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No.-1-6m.

Important Notice.

ALL persons indebted to the subscriber for wood, or otherwise, will please make some arrangements about paying him. My creditors are pressing me, and my *cartridge box* is empty, I will be compelled to go to the *rear*, without some relief. P. W. GREEN.

THE LIVING PRESENT.

DEVOTED TO LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, MORALITY, POLITICS AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

VOL. 1. WARRENTON, N. C., FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1869 NO. 21

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Special notices, under a special head will be charged one dollar per square for each insertion.

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Linked to a Star.

In making public the great sorrow of my life, I will speak briefly and plainly. No amplification, no graces of writing that I possess, can move the reader's compassion, if this unadorned narrative fails to. If any one asks why I come before the world with my sad story, I answer that I desire the world's sympathy. It relieves me to unbosom myself to the widest audience that will give me a hearing.

Once and for all, I do not believe in the supernatural explanation which some excellent people—most of them ladies—who personally knew of the occurrences here set down, attach to them. I hold them to be coincidences only. But upon me they have had an effect as controlling as if the Deity had made to me a special revelation. This is my candid statement, as i look back to the mysterious events across the dreary interval of two and a half years.

I am, and have been for a long time, head book-keeper in a great dry-goods house in the city—a plain, matter-of-fact man, of whom I will say no more here than that the gray which thickly studs my hair is not a mark of age, but of disappointment and grief.

I live where I was born, in a hallowed old house, about twenty miles up the river. Trains run to and from the city many times a day, so that my home is quite as convenient to business as a residence in town. My mother and two sisters occupy this house with me. It has fair grounds about it and some noble trees, and commands a distant view of the river. The outlook from the roof is very fine. You can see for miles in every direction. At night, owing to the high altitude and the purity of the air, such an expanse of dark-blue sky, fretted with myriads of golden fires, overhangs us, as I have never seen save out upon the Sound.

Among my father's effects was a six-foot achromatic telescope of Fraunhofer's make—an old instrument which had strayed across the Atlantic after a life of unknown vicissitudes, and got into an auctionship in the city, where my father chanced to see it, and bought it to look at remote objects with, principally at sails far up and down the river. In performance, for a land telescope, was unequalled by any instrument I have ever seen. Names of schooners, sloops, and barges, could easily be made out, eight to ten miles off. But it was in astronomical observations that I, as boy and man, tested is remarkable powers most thoroughly, and derived the greatest pleasure from its use. The possession of this glass made of me an amateur astronomer. Other people a hobby in chess, or billiards, or Shakespeare, or a hot-house. My amusement, on returning from the dull mechanics of book-keeping every night to my country home, was to bring out the battered brass and leather tube as soon as dark set in, and con the heavens. I rebuilt the cupola of our house into a sort of an astronomical observatory, by heightening and widening it so as to allow the free swing of my long telescope, and putting on a light movable roof, which could be slid off and back again by the pull of a cord. The sides were a mass of windows, so contrived that I could lower them at pleasure into the roof beneath me, out of the way. In this airy loft, long after the other members of my family had gone to bed have I spent hours that spun by like minutes, so lost was I in the ecstatic contemplation of celestial wonders. Many a night have I watched in the morning star, and made up for loss of sleep by naps in the ears. Occasionally I have been found nodding on my high stool in the office, and then there were sly jokes about where I had been the night before. I never let out the secret of my observatory but to a few of my most intimate acquaintances; for there was a general disposition, I soon discovered, to make fun of my innocent nocturnal pursuits. Several of my dearest friends called me "highly eccentric;" and one, whose good opinion I greatly valued, did not hesitate to pronounce me "moon struck."

For two years previous to May, 1866—memorable year and month in in my history—I had been engaged to Milly Estwick, the only daughter of a neighbor of ours. From childhood we had known and loved each other. Ours was the first love, which sometimes is the true love, the love that outlasts all. She was a handsome girl, sweetly disposed, and, in quiet, simple, home-loving tastes, much resembled me. We should have married soon after I put the golden pledge upon her dear hand, but for the delicate state of her health. She was a slender creature, having in excess that spiritual organization so often found in American girls. Manlike, I was anxious to wed at once, and be off on a journey for her health and pleasure. Womanlike, she preferred to wait.

Much of our courtship was carried on in the open air, beneath the pavilion of stars. It was the poetry of heaven that moved me, first to the point of proposition; and the eternal, countless eyes above us witnessed the sweet registry of our mutual vows. Many a summer evening, after our betrothal, would she sit with me for hours in my observatory, and watch for trancient meteors, or look through the telescope at objects which I would select, the moons of Jupiter, Saturn's ring and satellites, binary stars, nebulæ, and the like. The glass was mounted on an ingenious frame, of my own contrivance, and while we sat side by side, very close, in our easy chairs, I could turn the instrument, with the merest finger-touch, to any quarter of the skies. For both of us it was heaven above and heaven below.

Milly took but little interest in astronomy as a science. She said it made her head ache to think of the stupendous size and vast distances of the heavenly orbs. She feared, too, to detach her mind from thoughts of the pleasant earth, where she had so many devoted friends, whose love and tenderness were but the reflex of her own soft and loving nature. The stars appealed somewhat to her religious sensibilities. But she admired them most—let me say it at once—for the same reason that swayed the minds of the wisest and best in the olden times, and even now has not been banished, and perhaps never will be, by the decrees of knowledge. She believed the stars had some influence on mortal affairs. She thought they might be the homes of our future lives. This notion, so poetical and beautiful, although I thought it absurd, I did not try to laugh it out of her. Nor to disprove it—as how could I have done? No! I loved her all the more for her childish superstitions.

On the night of May 11, 1866, Milly and I were up in the cupola. My mother and sisters had been with us the greater part of the evening, but had withdrawn to the parlor, on some plausible pretext or other, but really, I dare say, to leave Milly and me together. Since we were engaged, they had often benevolently done this.

The night was mild and beautiful. A south wind brought to us the odor of blossoms. The first wood-crickets of the season chirped on every side. There was no moon; but the light of a multitude of stars, on the steel-blue ground of sky, made outlines of objects near me quite visible. I could see, or thought I could, the violet of Milly's sweet eyes; the deep chestnut of her hair; the little dimples in her cheeks. She was paler than usual that night. I knew, by her little nervous thrills that she suffered from some internal pain. But in vain I asked her to join my mother and sisters below. She said she was very comfortable there, and would stay a while longer. We had been roving idly among the stars, and chatting a good deal about ourselves, though there was one topic very near to both of us, which, by common consent, we never alluded to. That was my darling's heart affection. Neither of us dared to talk of it. We both silently hoped that the dangerous symptoms which had shown would disappear in good time. That malady was the spectre, as from the grave, that rose between us often in our gayest moments.

I folded her shawl more closely about her, for I somehow fancied she was chilled with the night air. Then said I, with a light laugh, and a Claude Melnotte-ish air, "Come now, Milly, tell me 'what star shall be our home, when love itself becomes immortal.'"

"Are you in earnest, Albert?" said Milly, more seriously than I expected.

"Of course, darling. Only let it be one of the first magnitude. No second-class for you and me in cars, hotels, or stars. There are Aldebaran, Regulus, Arcturus, Capella, Denebola, Lyra, and plenty more of them. Which, now?"

Milly glanced about the heavens a few moments. Her gaze suddenly became fixed on the beautiful constellation Corona. Her face seemed to light up with a look of decision, as she exclaimed: "There, that's our star!"

Her small white hand indicated the glittering Crown.

We were so used to pointing out stars to each other, that I knew instantly which she meant.

"I see it, dear. The one with the soft white light, changing a little as I look at it to a faint yellow, and perhaps a blue. 'Tis only of a second magnitude. I am disappointed."

"Nevertheless, Albert, 'tis our star. What is its name?"

I looked at the star attentively, taking its bearings from other well-known stars in the vincinity. "This is very strange, Milly," said I, "but I don't remember ever seeing that star before. 'Tis a fixed star, you see, by its sharp, flickering light; not a planet or a tailless comet. How does it happen, then, after all my studying of the heavens and Herchell's catalogue, till I thought I had both by heart, that I can't name the star?"

"Perhaps it's a new star," said Milly, still gazing at it intently.

"Impossible," I laughingly replied.

"We can't have new stars made for us expressly, you know. Yet it may be new in one sense," I added, more seriously, "that is, a variable star, re-appearing after years of obscuration. I will look at the catalogue when we go down-stairs. Meanwhile we call it new, and we'll christen it 'Milly,' your star."

"Our star, Albert."

I was about to respond with some pleasant jest, when I marked a deepening pallor, like a faint auroral cloud, pass over her face.

Star and telescope were forgotten in an instant. The phantom rose between us! "Darling," said I, "you are ill. I knew this night air would hurt you. Let us descend.

Her eyes were still fixed, rapt upon the soft, white star. I was obliged to take her gently by the arms, and move her to the trap-door, whence a safe flight of steps led to the attic. She obeyed me silently, like one in a trance; but, to the last, before we had passed through the roof, her backward gaze rested upon that star.

By the time we joined my mother and sisters in the parlor, she was better. "Only a passing faintness," she said. In a little while she recovered her usual spirits; and I accompanied her home to her father's house, which was but a stone's throw from us. As we went into the open air, I rejoiced to see that a fleecy cloud covered the Northern Crown, for I felt there were mysterious reasons why we should not look at that constelation. She glanced up at the sky, but said nothing.

I gave her the parting kiss at her father's door—how sweet it comes back to my memory!—and hastened home, and up to the roof, with a lantern and Herchel's catalogue in hand, to solve the riddle of the star. But clouds had gathered for the night, and after waiting fully three hours for some rift to open up through which I might have glimpses of the Crown and of "Milly" (as I fondly called the unknown,) I took in my telescope and went to bed. But long I lay awake, pondering perplexedly, sadly over the strange incident of the evening.

Next day, my thoughts so ran on the star and my betrothed—for the two came into my head together, as if they were inseperable—that I made several mistakes in the ledger. May 12, 1866, is scored with more penknife scratches in my accounts than any other whole month of that year.

At last—how slow time dragged, and snail-like the cars crept up the Hudson shore!—at last I was at home again. On my way to the house I always called on Milly. That evening (the sun had not yet gone down) she was sitting by an open window, where she often sat, looking right between two lilac trees, heavy with pink-white masses, watching for me. I ran to the window to greet her. Ah! how pale, but how beautiful! Her eyes had the introverted look of meditation. They did not seem to see me, but some point in space just short of me.

"You are not well, dear," said she, plaintively.

The very words I would have spoken to her! but I dared not utter them.

"Something has troubled you to-day, Albert. Our star, perhaps," she said, smiling, at the same time looking over the lilac tops to the sky, where Corona would be in an hour.

I made a poor attempt to laugh.

"Not much time to think about stars in town," said I. "The ledger is my only atlas there. One star more or less, where there are millions, is nothing to me, you know; but the mistake of a cent in balancing—that's every thing I've been very busy to-day.

Then, to change the subject, I handed her a new volume of poetry, that I had bought for her. This effectually diverted her thoughts—or seemed to do so—from the unpleasant subject. I leaned on the window-sill, so that my cheek almost touched hers, and we turned the pages, of the book together, glancing at the principal poems. One was headed "Lines to a Star." She paused, as if to read them.

"Let me show you a lovely ode further on," said I, and I thumed a dozen pages impatiently. Milly looked up and smiled. But I pretended not to understand her. Presently I found what I wanted, and read the poem to her in a low monotone. What it was all about I know not, at this time. My thoughts, all the while were only of her and her namesake up in the sky.

The sun was then setting, and Milly, always thoughtful of others, said I must go home to supper, for mother and sisters were waiting for me.

I was less reluctant to leave her than usual, for I burned with a desire to solve that star-problem.

"Let me shut the window for you," said I.

"Oh, no, Albert! Leave it open. Again the skyward glance, as she spoke!

"Then, good-night good-night, Milly, God bless yon." I kissed her hand, and hurried away, just as the twilight began to gloom softly.

Supper was dispatched mechanically, I chatted at random with mother and sisters. They knew that I was sad about Milly's declining health, and I knew that that made them unhappy. We shunned that subject of all others.

Almost rudely pushing my plate aside, I excused myself and ran up the observatory. I carefully wiped the glasses of my telescope and placed it in position. In the chair which she was wont to occupy, I spread out Herchel's catalogue, its pages open at the Corona constellation. The lantern, newly filled and freshly trimmed, stood by its side, shedding a clear light upon the text. I seated myself, my hand resting on the drawn tube of the instrument and caressing it. I trembled with impatience as I strained my gaze to the northeastern sky. One by one the brightest stars in that region began to appear. Presently, under my fascinated eyes, the Crown came out, gemming the blue with its brilliant points; and, set in the midst of them, the soft, white star. The moment I could identify it beyond a doubt, I turned to Herchel, as to a book of fate. Great Heavens! There was no such star on the list!

The import of the mystery flashed upon me like the gleam of a meteor. Milly had discovered a new star.

Truly, it was no star, as she had said—ours by right of finding. We were entitled to name it. The star was Milly, as regularly christened as ever child brought to font.

Let me be frank. For the first time in my life a feeling of superstitions awe crept over me. Was there more in the old astrology than credulity and imposture? But I did not allow this unscientific thought to keep ascendant long. I recalled all I knew of stars suddenly appearing, of variable stars, in Ophiuchus, in Scorpio, in Cassiopeia, Hercules, and other constellations. I remembered the theories that explained the prodigy, and gradually became calmer. We had made a new discovery surely; but dozens of other observers might have made it the same night, for aught we knew. Accidentally only had determined Milly's selection of that particular star. Its light, rather softer and purer than that of other stars in the neighborhood, had guided her choice. I felt proud for Milly and myself, but I laughed outright as I thought of the poor child's simplicity. The idea of a star, billions of miles away, being any earth-born creature's future home! The delicious absurdity of it made me love Milly all the more. "What is the darling doing now, I wwonder?"

My blood suddenly chilled in my veins as I thought. "She is at this moment looking at our star."

Mastering with an effort this mysterious and unpleasant fancy, I addressed myself to the scientific examination of the star, so far as I, a mere amateur, was capable of such a task. By this time the night was quite dark, and I now discovered that the star was not so brilliant as it had been the night before. From a full second magnitude, it had dropped at least half-way to a third. My experience in studying stars enabled me to detect this to a certainty. It was strange, but, after all, in accordance with the phenomena of recorded variables. Their brilliancy culminates and wanes in many cases with surprising rapidity. We had first seen it at its maximum; it was now on the decline. The flicker into a yellowish and bluish tint was noticeable, as on the night of the 11th. Some stupendous chemical action going on. Possibly, the burning out of the star! Who knows?

I leveled my telescope at this wonderful object. Like all other fixed stars seen through clear glasses, it became apparently smaller than when viewed by the naked eye—a diamond point only. But the color coming and going on the white was distinctly visible.

How long I sat at this scrutiny, I cannot tell. The voice of sister Hetty from the stairs called me back to earth.

"A note from Mrs. Estwick, Albert."

I seized it as she thrust it through the opening in the roof, tore away the envelope, and read:

"DEAR ALBERT,"—Milly wants to see you very much. Come over at once.

Affectionately yours,

"S. E."—

Appleton's Journal.

[Continued.]

WASHINGTON, May 21.—The President has issued the following:

By the President of the United States of America:

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas the act of Congress approved June 25, 1868, constituted on and after that date eight hours a day's work for all laborors; workmen, and mechanics employed by or on behalf of the government of the United States and repealed all acts or parts of acts inconsistent therewith; now, therefore,

I, Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States, do hereby direct that from and aftar this date no reduction shall be made in the wages paid by the government by the day to such laborers, workmen and mechanics on account of such reduction of the hours or labor.

In testimony whereof I have hereto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington this 19th day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, and of the independence of the United States the 93d.

U. S. GRANT.

By the President.

HAMILTON FISH, Secretary of State.

A few days since, a man well known in New York society—not young, and who could not dance—was sitting at a party, near a young lady, and watching the mazes of the "German." He turned to her, knowing her well, and said, "I wish you would let me put my arm around your waist." Of course she looked at him in amazement "Oh!" said he, "you know I can't dance, but I don't see the difference, All these young men have their arms about the girls' waists, and why should not I have the same privilege, though I sit still?" That man's head is level. I thinksso.

A Bird in the Hand.

A colored man, to whom meat was a rare blessing, one day, found in his trap a fine rabit. He took him out alive, held him under his arm, patted, him, and began to speculate on his qualtities.

"Oh! how bery fat! De fattest I ever did see! Let us see how me cook him. Me roast him. No; he so very fat, he lose all de fat. Me fry him. Ah! he so bery fat he fry himself! Golly! how fat he be! Den me stew him."

The thought of the savory stew made the negro forget himself, and in spreading out the feast to the imagination, his arm relaxed, when off hopped the rabit, and, squatting at a goodly distance, eyed his late owner with great composure. The negro knew there was an end of the matter, so, summoning up all his philosophy, he thus addressed the rabbitt:

"You long-eared, white-whiskered, red-eyed rat, you not so bery fat, arter all!"

How many people thar iz whose souls lay in them, like the pith of a goose quill.

"I am afraid you will come to want," said an old lady to her daughter.

"I have come to want already," was the reply, "I want a nice young man."

The question why printers do not succeed as well as brewers is thus answered: Because printers work for the head, and brewers for the stomach—and where twenty men have stomachs, but one has brains.

To do the thing properly in New York, at a wedding, the bride must have eight bridesmaids and a hundred-dollar poodle besides the one she marries.

What is the difference between a little boy and a potato? One grows to be eaten, and the other is beaten to grow.

A man once went to an eccentric lawyer to be qualified for some petty office. The lawyer said to him, "Hold up your hand. I'll swear you, but all creation couldn't qualify you."

GOOD ADVICE—Reader, did you ever enjoy the ecstatic bliss of courting? If you didn't, then get a little gal-an-try.

The Princiss Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, is to be married on the 27th of July next, to the Prince Royal of Denmark. This will leave the Queen only one unmarried daughter, the Princess Beatrice.

A man who gives his children habits of industry, provides for them better than by giving them a fortune.

WARMINSTER.

The imported Stallion, Warminster, will make his first session South for 1869, at P. R. Davis', Warrenton and Henderson, North Carolina. Terms $50 for thorough bred Mares and $25 for others.

Warminster is sired by Newminster so popular in England, and his first dam is Black Bess by Ratcatcher, and second dam Polydora by Priam &c., &c., &c., see Bruce's Studd Book for 1868. The liberality of his importer, R. W. Cameron Esq., of New York, in presenting this fine offer to the South, should be appreciated. Mares from a distance shall be well attended to and charges cheap. For particulars inquire of

PETER R. DAVIS,

April-2-1m. Warrenton, N. C.

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Will also undertake the collection of all old dues to the Press of the State, in any of the above places.

Refer specially, to Geo. V. Strong, Esq. Goldsboro'; Maj. J. A. Engelhard, Editor Wilmington Journal; Hon. Plato Durham, Raleigh; Hon. Geo. Howard, Tarboro; and Gen. M. W. Ransom, Weldon, N. C.

Refer generally, to the Conductors of the State Press.

Messrs. Wm. A. Hearne & Co., as above, are hereby authorized Special Agents for the LIVING PRESENT.

NOTICE

THE Subscriber announces to the public that he has for hire, either for hauling or conveyance of passengers

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He will furnish fire wood of all descriptions at shortest notice and at reasonable prices.

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I guarantee entire satisfaction, having had 13 years experience in the business.

RICHARD ROWLETT.

No.-1-tf.

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No-5-

ESTABLISHED 1831.

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Constantly receiving New and Desirable Goods as they come out.

Hair Jewelry made to order.

CLOCKS and FINE WATCHES Repaired by good and skillful workmen and warranted to give satisfaction.

J. M. FREEMAN.

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