

HARPER'S  
NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

VOLUME LII.

DECEMBER, 1875, TO MAY, 1876.

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NEW YORK:  
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,  
327 to 335 PEARL STREET,  
FRANKLIN SQUARE  
1876.

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# HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CCCVIII.—JANUARY, 1876.—Vol. LII.

## THE OKLAWAHA.



PALMS ON THE ST. JOHNS.

“GOVERNOR?” said Iris—“Governor? But I thought Governors were—” She paused.

“Old?” I added, smiling. “Not in this case, child. He was our ardent young war Governor, a title that stands by itself.”

But Iris was still doubtful.

“Let me tell you something else, then,” said Ermine. “When we were in Virginia last year, the fancy came to us to go and see a certain ruined Gothic tower by moonlight. The usual objections were made, of course: first, no one ever went to the tower by moonlight; second, no one ever went to the tower any way; third, there wasn’t any

tower. But the Governor calmly marshaled us to the very spot; bright moonlight all ready, field-glasses, chocolate-creams, diagrams of the country drawn on the bricks, poetical quotations, descriptions of colonial times, the loveliest compliments, and safe home again—all in two hours.”

“Charming!” said Iris. “I love such people.”

The Duke regarded her with gravity. It was necessary, then, to climb up Gothic towers, armed with poetical quotations and chocolate-creams. He had not thought of that. But he reflected that there were no Gothic towers on the Oklawaha, at any rate,

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## NATURAL SELECTION.

## I

HIS name was William Wright. I could have wished that, for purposes of euphony, his people had named him Clarence Courtenay instead, St. Clair Seymour, Achilles Grandville, or something of the sort, high-toned and sonorous, but they did nothing of the kind, and I am forced to state the fact. It is a grief to me that I can no more create a character than I can invent a vessel to navigate the air. Even if I could have constructed such an ethereal person, I would be as dreadfully at a loss to keep her or him going during a series of adventures as I would have been to have kept up my aerial machine in the air, even had I succeeded in launching it from some housetop. Owing to something painfully realistic in my own training, or in the style and sort of person intended at the time I was myself invented, I can do nothing more than tell of men and women whom I have actually known, as well as narrate simply what befell them. It is the more essential that I should confine myself rigidly to the facts of the case in this instance because I intend this to be a scientific statement in reference to Natural Selection. This is the one reason which causes me to make it at all, and we all know that in reasoning across the wide and swift stream of ever-flowing phenomena, from the bank, so to speak, of the known to the shores of the unknown, facts—thoroughly ascertained facts—are as indispensable as to a bridge are the iron links by which it is suspended, or the solid arches of rock upon which it is supported. Not Comte, John Stuart Mill, Buckle, Dr. Draper, nor any other scientist shall be more accurate than myself in what follows, which you will please consider henceforth to be not a story, but a carefully worded monograph.

"William Wright, M.D."—I copy from the sign beside the door of his little office in Jackson—was the son of a very plain pair of old people, who were held all their uneventful life in the rift of a mountain belonging to East Tennessee, as a brace of robins are held to their nest in the forks of an oak. Shakspeare himself could never have made any thing out of the desert island which he has lashed with his *Tempest* if he had not placed a Miranda there, to say nothing of an Ariel or Caliban, and there was no one on that rocky farm who could have been etherealized by the most imaginative poet, unless, indeed, he had dropped his pen, and, grasping a club instead, had spiritualized by slaying them. Mr. and Mrs. Wright lived in a double log-cabin, and died there, and that was all, because there is nothing whatever to say of them beyond that, except that she cooked, spun, wove, made rag car-

pets and clothing, while her tall and gaunt husband plowed, chopped wood, planted and gathered corn, according to the season of the year. But for the fact that the days were born twenty-four hours apart, all the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year were twins—a slight variation on Sundays of going to hear the circuit rider preach at the cross-roads. Husband and wife were so thoroughly the same as to each day and as to themselves that Sunday was only like another sort of night's rest which started them again, when it was over, that much more thoroughly the same people over again. Beyond the matter of color there was not a cent's worth of difference between the couple and Luke and Suke, the negro man and his wife whom Mr. Wright had bought, as you buy a pair of fowls, at the cross-roads with fourteen hundred hard dollars, the harder savings of his wife and himself, with this distinct object in view, from the day they married and took possession of their farm. I dare say all four grew more and more alike during all the years they labored and lived together, the blacks contributing almost as much as the whites to the common fund of sameness, no perceptible difference in housing, dressing, food, work, or general information. I doubt whether a soul of the four cared a clod of dirt for the rustling of the growing corn, or the beautiful dawning upon them of summer in the blooms of apple-tree and peach—any more, in fact, than they did for the breaking of day or the glorious sunsets, to say nothing of the storms which dashed their thunders into fragments against the mountains to roll away among the valleys. Like Luke and Suke, Mr. and Mrs. Wright were good Christian people, but dull to a degree that seems as inconsistent with piety as it is with genius. I have no doubt that all four went to heaven when they ceased to live—to say that they did any thing so tragic as to die seems out of keeping with lives so vegetable. And, with utmost reverence be it said, surely the other world must be graded and adapted to us when we get there as well as this. Could Mr. or Mrs. Wright have been seized upon in the stagnation of their pond-like life and set down instantly on Broadway, New York, nothing but bewilderment to a pitch of agony could have resulted; and heaven itself would, we can not but think, be a world the very reverse of heaven were such people, ceasing to live here, to find themselves suddenly amidst the magnitude and multitude and music, in the centre of the enrapturing grandeur and unceasing splendor of that eternal state. I had not the least idea of saying all this, but dullness becomes sensational when it reaches such excess thereof as in the case of the parents of Dr. Wright; and I am sure, so far as the other world is concerned, that the

Creator who adapts the rush of light from the sun to the fragile eye can and does adjust heaven to each of us who arrives there, as He does earth to all who are born therein.

The one solitary bit of romance during all the life of these people was their one child, the William Wright of whom I am trying to speak. But—and I make haste to say it—there was no romance whatever in this child, beyond the fact that he was a child. Those dull eyes which never noticed a star any more than they did a wild rose could not help observing the babe. To say nothing of the wonder of any thing so new among things which had been always as they were forever, the babe awoke springs of love in the bosoms of Luke and Suke, as well as of the parents, which surprised them as much as if the rocks against which their plows struck in the corn field had suddenly gushed out with water, or rather with honey. But "Billy," as he grew up, took his place in the round of the eternal sameness of the farm—a practical sameness which saturated the boy through and through. Yet there must have been an ancestor, somebody possibly in or before the Revolution of '76, who said something beyond what his parents generally talked about, some progenitor who did something or other—in fact, *was* somebody. Mark, I do not assert, because I do not know, but I am convinced there was not only some person out of the ordinary in his lineage, but I am convinced it was a distinguished surgeon. The *savant* knew that a certain planet, never known hitherto, must be in a certain place in the skies as the cause of certain effects otherwise unaccountable, and there was such a planet. And there were traits in the character of Dr. Wright accountable for only upon the hypothesis of such an ancestor. The alternative is spontaneous generation in the case of at least the soul of the doctor, and I am so realistic that I can not conceive of a stream without a fountain-head, though it be immeasurable miles away.

I am as anxious to get done with these preliminaries as the reader can be, for this scientific discussion of Natural Selection has to do exclusively with the later days of William Wright. Because the fact has mathematical relation to those after-hours, I am compelled to say that as a child he was in no sense either beautiful or interesting. His head, surmounted with a shock of undisciplined hair, was somewhat of the shape—especially of the speckled color—of a turkey egg set on end between his vigorous shoulders. And yet, merely as a child, blowing away the bubbles upon the foaming pail at milking-time to get a good drink; running in to his weary mother, at her loom or sewing, with a handful of daudeliions; crowding himself into the fat and moist arms of Suke, resting from her wash-tub, and de-

manding a story or a song; making sensation for weeks by the smashing of cup or bowl; awakening the hitherto unthrilled nerves of the household until they rang responsive to his screams from some burn, or fall, or cut, or kick from the aged horse that did not understand children—"runt" of a child as he was, "Billy" was at least the nearest approach to a bit of poetry ever known on the dreary old farm. But when eighteen, being able to read, write, and cipher, the end came. As if killed by the very shadow of the coming event, housed before the terrible tempest, Mr. and Mrs. Wright died when the war between the North and the South began. The farm was left in charge of Luke and his wife, and William Wright was swept off and away into a soldier's life upon the Confederate side as helplessly and as naturally as any other leaf before the storm. The last Napoleon states in his will that he was guided all his life by the spirit of his great uncle—although one would suppose that, after Waterloo, that uncle would have shrunk from guiding in the direction of Sedan; and it would seem as if the brilliant ancestor whom I have ventured to theorize guided the youth from the very outset of the war. From almost the first hour he became associated with the surgeon of an East Tennessee regiment, and till the end of the war remained, amidst all the movements of his regiment, heaved hither and thither upon the billows of blood, now here, now there, in active surgical employment unto the end. The youth had been cast into that work for which he was born, all his talent and taste and ever-growing enthusiasm lay in that direction, and in no other. At first this greenest of novices was employed in cleaning, sharpening, and having ready for use the arsenal of implements used by the surgeon, as well as in placing and holding the patients during the operations, and in bandaging and in nursing them afterward. Sympathizing with the eagerness of his young assistant, and appreciating the wonderful quickness with which, as by intuition, he seized upon every new fact, each surgeon-in-chief under whom he came in the rapid changes of war supplied him with all instruction by word and practical illustration, as well as with such books as life in camp allowed.

"I never saw such a fellow," Ferdinand Harris said to him one day. "When there is no battle or epidemic on hand, you are reading those calf-covered books as if your life depended on it; and as soon as there comes work to do, you go into that as if you were going to a wedding. I am not like you one bit."

"Which you are not," young Wright replied, with energy. "You are rich, and I own fifty acres among the rocks there in

East Tennessee, too poor and full of blazed trees to be worked. I suppose you own a hundred hands, and Luke and Suke there on the place, if they haven't run away, are old. Besides, you are educated—"

"Took the whole course at the University of Virginia," Ferdinand Harris interjected.

"While I never had any show, living at the old place like a pill in a box—rather like a specimen in a jar," said his friend.

"Except that there was no alcohol," added his companion, who could not truthfully have asserted the same of himself. The fact is, Ferdinand Harris had been shot through the lungs, and had been patched up and unwearingly nursed by young Wright until it was time to go back into the ranks—if he had but thought so; but all the first flush of the war had been long over with Ferdinand, not that he objected at all to the "fun" of a good fight.

"But the bother of it is," he had often explained to Wright, "that for one or two hours of regular battle, one has to endure whole months of picket duty, to say nothing of thousands of miles of marching and countermarching in the dust or the mud. Worse than all it is to have a fellow with shoulder-straps ordering you about. Before the war I made a point not to do whatever I was told—die rather; and here, if I don't obey, I'm court-martialed. No, Sir. I guess I ought to know about my own lungs. Until I am perfectly well, in my own opinion, too, I prefer staying in hospital and helping you."

"Helping me with a vengeance!" said Wright. "You fall dead asleep when you undertake to sit up with a patient; always give the wrong medicine, or too much of the right one. It was a tea-spoonful of quinine you gave Colonel Jones yesterday: had him a raving maniac—the bells ringing in his head like mad. I almost wished he had hit you when he whacked at you with that stray sword. You smoke all the cigars, drink up all the hospital wine. I will be compelled to report you to-morrow ready for duty."

"No, you won't, Doc. If there was to be a fight, I wouldn't wait to be reported, and you know it. But as it is only to dodge up and down the river trying to get a shot at the gun-boats—and what good does it do when you hit them?—I believe not. We like each other too well, Doc."

"As acid does alkali—because we are exactly the opposite of each other," replied his companion, who was very busy cleaning a set of surgical knives and pincers and saws at a table in the extemporized hospital of the hour, the instruments having a look of scientific cruelty in their silver mounting and razor-like steel, in comparison with which revolvers and sabres were but toys.

"Yes, certainly. I am, for instance, very good-looking," Ferdinand Harris assented, taking an easier position in his hammock, swung upon one side of the tent, and stroking his mustache. "My wound, you see, makes me pale and interesting, while you are—"

"Ugly," his companion said, promptly. Were it not a scientific paper which I am preparing, this fact would have been carefully kept out of these pages. I know it will strike every lady reader like a blow, but I can not help it even if the blow killed whom it hits. William Wright was ugly. Perhaps the gifted progenitor, whose talent had alighted upon him as by a flying leap over the heads, literally, of generations intervening, was beautiful; but the volatile intellect had left all loveliness of form among the dust of the dead in descending to him. Not for nothing had his father toiled winter and summer on his sterile farm, bowed of back, bronzed of brow, hardened of hand, whitened down to the very roots of his hair by the premature age of hard work. Mrs. Wright could never have been a beauty even in the eyes of her bridegroom, and working at the loom, sewing at the clothing, hardening her face and hands over the cooking and the washing, had left her during all the years her son knew her a small, thin, red-eyed, furrowed-faced old lady, somewhat leathery, if the phrase may be allowed. With such parents, it was impossible for the son to be other than homely, and very homely indeed.

"I lived among those rough mountains," Dr. Wright used often to say afterward, "stumbling, until I was nearly twenty years old, over the boulders in field and pasture, until I grew to be as rough and rocky as all my surroundings were. Luke and Suke, with me all the time, were, I do know, the very blackest as well as homeliest of colored folks: I am black from long association with them." For he was so decidedly ugly that he had got used to it as one does to a birth-mark upon the face, a terrible scar from forehead to chin, or even, I dare say, to an artificial nose.

"You are hairy and black and rough as any body I ever saw in my life, Doc," Ferdinand Harris remarked on the occasion in question; "but this military life has made a man of you, not only in your surgical knowledge, although you have had ten times the chance at that in camp you would have had during years in Paris under the best teachers. Your practice may not have been lucrative, but it certainly is as extensive and varied as you could wish. What I mean is, the drill has made you straight as an Indian, and the pressure upon you has made you quick, decided, self-reliant, energetic, beyond any fellow I ever knew. I like you, Doc, and about the only thing I re-

gret in you is that you are so very, very—” And the invalided soldier lighted another cigar from the breast pocket of his friend’s coat, hanging near him from the tent pole, and took an easier position in his hammock.

“So very what?” the other replied, pushing back his exceedingly tangled mass of jet-black hair from his ample forehead, pausing, saw in one hand and chamois-skin in the other.

“Will you pardon me?” said his companion, in the softest of modulations, contrasted with the rasping of his friend’s harsh voice. “But you are coarse, Doc, so exceedingly coarse! I wouldn’t tell you, but I know you do not care. Besides, I like you. And then what does it matter, when every body says you are going to make the most splendid surgeon in the world? But,” the handsome young soldier added, after a pause, “I wonder what Bell would think?”

“Bell? Colonel Bell? What do you think I care?”

“Pshaw! it is another Bell than that,” laughed Ferdinand Harris. “Did I never tell you about my sister, Doc? You are the only man in this camp I would name her to, and I didn’t intend to do it to you. I was thinking of how you looked the day I was shot. It reminded me of hog-killing time at home in old Kentucky. You know what fun it is to the boys shooting the hogs down of cold mornings, sousing them in a tilted-up bogshead of water boiling from red-hot rocks thrown in, scraping them, hanging them up by the heels from a pole between two trees. I never ate any thing in my life as good as the tails we used to split and salt, and roast on the coals by the big fires. And then the bladders! We never have any fun like that afterward. But I was talking of the day of the battle. You know how you stood there by the stable door laid over two mess barrels, exactly as they did at hog-time, except that they were living men placed there, bleeding, groaning, dying. I believe you took actual pleasure in it, with the other doctors that day, ripping up pants, or sleeves, or coats; probing, sawing off legs and arms! You corded those arms and legs, Doc, as fast as you cut them off, just as our hands used to do logs of wood. Ah yah! if Bell could but have seen you! You hadn’t slept or washed for days, standing there, bloody from head to foot, reeking with gore, the most horrible cannibals I ever saw—more like devils incarnate.”

“I don’t think you were so very lovely just then, shot through, expecting to die, leaving charges—”

“By-the-bye, and I’ll be shot!” exclaimed the other, rousing up. “It is a shame, but I never thought of it from that moment to this. What did you do with that photograph?”

“Among my traps somewhere,” said the other, indifferently. “But what was it you were going to say?”

“Hand it to me, old fellow, whenever you can think of it, I’m so forgetful. The difference between us,” continued Harris, “was that I hated it, while you actually loved it.”

“What do you mean?” asked the other, his swarthy face almost ashen with astonishment in contrast with his black and disordered hair.

“Mean? What am I talking about?” replied his companion, with the irritability of an invalid. “No man not a monster could stand it; but there you stood, as happy as you were dirty, all full of enthusiasm, hacking and hewing among those poor fellows, laughing and talking as if it was fun alive. If I didn’t know you never drank, I would have sworn you were half tight. It was the most horrible part of it, your enjoying such work. I can just imagine it,” the invalid continued, after a long pause—“Bell coming in upon you then! I do believe it would have killed her. Give a fellow a glass of port, Doc.”

And the young soldier settled himself back after his wine and took a good nap, the tent being pitched among a grove of post oaks off to itself from camp, all the men except the guard having gone before day upon a raid Northward. The young surgeon cleaned steadily away at his instruments for some moments, but seeing how soundly his companion slept, he unlocked a camp chest, took out a medical book, and sat down upon the ground, his back against the chest, to read. One would have supposed that he had condensed the whole volume into memoranda made upon a card, which also served as a marker in his book, so intently did he gaze upon it. At last he arose, and, card in hand, stood looking from it to the sleeper. An amazing contrast between the two men, for you could hardly hope to find a handsomer youth than the one sleeping in the hammock, nor a homelier one than the other, gazing somewhat sullenly upon him. The one was fair-haired, with delicate features, slight moustache, no more purpose in his face than in the petals of a flower; the other tall, defiantly erect, with dark, angular face, abundant hair and beard, eyes strong, clear, and direct, the eyes and bearing and manner of the man in keeping with his way of speech and action, which was prompt and decided enough.

“Queer, but I dreamed Bell was standing over me,” Ferdinand said, opening his eyes suddenly. “What’s o’clock, Doc?”

“Twelve.” And after a long silence, during which the surgeon had replaced the card in the book and the book in the chest, and entered upon the mending of a broken rivet in a complicated surgical contrivance of his own, he added at last, “I glanced at the pic-



ture you were speaking of when you gave it to me. The lady was not very strong, was she? but she seemed to be very sensible."

"Sensible? Not a bit of it," laughed the other. "Bell hasn't a bone, muscle, or sinew in her whole body—nothing but nerves. She never was any thing but a helpless baby. She is off in France with an old aunt of ours, or in Germany, at school, and much she'll learn. We are the only children. Our parents are dead. Both of us were petted by them and by the negroes as long back as I can remember. All she cares about is poetry and laces and moonshine and—well, nonsense generally, flowers and the like. She is a splendid musician, and is good-looking, or she couldn't be my sister," he added, stroking his mustache, "and she pets dogs and cats and canary-birds—the most effeminate woman you ever met. There's another thing about Bell," the brother added, after quite a pause. "You see, our father never entered a church at all, so that our mother had to attend church enough for both of them. She was a good Christian, you bet! And so with Bell. I'm a hard case, and she can do nothing with me; but she tries hard. I tell her she is too much of a saint, too much of a good thing. A mixed-up sort of a lady, isn't she? One has to know her to understand her. Listen! There's the tramp of hoofs. The boys are back again; and I'll bet you a bottle of wine, Doc, we've been tricked by the Yankees again. It's the old story of the grapevine telegraph, and these thick-headed negroes about camp are the operators. Shot if they ain't! But there's one question I would like to ask you, Doc, before the fellows come—one question."

"Ask away," the other replied, but not looking up as usual; and his friend continued:

"You're about the only man in camp that don't curse and swear, gamble and drink, fool with the yellow girls and the like. What I want to know is, why?"

"I told you before, man," the other said, somewhat savagely. "Until the war broke out I lived on our little old farm among the mountains. Except at the cross-roads once or twice a month, we never saw any body. It was like living in the bottom of a well; but I don't believe there was such a thing as an oath on that farm, much less a bottle of whisky or a card, since God made it. I am too old to take to such nonsense now; I despise it. Besides, I've my fortune to make, and—"

"You take to your surgery as some fellows take to drinking," the other added for him. "But what a dog's life you must have had of it!—stupid, wasn't it?"

"It does not seem to me, looking back upon it," the other replied, "as if my whole

life there was more than an hour long, and it was heaven. I don't talk about such things, Ferd, to any body; but every morning and evening, as regular as the clock, we had Luke and Suke in, and my father read a chapter from the Bible in course with a prayer. It was exactly the same prayer, and I know it by heart. So with the Bible. That's all."

"It's a mighty solid foundation, Doc," the other moralized; "deep and dull and hard; but you can afford to build a good deal on it, and to build pretty high. But we were raised different, Bell and I, except that Bell goes in for religion; we ain't of that sort, and you must excuse us. What a row those fellows are making! just listen to their cursing. As sure as you live, it is the negroes who betrayed us."

"You can't come in here," Dr. Wright said, at this juncture, to a party of officers about pressing in, chiefly in hopes of certain restoratives from the medicine chest of the surgeon. His own parents would not have known him as he filled the door of the tent, erect, peremptory, final, the very soul of decision and command in person and voice. No man could have so developed in three years had not the camp been in fact but the continuance of the hard life of the farm going before.

"Oh, Doc," "Why, Doc," "Now, Doc," "Come, Doc," "You know your own uncle, Doc," was the chorus outside, but not a man even tried to enter. You saw at a glance that the fear in which the surgeon was held was equalled by his popularity, for the hearty affection for him on the part of Ferdinand Harris was but the feeling of every man in camp, from the colonel commanding down. In a sneaking sort of way the lowest bumner was only too glad to share with "Doc" the degraded turkey or disreputable pig which came somehow into the possession of the bumner, and as much without possibility of explanation therefor as if turkey and pig were innate ideas generated in the depths of his, the bumner's, inner consciousness.

"Thank you, Doc; and there's one more thing I will tell you, for keeping those greedy fellows out," said the languid invalid—invalued as much by his life-long dandyism as by the shot through his lungs. "I'm a fool to do it, and it's part of my illness. I was speaking about my sister Bell. It's no secret, even in the army; but she's to be married, when the war is over, to General —;" and the brother named one of the most distinguished of the Confederate leaders—quite proud of it, too.

"What? She is?" his companion exclaimed, and with such roughness that the other could not help replying,

"You cut with your tones as you do with your saws! Don't be so coarse, Doc; be a little more cultured. *Coarse* is the word."

## II.

Possibly the men standing upon the summits of position, North and South, saw long before the masses beneath them not only the sure beginning of the rebellion, but after it had begun the certain ending also of the contest long before it did end. Yet it was not so, let it be repeated, with the mass of men. In the South, at least, no thunder-storm ever began so unexpectedly or ended its disastrous fury so abruptly. If the figure may be changed, no man among the crew of the Confederate ship of state worked harder than did Dr. William Wright. As an enthusiastic surgeon, his place was not on deck, but deep down, if we may so speak, in the hold among the wounded; and when the ship struck, it was with a shock that threw him from his feet, stunned, and for months after, with unspeakable astonishment; although, it must be added, the enthusiasm of the doctor was so absorbed by his surgery that he really never had got time to be particularly patriotic in regard to the cause of the Confederacy.

As soon as he could do so, the doctor went back to his home among the mountains. He found that Luke and Suke had added two more to the graves of his father and mother at the far end of the calf pasture, not a vestige of the fences left, much less of his ancestral log-cabin. The storm of war seemed, however, to have despised the smaller cabin in which Luke and Suke had lived, and the doctor contrived to shelter himself in that during the few days of his stay.

"If they had left a single duck or chicken!" the lonely man said, as he sat on a stone near the old well. "Not even the pole of that left! However, I've had a long time of it since I left, am sore with the shock of the ending, and if this place is not of the nature of bandage and poultice and quiet, I'm mistaken. If I could come upon an old shoe that some of the family had worn, could even start up some frog that I could pretend I had seen here before! I do suppose," he added, looking around over the bare and barren cleft in the mountains he had known as his home from his birth (now swept very clean by the torrent of war)—"I do suppose I am left as much alone as a man ever was in this world!" and he might have wept had he not been as devoid of sentiment as men generally get to be. It was very natural therefore that the doctor should resort to a little study, when the profound silence and stillness had begun to weary him, but somehow he never got beyond that place in his medical book marked by the card, still there from the days of his talk with Ferdinand Harris.

It may have been that this card was the only photograph he had ever owned. I dare say he had hardly looked at it for weeks after young Harris had given it to

him, when he (Harris) supposed himself dying, and it was owing merely to the picture being used as a marker that he had come to see the face upon it so often—to see the face of Bell Harris upon it so very, very often that she had come to be the one only living being in the world for whom he cared any thing whatever. It would have been a pretty picture for painter or poet, this burly youth of twenty-three, clad in his dilapidated Confederate gray, seated among the wreck of his home, bending his bronzed and determined face above the volume in which lay the open and smiling countenance of Bell Harris. In the absence of any other god, the savage, we all know, will make a fragment of a deer's vertebra answer the purpose—will invest it with awful attributes, cherish it next his heart, worship and pray to it; and the Creator has made every Adam of us to crave some Eve, less only than the soul craves after God. Even in Eden Adam demanded an Eve; and in the utter wilderness of the world in which the young surgeon found himself, this woman was to him the one other human being, except his Creator the only person in fact besides himself in existence. The very solitude made it worse. I am afraid to say how many weeks he remained there. Once or twice he rode to the cross-roads, twenty miles away, for flour, sugar, coffee, and salt, his revolver and Spencer rifle supplying him with venison or rabbit in abundance, and then, having nothing else on earth and all day long to do, he would revert to that picture. At last, from his knowledge of medicine and disease, he agreed, as if in consultation with himself, that he must either quit the place or his senses. "I will do it to-day. No; but I will do it to-morrow," he said to himself at last. And so he wandered once more from end to end and round and round the old farm he knew so well, and then, after cooking and eating his rude repast, would sit down for a time upon rock or stump to gaze into the smiling eyes, and lips open to speak, of his fetich. He lay awake all that last night in the desolate cabin, thinking of his father's harsh voice, of his mother's worn face, of Luke and Suke, of the dogs he used to own there, of all the myriad nothings of which his life had been slowly built up, but most of all of the picture.

In the morning, after saddling his horse, he went to one side of the corn field of old, which ended at the base of a rock rising high over his head, and knelt at the point where a certain well-remembered crack running diagonally down the rock disappeared in the earth. Knelt, but not in prayer, for, drawing his butcher knife from his belt, he proceeded, after looking around, to dig, prying up loose rocks and throwing out the earth, until he came to an old and rotten

tea-chest which he had himself helped his father to place there, one specially dark midnight in the wind and rain, as the war was beginning. Without removing the box, he transferred to various parts of his person the gold which, after paying for Luke and Suke, his parents had saved during the last twenty-five years of their life—the slow proceeds of webs from the loom, honey from the hive, the skins of all sorts of “varmints” from deer and bear and beaver down, poultry and pigs, corn and wheat from the field, and ginseng gathered from the woods. Now that the negroes were dead, the farm desolated, in that gold was, besides the doctor himself, the net results of all those long, dull years of close saving and unceasing toil. When he came to count it afterward, the amount was ten times beyond what he had supposed: enough to support him with economy for years, until he could secure a good practice in his profession.

And now, what? Had he been wrecked on an open sea without the smallest knowledge of direction as to land, he could not have been more indifferent in reference to the question in which way he was to swim. Having lived so secluded until he entered the army, having been tossed at random over nearly all the battle-fields of the war, he had nothing whatever of choice as to the town in which he should settle down to his practice—nothing beyond the photograph; and therefore he rode steadily for that place (suppose we agree to call it Jackson) in which Bell Harris had lived before the war.

And Dr. William Wright is surprised at himself to find how singularly cool and deliberate he is, on housing himself at the hotel of Jackson, as to learning about the Harris family. The place is a really beautiful little city, built upon half a hundred rolling hills, nine parts suburbs to one part courthouse and shops and stores. For a month or so he rides round and round, through and through it, perfectly at his leisure, until he knows it by heart. One day he draws rein at the great gate leading to one of the “places” in the suburbs. A negro boy of twelve years old is enjoying the emancipation of his race by swinging upon the gate.

“Boy, whose place is this?” and somehow he knows the reply as he asks.

“Dis is de Harris place, massa.”

“People at home?”

“Law, no, massa. Mars Ferdinand he was home from de war, but he done gone. Miss Bell she’s way off; hain’t been here sense de war bruk out. Oberseer’s in de house; he’ll tell you. Stay here, massa, an’ I’ll fotch him.”

Dr. Wright remains on his horse until the overseer comes to the gate, and then learns from him that Miss Bell is still in Europe for “her schooling;” that Ferdinand Harris has gone to New Orleans to hunt up his merchant

of times before the war, and there is no telling when he will be back. Making a note of the merchant’s name, the doctor rides off, there being nothing else to do.

“Who shall I say called, Sir?” the overseer asks.

“Doesn’t matter,” the other replies; “she doesn’t know me, but I know her!”

As to Jackson, had it been swallowed up on the instant in an earthquake like another Lisbon, it could hardly have disappeared to the surgeon more suddenly and entirely. In a wide world which all around is as much the same to him as, out of sight of shore, the sea would have been, he has but one object to direct him, but one thing.

“I wouldn’t be in the least surprised,” he says to himself, as he rides off, “if I am getting crazy. If I had a grandmother somewhere, some old army friend that I cared a bit more for than I did for all the rest, somebody somewhere, or even something, however small, to decide me to one town rather than another, it would be different. But I am in such exact balance that I *have* nothing else to decide me but her. Queer how cool and indifferent I am! And I would have liked to have settled as much in Jackson as any where.”

Now if you, dear reader, had been in the surgeon’s place, you would have been glad to have gone over the house in which she had lived, you would have made some inquiry about her. But the doctor had not enough sentiment for that. It was distinctly for her he cared, and for her wholly apart from her surroundings. So sufficient was she in and of herself that he had no question to ask, not desiring to know any thing whatever concerning her. He was a peculiar man, which is why I take the trouble to write out his case; and I dare not mar the scientific precision of my statement as illustrating Natural Selection by any exaggeration or least coloring of the facts as I happen to know them: and I am sure that I *ought* to know them!

Selling his horse, paying his bills, begging the sign-painter, who had already prepared his office sign, to let it stay in his shop until he called for it, in a week Dr. Wright was in the office in New Orleans of the merchant who had sold the cotton of the Harris Plantation, near Jackson, before the war. An exceedingly dry old gentleman the doctor found this merchant, a Mr. Garner, to be, just establishing himself again in business, clerkless, and waspish to the last degree over his ruined connection among the planters, as loud in denunciation of the Confederate as of the Federal powers.

“I don’t know where young Harris is, except that when he was here the other day I told him that the days of making advances on crops are over with a vengeance,” the wiry old soul said, in answer to Dr. Wright’s

inquiries. "But I can tell you where he is going," he added.

"Well?" Dr. Wright asked.

"Going head-foremost to the bad," the irritable old man continued. "I'm from Yankee-land myself, although I hate the Yankees more than any creole can pretend to do; but I've done business in New Orleans fifty years. These young fellows were never raised to work. What with the climate and their training, they can't work. Besides, they're so used to the war, they must have excitement, so they hang around the St. Charles or the St. Louis drinking, and spend every afternoon on Canal Street, because they know the creole girls will be there to admire them by reason of their sufferings for the cause. I'm sorry for young Harris," the old factor said, relenting a little; "but he hasn't stamina enough to save him."

Possibly there was something of reticence and authority in the bearing of the dark-haired, homely, but honest face, military and somewhat defiant attitude, of his visitor, which encouraged the old merchant, having once begun, old and shaken as he was by the war, too, to pour out his soul in reference to the Harris people. But having learned that Miss Bell Harris was at a certain address in Paris, or if not there, then at a certain other address at Berlin, the visitor withdrew to make a memorandum of the same, and—for there was nothing else in the world to be done—go first to the one city, and then, if necessary, to the other. Years on years before, the Harris parents had so settled their property as that a certain income went through the hands of Dr. Wright's informant to the daughter, and it was thus the old gentleman was kept informed of the address of the lady and of her old aunt who accompanied her. But it was little Dr. Wright heard of all this after making mental note of her whereabouts.

"I wouldn't be surprised," the old merchant said, in parting, "if young Harris has gone to her, if he can muster money and energy enough. They say she is going to marry General —;" and he mentioned the distinguished soldier of whom the brother had already told him. "Possibly Mr. Ferdinand Harris—Ferdinand and Isabella are their names, twins, I suppose you know," he added—"has gone to her wedding. The best thing *he* can do," the old man concluded, "is to marry some woman rich enough to afford it and fool enough to do it. If you should see him—good-afternoon, Sir—you can tell him so from me, Ebenezer Garner. Oh, he knows me well enough! Good-afternoon, good-afternoon!"

Within a week Dr. Wright was far out at sea on his way, under an instinct as powerful as that by which a vine runs toward the light or a bobolink flies southward from the

cold. Never before had he seen the ocean, nor had he ever met seasickness previously except in the pages of his medical reading; but he no more wavered because of such things than he did on account of quite a variety of really beautiful and accomplished ladies whom, as soon as the general seasickness ceased, he met upon the decks. The narrowness of his life while he lived in that cleft of the mountains before the war was changed for but another form of narrowness during the war, in virtue of his exclusive devotion to his surgery, and now, like an arrow made perfectly true beforehand, and aimed by that force in our nature which is the strongest of all, the necessity of loving and being loved by some woman, he went steadily to his mark. Nor did Paris itself have power to deflect him.

"Here I am," he reasoned with himself on his arrival, "and here she is. Now I intend to take things as coolly as I have always done, slowly, deliberately, accurately. I will get a master and learn the language. The medical schools here are the best in the world, as well as the hospitals and museums of medical science. Very good. While I am attending to my main business here I will not neglect these lesser matters. Besides, I am homely and coarse and abrupt. Miss Bell Harris is not a patient held to a table for knife and scalpel, nor do I know of any ether or chloroform beyond the most cautious and respectful advances on my part. I never intend to bow and gesticulate, shrug my shoulders and smile, like these monkeys around me in this city of chatters, but I will get a book or a teacher to smooth me off a little, also a tailor. Moreover, I will study society as I do medicine and surgery, and not be in a hurry. We are young, and there is plenty of time. In fact, I would rather not see her just yet."

And upon this principle Dr. Wright proceeds during the months that follow, no more forgetful all the time of his one object in life than the fish-hawk during its wide circlings in the air is of the quarry below, around which it is wheeling only to strike at last the more successfully.

Of course he knew by heart the *pension* upon the quiet out-of-the-way street at which Miss Bell Harris and her aunt were supposed by him to live, passing it at least once a day, by blind and lower instinct however, for his sincere hope every time he passed was that he might miss seeing her on that occasion also. But one beautiful day, as he was studying rather the anatomy than any other beauty in the large group of the Louvre opposite the east entrance, two ladies, one old, the other young, paused beside him. I am provoked at the doctor that his peculiar character was of that sort; but as if he had met the ladies from his earliest recollection, varying from that merely in the

words required, the instant he saw them he advanced, hat in hand, to the elder of the ladies, and said, with a sudden snavity of manner which, up to that moment, he did not know he possessed,

"Will you kindly allow me, madam? I see that this is Miss Bell Harris. My name is Dr. William Wright. I was with your brother, Miss Harris, when he was shot through the chest. Pardon me for speaking, but—"

"Certainly, Sir," said the old lady, as promptly. "Why, my dear, you remember how Ferdinand used to write about him? We would know you, Sir, if it were only from his description."

Now old Mrs. Magruder, for that was her name, said this exactly as she would have done if it had the meeting taken place in New Orleans or in Jackson. She did not understand French. Paris was no more to her than Jackson. In fact, being too old to change, she was precisely as she had been all along and every where, a motherly, sensible old soul. Besides, there was so much simple, sensible, honest human nature in this plain but authoritative young man that one would as well have suspected a loaf of brown-bread or a glass of water as have had a doubt in regard to him, the more especially as he evidently did not have the least doubt in regard to them.

While the young lady held herself somewhat aloof, modest and silent, in twenty minutes the doctor and Mrs. Magruder were talking over the war and Ferdinand Harris's experiences therein. "You see, Dr. Wright," she explained, "their parents died when they were young, and I have had charge of Ferdinand and Isabella—they are twins, you know—ever since. We wouldn't have been in Europe if the South had not been so torn up with the war. My niece had to be educated; her father left special directions in his will about that; and as Bell could not go North to school among the Yankees, we had to come to Europe." And thereupon the old lady entered into motherly inquiries in reference to Ferdinand, as to whose strength of character and prospects for the future she evidently had the gravest of doubts.

Thus it came to pass as naturally as one eats and drinks and breathes that these three persons met as by a species of appointment in the churches and galleries of art, libraries, and the like, during the weeks in Paris that followed. Miss Bell Harris was to Dr. Wright simply his cherished photograph alive and speaking. An immense difference, none the less, between the lady of pasteboard and the living, breathing, smiling woman in unceasing motion. But I am forced by the fact that this is a scientific monograph to say that there was nothing at last so remarkable in the lady. Not one

man in ten thousand, meeting her for the first time in the Louvre or any where else, would have glanced at her a second time, for beyond being a modest, pleasant, unaffected young lady of education, there was nothing in her slight form, child-like face, with brown eyes, a smooth brow in an abundance of brown hair, that was particularly remindful of Madonna or Fornarina. But for years now she had been to Dr. Wright not only the one woman of her sex, she had been also the one person of the race for whom he specially cared. It had *grown* that way!

I knew it when I began to write, but it presses upon me at this juncture with severity, the fact that I can not recount any thing of a violent or tragic nature. I will even confess that I had at one time yielded so far to the temptation toward the sensational as to resolve upon having the doctor shoot the distinguished general. But as he did nothing of the kind, I am satisfied that, by the very instincts of sweet nature itself, the reader would have despised the device: the literal fact being that by reason of certain immoral courses of the general during the war—courses so exceedingly immoral as to become offensively notorious—the match ceased as of itself, and from both sides. The scientific fact also was that Bell Harris was to no other man living what she was to this man. Nature should have completed matters by making Dr. Wright to be to her all that she was to him. But, alas, no.

Of this the lover became well aware when, after months of ever ripening acquaintance, he ventured to speak for himself, and was promptly and decidedly rejected. She knew and liked him, that was the amount of it, as one who had nursed her brother during his wound, and had saved his life thereby: as one who was an earnest, sincere, sensible, downright, and determined youth: brown, bearded, plain, and altogether reliable, and that was all!

"Of course," the rejected lover reasoned, "haven't I known and loved her for years, while she has not known me as many months! It was not like a case of fracture, to be finished all at once so far as a surgeon is concerned, and even then the surgeon is through a great deal sooner than the patient. I'll wait." For the man no more abandoned the intention of at last succeeding than hunger abandons the idea of food, or than he did of securing a fortune some day in the line of his profession.

"I'll wait," said the lover; and upon waiting he entered as upon a process of treatment, treatment of himself as well as of her. Passionately in love, and more deeply so every hour, his affection took the energetic path of waiting, which is, at least to men of his determined character, the hardest work in the world.

"I pledge you my word, Miss Bell," he said to her, "that you will never again hear a word upon the subject from my lips, nor will I annoy you by a visit, much less by a letter, or even a look. Your aunt has consented that I may escort you to Berlin. No gentleman is with you, and there are many matters in which I can serve you. I never indulge in transports, have no intentions of suicide, am, as you see, one of the most unimaginative men living. I suppose I am the result of my peculiar birth and history and profession; but I suppose, too, that I am of as hard and cold a heart as a man can well be. I haven't a single person in America I care a cent for, or one who cares half a cent for me; not one soul in Europe with whom I am even acquainted!"

But the young lady objected with many assurances of the hopelessness of his continuing the acquaintance: there was not the least possibility of its resulting in any thing to him except pain and certain mortification, and she too was so cool when she said it, so calm and deliberate and assured down to the deepest depths of her brown eyes, and in the emphasis of her head and hand and tones as she spoke, that any other man would have abandoned the matter in despair. The doctor did not, purely because it was a question of sole alternative—what other woman, living person even, was there to him in all the world?

"I agree with you entirely, Bell," Mrs. Magruder said to her in private. "Dr. Wright is an excellent man, ten times the character of poor Ferdinand, but he is not at all the person I would have you marry. Considering his lack of fortune, of education, of culture and refinement and all, it is simply absurd."

"Why, then, do you let him go with us?" said the niece, with some irritation.

"Because we have been so wretchedly cheated all along—have had so much trouble about our passports and baggage and railway tickets and hotel people. I'm getting old and am tired, and he will be so glad to help. His marrying you is so entirely out of the question that I regard that as settled. He is too sensible not to give it up; the only fear is that you may fall in love with him at last. If you think so, we had better refuse to let him go."

"The idea!" exclaimed the young lady, and made no further opposition.

It was simply a question of Natural Selection. An oak-tree makes no more noise in selecting from earth and air what is essential to it than a violet does. There is the peal of no particular thunder when either robin-redbreast or eagle are mated. Of course in the case of many a Pyramus and Thisbe there is a separating wall and a devouring lion, many a dagger and cup of poison, as in the instances of innumerable

Romeos and Juliets, as well as Antonys and Cleopatras; but you will be good enough to observe that these were cases not of Natural but of unnatural Selection. No peaceful marriages in cases of that sort, with happy homes afterward. Study such instances in all their vast varieties, and you will see that all the jar and turmoil and inevitable crash in the end are because the selection of each other was abnormal and in defiance of nature. The Creator mates man and woman to-day precisely as He did Adam and Eve; it is the devil coming in that spoils it all. Under His unwearying wisdom and love it is as much this Adam to that Eve in the composition of a pair as it is this much oxygen to that much nitrogen in the construction of the atmosphere in general and in particular. There is not a particle of fuss or confusion except when the Creator is hindered. Were He left to His workings, things would move as smoothly as do the planets, which we undoubtedly would interfere with if we could reach them. The companionship of the eternal heaven, you may rest sure, will be happy, because it will be left, unmolested of sin, to the law, as sweet as it is simple, of lack and supply on the part of each soul—lack and loving supply, pure as it is strong, instinctive, abundant, eternal.

"Nothing can be plainer," Dr. Wright would say, during the months which followed, to Mrs. Magruder, who, by the affinity of good sense for sense uncommonly common and sterling on his part, had slowly and imperceptibly come to like Dr. Wright a great deal more than she herself knew. "There is music, you know. I can not make music, but I am growing to feed upon it more as upon food every day. Well, then, all the music I hear in cathedral, concert, opera, band in the parks, or songs of the peasants, is supplied to me in one person and in perfection by Miss Bell, by far the best musician with voice or instrument I can imagine. So with sculpture and painting, of which we certainly see enough. Now to me all beauty of form and color I find in her."

"Perspective too," the old lady added, sarcastically, and looking somewhat pityingly, too, from under her brown "front," through her spectacles, at her companion, as he replied:

"Yes, she does keep her distance, madam. But America is three thousand miles off, yet we will get there some day: and so is heaven. I am as practical. Then there's all we know of education, refinement, culture. Don't you suppose I feel my lack of all that?—and more every day? And Miss Bell is all of that to me. I give you my solemn word, Mrs. Magruder, that I never read a novel in my life, that is, through and through, yet I have a sort of craving for

such things—poetry too—not much, I confess. Now your niece—”

“You would make Bell out to be an angel. I never knew such infatuation,” said the old lady. “Bell is a good girl; I’ve known her since she was a baby; but she is nothing miraculous. That wretched photograph has crazed you, Dr. Wright; it’s a regular case of hallucination.”

“I have sometimes thought so myself,” said her companion, frankly; “but I gave it up to her long ago, when I told her all about it, and I have not even thought of it since. But I do not think Miss Bell is an angel—perfect, I mean—at all. I think she has weaknesses which make me as necessary to her as she is to me.”

“Well, upon my word!” exclaimed Mrs. Magruder. “Why, Dr. Wright, what on earth?”

“I suppose I am the plainest of men,” Dr. Wright said, rubbing at his black beard; “but the fact is, I just think aloud. When she fell as we were climbing the Alps, you remember, and I had to lift her animal off of her; the time your courier stole your things, and that telegraphing had to be done, and all the proving afterward, it was the same; so when she was very ill at the *chalet*, and I was the only medical man in reach; the time I had to thrash that Englishman who was rude to her, when she was off that day sketching, and the like. Of course you are too sensible to think I boast of what was as easy and as natural for me to do when I was needed as it was for her to need me then. I do believe, my dear madam,” the lover added, so thoroughly in earnest that it went to the very heart of the lady, “that there are and will be a thousand things—things of character as well as circumstance—which she has not and which I do have, just as I am tremendously sure that she is in her blessed self the supply to me of every thing of which I am deficient. I am a little sombre, for instance, and she is as joyous as a bird; I am homely, and she is beautiful; and if she is full of sentiment, I am made up of facts as a house is of bricks! All these young fellows that are falling in love with her, do you suppose I’m afraid of them? Not one bit. They never can be, all of them put together, to her what I am, and she is knowing it to be a fact every day, unconsciously to herself.”

“Do, for mercy’s sake, doctor—stop!” and the doctor did stop at this adjuration; but Mrs. Magruder had become on solid principles his friend, and it was little he said thus to her that was not filtered through the older lady into the heart of the younger. Meanwhile—

“I’m sure, Bell,” her aunt said to her, “no man could be less demonstrative than the doctor. He never comes near or speaks to you unless upon your motion; if he as much

as looks at you, I do not see him doing so. If he was a hundred years old, he could not seem less ardent, and if he was a thousand miles off, he could not be less in your way.”

But it must not be supposed that Dr. Wright knew so little of women as to remain in attendance upon the ladies all this time. All day long he was hard at work in Berlin, to which city they went after leaving Paris, in the study of his profession. No harder nor more enthusiastic student in Germany than the doctor. Often he would be gone for weeks at a time into Italy, or upon pedestrian excursions with acquaintances he made among the Alps. It was the independence and self-reliance of the man and his devotion to his profession which secured their respect, and grievously did they miss him when absent, and eagerly did they welcome him—Mrs. Magruder did at least—when he returned.

“I never knew a man to improve so,” the aunt would often say to her niece; “he is rough still, but is growing more of a gentleman every hour. How heartily he enjoys our quiet Sunday afternoons in this beer-drinking land! How glad he is to go with us to chapel! But he enjoys your Sunday afternoon singing more than all. I am glad, Bell, that, with all your nonsense, you are so decided and steady as a Christian.”

And Miss Bell would lift her eyes, the cloud of brown hair overhanging them, from her sewing, and say: “I do not see how I could be any thing else, aunty, considering the mother I had. When one is away off in a foreign land like this, knowing, too, that the old South we loved so well is all broken up and ruined, if one does not look to heaven, what is there left? The Catholics clinging so to their Madonnas put us to shame. Besides you and poor dear Ferdinand I have nothing in all the world. I feel, too, that I must hold all the firmer to God when all the people, here at least, seem to be going off into infidelity. I wish I was a more devoted Christian! I intend to try to be.” And her aunt thought she never looked quite so lovely as when she said that. The plain truth is, notwithstanding all that Dr. Wright thought about it, Miss Bell Harris was a good, earnest, pleasant little lady to see, with plenty of quiet decision of character underneath her child-like gayety of manner.

Here again I heartily wish that I could with truth narrate some convulsion of nature by which the end was precipitated, especially as the threatening of war in Europe about that time would have enabled me quite easily to invent and palm off upon the reader something thrilling if not ingenious, but I am compelled to cleave to the macadamized turnpike of facts. Let me hasten upon it to the end.

“What do you suppose induced me to

yield?—I mean, what do you think was the last inducement which turned the scale?" asked a lady of Dr. Wright, as the two were seated together upon the deck of a steamer, America bound, just two years to a day after the doctor had crossed to Europe.

"I do not know, Bell," the gentleman replied, in a common-sense way, "unless it was that you slowly came to see that I must have been made for you, since nothing could be plainer to any body than that you were made for me."

"No, Sir. That was what Aunt Magruder called your hallucination," the lady answers. "I suppose I must have been slowly giving way, unconsciously so, for a long time. But if you had ever given me an opportunity by saying a word to me about it, I would have rejected you, and over and over again whenever you tried it. No, Sir: that letter from old grumpy Mr. Garner in New Orleans did it. I thought at first you were intoxicated, you were so radiant with joy to learn, as you did from aunt—you never would have done so from me—that we must return, because our money was almost gone; that the hands were free now and would not work on the plantation; and pages on pages to that effect."

"I am sure I did not say any thing," Dr. Wright made answer.

"No," the lady continued, "and I would have been angry if you had. But you were like a child, so full of happiness at the hope that now you would be able to do something to prove all you wanted to be to me, that I could not resist it; and I began to realize the difference between your steady, settled purpose in life and the butterfly sort of life I had been leading. You did not ask me again, but I could not hold out against your eager and joyful silence. If you had heard that you had suddenly come into an estate, you could not have gone about happier than you were, rubbing your hands and rumpling your beard, laughing and talking as if you were beside yourself."

"I do not remember saying any thing to you at last," said her matter-of-fact husband.

"Are you not ashamed of yourself to say so? At least," the lady added, with a blush, "you had been saying so much to me silently for so long, it was not in my heart not to say something at last. I did not have to say much."

"And I will tell you," her husband said, taking her hand under the cover of her traveling shawl, as they sat side by side at the taffrail of the vessel, steaming smoothly along homeward, "what was the one thing in you that determined me to persevere. There were many lesser things, but this was the chief thing. As I told you, I had been trained to religion on the old farm. We had the Bible and prayers every day

regularly as our meals, as necessary a thing from force of long habit, yet the dullest of all matters. There was nothing of it during life in camp, and I saw, as all men do, the need of it. Now I did not have it, and you did, and that is all, only your joyous faith and happy content have thrown the bright sunlight over what had seemed gloomy and dark before. It was the way you used to put your very soul of Sunday afternoons in your singing which made me certain that if I was ever to have religion, I must have you."

I will only add that my neighbor, Dr. Wright, is succeeding at his profession here in Jackson splendidly. He is, in fact, our main reliance as physician and surgeon. Aunt Magruder, Dr. and Mrs. Wright, their little Ferdinand and Isabella—twins once more, if you will believe me—and Ferdinand Harris, battling manfully, with his sister's help, against his besetting weaknesses, are all living quite happily together. Should you be any where in the region, they would be glad to have you call. They are by no means rich, but will try to give you a genuine Southern welcome as of old.

## THE ANSWER.

We wished the winter days away—

"After March winds and April rain,"  
I said, "will come the warmth of May,  
And then you will be strong again."

When snows were deep and winds were wild  
We talked of summer woods and streams,  
Till all the present was beguiled  
To gladness by our happy dreams.

Beside the fire I pictured days  
When spring, transforming all the land,  
Invests the common scenes and ways  
With charms we can not understand.

And planned: "When you are well, we too  
Will help the general holiday,  
Will celebrate the time, and you  
Shall be the gayest of the gay."

She answered with a little smile,  
That came to eyes a shade too grave  
And left them bright, "But wait a while,  
Till we are sure of wind and wave!"

And I smiled back, "Let those beware  
Who cross the path of my desire,  
Who raze my castles in the air,  
Or spoil my pictures in the fire!"

Brave words! brave words! in looking back,  
How confident and glad they seem!  
Ah, what we have, not what we lack—  
That is the shadow and the dream!

I prayed, I hoped, and never knew  
The higher meaning in my prayers,  
Until the perfect answer grew  
Into my knowledge, unawares;

For April lingers, loath to go,  
And God has made His blessing plain.  
What can I wish for, since I know  
That she is well and glad again?

Ah, let my selfish grief be dumb!  
Why should I wrong the dead so far?  
Safe where no care or grief can come,  
And happy as the angels are!

H. R. HUDSON.