that, and now, I'll vary my question by asking if you would consent to become the wife of an Episcopal preacher?'

'The fact of his being an *Episcopal* preacher would be an objection, though it might not be an insurmountable one, if the wooer possessed qualities of heart and mind, which were noble and attractive.'

Mr. Honeyspeech began to suspect that he had been playing on the wrong string, and that the fact of his being a preacher, though an episcopal preacher, did not advance his interests in the courting line. His heart had become warmer under the influence of conversation with this accomplished lady, and he would declare his passion in words of true love.

'Miss Forester,' he said, a flush of emotion suffusing his cold visage for the first time, 'I have been too cold in my advances for your affections, but I now offer you my hand and my heart. Can you or will you accept them, and be mine forever?'

'I cannot, sir, and therefore will not,' with a calm, steady look into his eyes, which told him plainly that she meant what she said.

The poor parson dropped his head in mute amazement. He had made the mistake too common among public men of general popularity, of supposing that he could win the heart of any lady by simply offering himself. Irene Forester saw that this weakness in his nature was blended with undue forwardness, and to avoid farther trouble from that source, she allowed him to say his say, that she might shut him out forever.

'Well,' said he, reaching for his hat, 'I suppose your answer may be taken as final?'

She bowed, but did not reply in words.

'May I not hope for a different one at some future time?' he ventured to inquire.

'Mr. Honeyspeech,' she said coldly, but seriously,' if you would oblige me,' you'll never mention that subject to me again. I wish you well, but you have asked of me what can never be granted.''

In about a minute after, the crest-fallen parson was making double-quick time down Mr. Forester's avenue, with no desire to encounter any one, for on meeting Mr. Forester at the lawn gate, he barely lifted his hat to him, and passed on.

Irene retired to her room to muse on another event in the history of her life.

FOR FARMERS.

The Independent Farmer.

Col. Thomas Hardeman, of Macon, in his address before the late Agricultural Convention in Savanah, presents arguments and logic of terrible force against the "all cotton and no corn" system of farming that prevails in Georgia. Much as has been said and written on every possible occasion to induce the planting public to appreciate the inevitable evils of the practice, this address is so forcible, so plain and so sincere, we regret that every farmer in Georgia could not hear it directly from the lips of the speaker. Speaking of the changed conditions since the days of independent farming, and of the present evils, of planting wide areas of cotton, to the neglect of provisions, and total dependence on factories and commission men for advances necessary to carry on the farm, he says: "The corn that is now being deposited in the ground is the growth of a factors lien, and, like patriotic soldiers, *drafted* for the service. The cotton that is in expectancy will droop under the weight of the liens that burden it, and the planters thereon, as they look for the sunshine and showers, will think not so much of the Providences of God, as the chances of escape from summary processes, and speedy foreclosures.

"Thus feeling with the knowledge that they have parted with the controle and, too often, with the ownership of their crop before they have housed it, can they be independent? Their spirits are broken, and they live in restless anxiety, knowing not from whom they will obtain supplies for the coming year. A farmer thus living, is the creature of dependence; he is hardly a *tenant at will* upon his own possessions; for he is farming upon sufferance, and his acreage in crops is too often limited to the extent of his credit, and the will and ability of his factor; thus he lives from year to year the slave of necessity—a *drafted* agriculturist, farming upon liens, and subsisting upon mortgages."

How deplorable the picture of what once was, and never should be, the most independent calling on earth. The farmer who owns his land and home need never surrender his independence except voluntarily, for he can live without resorting to credit. The allurements of high priced cotton and the facility of borrowing money for speculative planting, by the aid of growing statutory liens and mortgages which were unknown in the days when the farmer was independent, have seduced too many into the endless and ruinous system of borrowing from year to year, trusting always to the luck of high prices, to pay off his debts and leave him a surplus.

The happy result is never reached, and for simple reasons. When the crop proves a success, the price falls, on account of the large production in the country. The price is high enough to satisfy the speculative desire, only when the supply is short by reason of failures from bad seasons, early frost or the like. And having once fallen behind, the same course of borrowing and giving liens must be again pursued from year to year.

We extract another paragraph from Col. Hardeman, in which he compares the prices obtained for cotton with the aggregate crop, for several years past, in illustration of the folly of crowding all the means and resources of the country into the production of one crop, which from the mere excess of production becomes profitable to the producer.

"In 1868-69 the crop was 3,480,000 bales, and the price paid for it in the middle of February was 27 cents in the interior markets of the State.

In the year 1869-70 the crop was 3,150,000 bales in round numbers, and the price fell in February, to 23½ cents.

In the year 1870-71 the crop was increased to 4,352,000 bales, and the price in February had receded to 13½ cents.

At the present writing when it is estimated that the decrease in the cotton crop just grown will be about one million of bales, or in other words that the crop estimate will be about 3,350,000 bales, we see cotton again up to 21 cents. Are these not instructive figures? and cannot will not our planters profit by the lesson they teach. Are they not convinced if they will return to their old modes of farming, raising meat, their supplies, then devoting the remainder of the land to the cotton crop, that they will make farming more profitable and live in more contentment and independence? This result will be accomplished whenever this destructive system is abandoned—a system that is now dragging the agricultural interest of Georgia into ruin and bankruptcy.

From the Memphis Southern Farmer.

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As a top dressing for fruit trees, vines, grain crops or garden crops of any sort, on ground that has been somewhat exhausted by cultivation, the preparation described below will be found very useful. It would improve the mixture, however, to add to the ashes about a peck of good, newly slacked lime, which would bring the potash of the ashes to a caustic state and enable it more speedily to soften and dissolve the bones, which, when lime is thus used, need not be necessary in the absence of the quick lime. With its use in this way, and with a sufficiency of good unleached wood ashes, the bones, which have merely been cracked up with the hammer, may be easily softened.

Take one barrel or pure, finely ground bone and mix with it a barrel of the best wood ashes; during the mixing, add gradually about three pails full of water. The heap may be made upon any floor, and must be thoroughly mixed with a hoe. The water added is just sufficient to liberate the caustic alkalies, potash and soda, which react upon the gelatine of the bone, dissolving the little atoms, forming a kind of soap, and fitting it for plant aliment. It must be used in small quantities. A barrel of this mixture is worth two of any of the commercial fertilizer. If the bone meal and ashes are very dry, four pails full of water may be required, but care must be exercised not to have it inconveniently moist. It may be ready for use in a week after it is made. Pure, raw finely ground bone and the best of ashes should be employed. This preparation will cost about half what other fertilizers cost, and the ingredients are within reach of all.

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WEST END.—Train leaves Charlotte for Chester every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 8.30 a. m. and Cherryville on the same days at 1.30 p. m.

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Same leaves Weldon at 10.10 and arrives in Raleigh at 4 p. m.

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