

The Oxford Free Lance.

JOHN T. BRITT, Proprietor.

"Hew to the line, let the Chips fall where they May."

\$1 25 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

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THE OXFORD FREE LANCE,

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E. J. MITCHELL & SONS,

OXFORD, N. C.

BY

JOHN T. BRITT.

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quered. 88 and 91 South High street, Baltimore

Maryland, Jan 11 11.

Poetry.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever.

HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.

Who lives for earth, how sad his fate!

His past is strewn with wrecks of hopes

And staggering beneath the weight

Of cares, his onward way he gropes.

The seeming sports of wind and wave,

He sighs for peace and rest in vain,

Each goal when won, but proves the grave

Of idols, ne'er to lure again.

I questioned wealth rank and fame,

Pow'r, pleasure—all that men pursue.

From each and all the answer came:

"Nor rest, nor peace we ever knew."

I turned me to the lowly abode,

Where modest worth so humbly dwells.

"The slipper ways these never trode,"

I said, "or drank from turbid wells."

But these replied: "Toil, pain and want

Our footsteps track from day to day.

For peace and rest we ever pant;

Here troubles hold unceasing sway."

Is there no state on earth, I cried,

Where harassed spirits rest may find?

Is this sweet boon to all denied?

Is peace a stranger to mankind?

Alas! this world's one scene of strife;

Its every prize an idle gaud;

And peace a stranger to the life

That is not "hid with CHRIST IN GOD."

Home Circle.

Home is the sacred refuge of our life.

Dry-d-n.

MILDRED.

BY CONSTANCE MAITLAND.

—She lifted up her eyes,

And loved him with a love that was her doom,

read Mildred, from the sweetest of

all Tennyson's sweet lyrics; and as

she paused a moment upon the sug-

gestive words, and the conscious

blush mantled over cheek and brow,

our eyes met in one quick glance;

and each, as if by inspiration, learn-

ed for a truth that had hitherto

been only a suspicion—that we loved

each other, both of us, Randolph Duhamel.

"Mildred?"

"Constance?"

And, like stars at bay, we looked

each other in the face for one long

moment; then, with a sudden flush,

which, dying down, left her face as

white as ashes, Mildred said, "Con-

stance, what are we to do?"

"There is nothing for us to do,"

I answered, turning away with bit-

terness in my heart,—"nothing, but

to keep each other's secret."

There was a pause, and she said

again, with a slight tremor in her

voice, "Constance, whatever hap-

pens, do not let this come between

our friendship."

"There is no reason—" I began.

"Yes, there is," she answered,

quickly, and with flashing eyes.

"A moment ago, when you saw I

loved him, there was cruel hatred

in your heart. I felt it. You could

almost have killed me. Constance?"

She was right; for one brief se-

cond I had been in sight of heaven

and my own conscience, a murderer!

But repentance came, and with an

inward cry for pardon, I caught my

cousin's hand.

"Oh, Mildred," I said, "forgive me!

Nothing, not even he, shall ever

again come between our love!

Heaven keep me true!"

And again, and again, since that

day, I have thanked heaven for the

promise then exchanged between us.

On that same evening Mrs. Mur-

ray's soiree dante, at which we

were both engaged; and, with

what cheerfulness we might, Mild-

red and I dressed and went.

There is a dim feeling of vagueness

mixed with my recollection of the

earlier hours of that ball. A

confused sensation of lights and

perfume, of music and dancing, and

a cloud of forms and colors, in

which Mildred and I seemed to be

for ever tossing to and fro, now

apart, now together, yet ever with

a strange current of sympathy flow-

ing ceaselessly from one to the other,

and keeping record in each of the

other's heart beats. And then

Randolph Duhamel's dark, clear-cut

face came between us, and in the in-

toxication of his presence, Mildred—

all was forgotten.

I know now how fully the happi-

ness of a whole lifetime lived and

died in that one short hour; I know

how the lights in the dazzling ball-

room grew faint and pale before the

animated glow of his dark eyes;