AND THIS IS WAR

DUDLEY

And This is War

BY

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TO HER WHOSE LIFE WITH MY LIFE RHYMES.

This little book must not go tremblingly forth voyaging to its unknown destination without grateful acknowledgment being made for the help of One who has ever stood by my side, who has witnessed the birth of these stray waifs one by one in my soul, whose timely suggestions and help have given them first aid when their feeble cries indicated that life in them was at low ebb, and who has furnished all the material for some of their stories.

This grateful acknowledgment I make to my wife,

LOUISE JENKINS DUDLEY.

Should the rose on thy cheek ever fade,
Bloom fairer will the garden of roses
Thy life in my life hath made.

—C. H. D.

"Great captains with their guns and drums
Disturb our judgments for the hour,
But at last silence comes."

—*Lowell.*

"Truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors,

* * * * * *

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave."

—*In Memoriam.*

"Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."

—*Shakespeare.*

"War is hell."

—*Gen. Sherman.*

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Part I.

WAR'S ALARUMS

And This is War

CHAPTER I.

ONLY EIGHTEEN.

He was only eighteen, but his country needed him, and he had answered her call. It was the last day he was to have at home—the home of his childhood. On the morrow he was to leave for the army. He wanted to be alone. He wanted to revisit each dear spot on the old farm, to say good-bye to each,—for when would he see them again?

After dinner was eaten he silently rose from the table, took down his hat, and passed out of the house. Wistfully two pair of eyes followed his retreating figure —the eyes of the mother who bore him and of the father who begot him. The boy passed from sight. They glanced at each other, eyes moistened, throats suddenly became dry: the father went out in silence, but the mother sat still in the house, gazing awhile at the empty cup before her. Possibly she saw visions of vanished years. Possibly a curly-headed child figured in those visions.

The father looked anxiously in every direction, but the boy was not in sight.

He had climbed a distant hill whereon was an oak with limbs nearly sweeping the ground. In its branches

sunny hours had fled while he played with brothers who were now bearded men roaming afar. Here he had built his castles in the air. He climbs the oak once more. He gazes long on each familiar spot, and his eyes linger caressingly on some which stirred tender memories.

Long he sat there, and longer were his thoughts. At last he descends from the tree; he will press again with his foot every place where his baby feet have wandered. He visits the orchard, he roams through the woods, he sits on the bank by the swimming pool, he tarries by the sunken log where he caught his first trout. He thinks of the yesterdays and of the tomorrows, and something swells in his throat.

He goes to the barn, caresses the horses, and says good-bye. He enters the house and silently goes up stairs, picks up a few old toys and packs them away. He handles each lovingly, and he remembers. Tomorrow he leaves for the war. Ah, he never knew before how many heart-strings bound him to the old place and the old familiar scenes. Familiar? Yes—but what strange light is this in which each seems to swim this long afternoon?

It is midnight; the last night has reached its noon. The darkness is thick in the home, but the morning has begun—the morning that for the boy should know no evening under his father's roof; the morning that for the parents ushered in an endless evening, till the boy should come back—if he ever would.

She was a plain farm wife and mother and the world never heard her name: and yet there were those that loved her, and she loved, too. She could not sleep.

Her thoughts were of the boy. Noiselessly she slips from her husband's side, noiselessly she enters the open door of the boy's chamber. It is in total darkness. Slowly she feels her way to a window, pulls back the curtain a little ways, and a dim light falls on the sleeper's face.

Long she stands there hushed and awed, not a muscle moving. She is all soul, and her soul is all in her eyes, and her eyes are devouring a sleeping face—her boy's. The sleeper stirs a little. He is dreaming. "Mother," he softly breathes. A mother's heart stops beating. She has become all ears, but that one word is all.

And the breakfast hour came. Appetites were small. Silence was king. A book is taken from the center table. Its leather cover is rusty and worn. The binding is falling to pieces. The leaves are tattered and soiled. On the cover are some nearly illegible letters, once guilt; they spell, "Holy Bible." The father opens the book and reads. A prayer follows, and a strange peace finds a tiny entrance into hearts packed with sadness. A team is brought to the door. Quivering lips touch quivering lips and filmy eyes look into filmy eyes. Then father and son ride away down the dusty highway—yes, ride away. And a woman stands in the door with a hand shading her eyes. The team passes out of sight, and a woman turns back into the house.

The father and son slowly ascend a long hill. Reaching its summit, before passing down the other side, a boy rises in the wagon, turns round and takes a last look at the valley he is leaving behind. A woman has come to the door once more; she sees a boy standing in a distant wagon on a hill, and the boy sees a woman

standing in a farmhouse door down in the valley, and then he passes over the hill.

Father and son do not talk, but occasionally each takes a hasty sidelong glance at the other, and then quickly turns his eyes to the distant, low-lying, smoky hills.

They reach the station, the train comes puffing in, the father drives home alone.

Will the boy come back?

CHAPTER II.

DRAFTED.

He was a stalwart man mentally and physically, God-fearing and true. Eight years before he had married the lass across the way. They had been sweethearts since childhood. A little home was purchased, mainly on hope of future savings; and to this home the joyous bride was brought. The little white farmhouse became a Garden of Eden. In the six years following the bridal morn, three little faces stole into their enchanted bower. And great happiness welled up in the husband's heart as he took his rest at eventide under his own vine and fig-tree.

But as the eighth year of this unmarred happiness was tapering to its close, clouds of war rose dark and portentous and the whole land reeled under the thick shadows. The call for troops came. He was a well-read man, intelligent, courageous, patriotic. But everybody prophesied a short war, so, though he longed to bear a part of his country's burdens, he felt that as single men were plenty and eager to fight, he must not desert those God had given him to protect.

But the war dragged on. Call for men followed call, until every square mile of his native land was constantly atremble with the march of its bravest sons passing from every home to where gory death held high carnival. His country's voice rang in his ears. Home ties clutched at his heart. In the night he tossed on a

wakeful pillow. He looked into the calm face of his sleeping bride-wife; into three little faces on which the moonlight played. No! he could not, must not, go. The farm was still heavily mortgaged, his oldest child but seven.

Battle after battle was lost. The Ruler and his cabinet took counsel late into the nights. The ranks that faced the foe were thinning, the tramp, tramp, tramp from homes about him was growing fainter and fainter; there were fewer now to go forth—and those few were needed where they were. The claims of home and humanity chained them to their uneasy posts. The newspapers began darkly and mysteriously to hint at the possible necessity of drafting men to fill the wasted ranks. Their tone grew more certain and clamorous. It was done: the draft ordered. The father hid the paper containing this announcement. That night he again looked long hours into four peaceful, sleeping faces. Four separate swords passed through his heart and some four-handed monster had hold of the four hilts of those swords and was remorselessly sawing back and forth.

For three days he hid every paper that came to the house. His wife asked for them, but evasive answers satisfied her unsuspecting love. The fourth day when he was away in the field at work, a neighbor dropped in to chat and brought the news of the draft. The wife's face paled and her lips tightened, but she said little. When the visitor had at last taken her departure, the wife hunted up the missing papers. She read them, and she read her husband's nameless dread.

That night she spoke to him about the matter—and four eyes in an isolated farm home failed to close in

sleep. In two little beds, through an open door, three little children were sleeping calmly on.

A week passed. The day of the draft came. He could not wait at home. He heard the names read off—his own among them.

After he had left home that morning a woman who had said good-bye with brave but white and twitching face hurried three little children outdoors to their play; then she collapsed into a chair and, with arms on the table and face buried on her arms, her form was shaken with convulsive sobs, and salt tears wet her face and dress. In her anguish she called upon God to spare them the impending blow.

A little child seven years old heard a strange sound and, leaving her play, came to the door. What was the matter with mamma? Scared and wondering, she noiselessly went away and called her sister next younger; and the two came to the door, and there they stopped. Long they gazed with frightened faces upon that shaking, moaning form huddled by the table. Silently they tiptoed to her side, and the little eyes grew larger and larger, while the little bodies are held motionless with terror. A toddler of three, missing the older children, clambers up the steps, enters the open door, and patters noisily over the bare floor. The mother hears, raises her streaming eyes, and through their wet bitterness looks into three pairs of scared, mystified child-eyes.

Little lips cry out: "Mamma c'ying! mamma c'ying! Don't c'y, mamma! Don't c'y, mamma!" And three little broken hearts begin to weep. And the mother has to comfort them, yes, comfort them.

A farmer is slowly driving home. A farmer? Nay!

a husband and a father. He sees naught about him. He is thinking. A woman goes often to an open door and gazes longingly, dreadingly, up the winding road. A team comes into sight around a turn, comes slowly on toward where the woman waits. A man is in that wagon. His head is bowed, the lines have fallen from his hands, but he hasn't noticed this.

The team draw near the gate. The bowed head is not lifted. The woman tries to steal out of the house unobserved, but six little eyes see her go, six little ears hear a team approaching, six little feet follow after the woman. They raise their eyes, gleefully they lift up their voices: "Papa coming! Papa coming!" The man is aroused from his revery. A woman looks into his eyes and he into hers. Strength goes from her limbs, she totters, is falling. The man leaps from the wagon and catches her with trembling arms.

Three white little faces look up into father's, and father looks down into three white little faces.

CHAPTER III.

TWENTY-TWO AND NINETEEN.

He was twenty-two and she nineteen. They had been engaged only six weeks, and the light of lights still shone in four eyes that knew nothing but the morning.

War had been declared. He loved as a true man's heart does love. Yet he had a man's head and a man's conscience, and he knew down deep somewhere in his soul that somehow a man's life belongs first to God and country, only afterwards to home and friends and sweethearts; and, lastly, if at all, to self.

At first the voice of his country seemed to pass him by, or he failed to hear it, absorbed as he was in his new-born happiness. But that call became louder, more urgent, more imperious, more distressful. Yes, his country needed men, must have them, or she die. He knew her cause was the cause of God and all humanity. Her voice pierced the joints of the armor of his happiness. Conscience leaped to her feet. Duty shouted in his ears. His country's voice was no longer self-confident, vaunting, unafraid; but the voice of fear, of anguish, of desperate, imperative need.

Six months ago he would have greeted that call to arms with a shout of martial ardor, but now—there was another. The old conflict broke out in his soul, a conflict which most men know sooner or later, be there war or be there peace—how meet and satisfy the claims of

God and men and one's work in the world, and also the demands and expectations of those to whom the heart is pledged?

He fought back the hour of decision. He became strangely quiet and pre-occupied in her presence. Her heart grew anxious, and pain nestled down beside her joy and almost crowded it out. Was his love growing cold already? Was he tiring of her? Did he think he had made a mistake?

At last her breaking heart forced these questions to her lips. Yes, he loved her better than life, he declared —and crushed her to his heart. Ah, yes, he did love her then. But why his silences, why his unhappiness? Wouldn't he share his troubles with her?

For a time he was evasive, but she pressed him hard. At length, almost without the consent or knowledge of his will, there broke from his lips: "The war, dearest! this terrible war—you know the need of men—what shall I do?"

At first she was dumfounded; then she turned upon him in bitter reproaches. Did he love a uniform better than he loved her? Was this all he cared for her after all? Was this all his vows of constancy amounted to? Let others go to the dreadful war if they wanted to. Why should he desert her in the moment of their great happiness? Was this as long as his pledges of life-long devotion were to last?

They parted that night, her eyes glittering with anger and wounded pride: his with a dumb ache she did not know and could not fathom. He rode home, torn with conflicting emotions, with battling voices shouting in his soul. Oh, God, what should he do? Was not his battle hard enough without the one he worshiped throwing herself into the scales against the

call of duty? What should he do? What should he do?

The days came and went. He toiled up the steep hill, bearing his cross. He crucified himself and his love, as thousands of other brave and silent men had done before him. He enlisted.

The night he confessed his conflict she did not sleep. She came to see that he was right and she was wrong; but at first her anger waxed, anger at self, and so resentment against him all the more bitter and unyielding. But her heart was true and her passion passed. He had not come again. She wrote him that he must do right and she would honor him the more.

He came to see her the evening he received her letter. On the morrow he was to start for the front. The night was warm. Arm in arm they strolled under the trees. They talked of their love, of their dreams, and of the morrow. They looked up at the silent stars and the silent stars looked down—looked down into four young and tear-stained eyes as the stars have looked down into such eyes since that first morning when they sang together, as they will continue to look down into such until the mantle of silence enfolds the dwelling place of man forever.

The night waned—and still the lovers wandered on arm in arm, unheeding Time's mad rush. Suddenly a shaft of light shot up the sky in the far East. Could it be?—yes, the morning was breaking. Whither had fled the night—whither?

For a moment hands cling to hands, lips cling to lips—then they parted. And there be "partings such as press the life from out young hearts." He went to the front where flags wave, and cannon roar, and men shout, and dare, and do, and die. And she? She went into the house and—waited.

CHAPTER IV.

THEIR LAST CHILD.

BOTH were well past seventy. Age and sorrow had long since bowed their forms and marred their faces. They had known a life of toil and disappointment. Four of their children were sleeping side by side. Only one still remained to them. He was now forty, unmarried, and living at home: and they leaned on him harder and harder from day to day.

Twenty years earlier this son was in college looking forward to a professional career, as a boy of twenty does look forward. He loved a maiden then as fair as the flowers of spring, loved her as a boy of twenty does love.

An older brother, the last of the five children save himself, had chosen to keep the homestead and take care of "the old folks at home." This brother died.

The boy of twenty had not yet told the girl that he loved her; he never told her. He packed up his books, folded away his ambitions and hopes in memory's winding sheet. He went home. He stayed home. His broken-hearted parents were comforted by his presence. He never told them that he had loved; they never guessed it. The girl married, he saw children grow up about her; they called another man father.

The war came. His parents never dreamed that its gory voice could disturb the peace of their little household. Their son had turned a deaf ear to the call of a profession; to the call of love, and home, and ambition. He had forsaken all else to cleave unto them—and their

hearts were at rest, their feet gently descending to the river's brink.

But the nation was crying out in its sore travail: the son heard that piteous cry. A day came when its voice broke through every barrier he had erected between his ear and his soul—he answered that cry, he enlisted. He rode back to a weather-beaten house on a wind-swept hill, where two aged people were sitting by a flickering fire. He went in to tell them what he had done. It was mid-afternoon. He gazed upon the scene before him, then into those aged eyes, then decided he would wait till supper time before telling them. He left the house to do a piece of farm work; but someway the work didn't go on very fast.

His mother called him to supper. Now he was to tell them. But again he thought he would wait; it would be easier and they would have more time to discuss it after the chores were done. Someway he didn't eat much nor talk much either. He finished the chores and returned to the house. The father was reading the day's news, the mother serenely knitting, and both were at peace. He would wait until bedtime before telling them.

The father is reading of the war's red carnage, of the nation's terrible defeat. He reads aloud an occasional sentence, commenting as he reads. The son's uphill task grows harder. The mother speaks. She rejoices that no son of hers is in that disastrous, dead-strewn rout. She speaks of the comfort the son is to their declining years. She speaks of the four children at rest. She magnifies the mercy of God in sparing one child to close their eyes at last, and lay them beside those whom the Reaper had long since garnered. And the son listens. He is thinking.

Suddenly it comes to the mother that he is saying nothing, that he has been silent all the evening. She raises her eyes and peers searchingly into his face. She discovers it is pinched and drawn. "My son, what is it?" she cries out, feeling the cold, clammy hand of nameless dread icily clutching her heart to suffocation. "Mother, I have enlisted!" he blurts out.

A scream of anguish breaks from those lips which have just been praising God's mercy in sparing their boy to them in their desolate, wintry years. The paper falls from the nerveless hands of the aged father. He wrings those withered hands, rocking back and forth in silence more terrible than any words, his face working contortedly. The son tries to speak, he wants comfort, but lips and tongue refuse their office. He rises from his chair and stands a moment looking at his parents in a helpless sort of way, his hands nervously twitching at his side. Then he turns about and steals noiselessly from the room and up the stairs.

Into the far hours of the night the mother was still weeping. "Mother," the tremulous, shaking tones were those of the aged husband by her side, "you remember the Good Book says, 'he spared not his only Son.' Shall we keep back ours when our country needs him most?"

"No, no, father! But my gray hairs will go down to the grave in sorrow."

"Yes," responded the old man's voice, "but it won't be long now for either of us."

"No!" was the answer, "and it is well. It is better so—we will see the others."

"Yes, we'll see the others."

And God gave them sleep.

Part II.

WAR

CHAPTER V.

AND STILL THE SUN SHONE ON.

He was born and bred in Ohio. His parents were New England Puritans, God-fearing, slavery-hating, stalwart and fearless. Their home was one of the main stations on the "underground railroad." Many a black man had they helped to reach the Canadian border. Never was a slave turned away from their door. Their lives were ever in peril from enraged slaveholders, for their sympathy with the runaway was notorious. Twice had their outbuildings been burned to the ground, their death threatened times without number.

When the boy was only twelve there had come frantically pounding on their door late one night, when the household was all wrapped in deepest slumber, a wild-eyed, torn and bleeding slave, exhausted by his race for life and nearly starved. Already the baying of the remorseless bloodhounds in hot and deadly pursuit could be heard in the distance, and armed men were galloping close behind. To shield the black was to imperil the life of every member of the home.

"Come in," said the boy's father, "we cannot die in a holier cause, if die we must." The mother was white with terror. The children heard the oncoming hounds and were screaming in an agony of fear. The echoing hoofbeats of hard-running horses now began to chime in with the frantic clamor of the dogs. Food was set before the ravenous black, who bolted it like a

starving beast, despite the horrors of his situation. Concealment was impossible. The father alone was calm. What should be done? They were practically defenseless and evidently there were at least half a dozen of the horsemen. But there was no time even to plan. The moon was poised serenely and unconcerned in midheaven, her silvery light making the night bright enough to read in. The aspect of nature was one of infinite peace.

The father opened the door and looked out. A long, gaunt, gigantic beast with lolling tongue swung in at the gate, and with inhuman roar dashed up the driveway; three others followed a few leaps behind, their hellish clamor stopping the very beating of human hearts. Horsemen followed. A volley of pistol shots rattled against the house, smashing windows and penetrating doors. The father from behind a pillar of the porch hailed the huntsmen of the night and begged the privilege of purchasing the freedom of their prey. A volley of oaths and a volley of lead answered his appeal, and his right arm hung useless at his side. The men leaped from their horses and smashed open the doors. Men and dogs entered together, a motley, indiscriminate mass of pitiless fury. Too stupefied even to try to escape, there sat the cowering black, paralyzed with terror. Screaming children in their nightclothes vainly tried to clamber up the very walls of the room.

Dogs and men sprang upon the fugitive slave and dragged him with teeth and claws out into the night and on and away to endless doom. And the iron entered the soul of a boy twelve years old.

The years rolled by and found the boy, now a youth

of twenty, a private in the regular army of the United States. His regiment was located in the far Southwest. James K. Polk ordered the invasion of a sister republic with whom we were at peace. Battles were fought and won, and a republic founded upon liberty and the rights of man proceeded to steal half the area of a helpless neighbor in order that the hiss of the slave-driver's lash and the baying of man-hunting dogs might mingle forever with the songs of freedom and the praise of God.

The boy knew the meaning of war and his soul revolted. Every victory deepened his anguish. What could he do? He was a private, so he could not resign from the service. There was his oath of loyalty and obedience; should he desert and so commit perjury? Or should he continue loyal to a country whose cause he believed rested under the curse of Almighty God?

He recalled that night of his childhood eight years previous. In the silence of the following night he fled from his post. He could war against his conscience no longer. He was now a deserter. Fifteen miles he hurried on ere morning light overtook him. But the hounds were on his trail. He heard their voices, he knew the message they were heralding.

The trial by court-martial was brief. The sentence pronounced. They stood him forth in the presence of his comrades. A shot rang out, a puff of smoke, a crumpled form, a pool of blood. And still the grass waved, and still the birds twittered in the trees, and still the sun shone on.

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY A COMMON SOLDIER.

He and his wife were driving into town that forenoon as rapidly as their stolid work-team could go. They were in a nervous hurry, for they hoped a letter might be there from their son who was away at the front. A battle had been fought a few days before and no word had they received since. The previous evening after his hard day's work the father had walked the two miles to the office, forbearing to take out again his jaded team. No letter was there and the fears and suspense of the home had become almost unendurable.

As soon as the morning's mail was in, too impatient to wait another moment, the father unhitched from the plow and started to town. The wife could not wait his return. She left the preparation of the noon meal, put on hat and shawl, and sprang into the wagon. No word was spoken. As they approached the railroad crossing, with thoughts far, far away, they were nearly dashed to death by the fearful rush of a magnificent train running off schedule time. They pulled up their team and swung their heads to one side just in time to save themselves a mangled death.

That train was the private one of a millionaire magnate just returning from the nation's capital with another fat contract for supplying the army with meat. As his splendid train shot across half the continent he

reveled in the thoughts of the millions he would be able to pile up, if only the war would last long enough. Yes, surely, it would last some months yet. He had a few law-makers down at the capital and he could easily persuade them that peace ought not to be concluded until the nation's enemies came begging for it on their knees. Yes, the war would last some time yet, thank God for that; and meantime that contract nestled close to his heart. He was happy, why shouldn't he be? More millions, that he did not need and could not spend, were coming his way.

The boy's parents reached the post-office without mishap, and there, sure enough, was a letter in a handwriting that they loved so well. The boy had been in the thick of the fight, but came through unharmed. It was a patriotic, tumultuous, exulting boy-letter. They read it through and through. They discussed its every phrase. They talked of the boy; they recalled little incidents of his childhood; they repoiced in his heroism and willingness to die for his country if need be; and they tried to be as brave as he in enduring the terrible suspense of separation. But now another battle was past; he was safe, and silently both thanked their Maker.

That night after the chores were done and these long married lovers were sitting on the porch of their little home silently watching the sunset, but thinking all the while of their boy, the father spoke: "Mother, have you the boy's letter?"

"Why, yes, I think so, somewhere," and as though half ashamed to have even her husband discover her great love, she took from the bosom of her dress the already well-thumbed letter.

"Read it again, please," said the father. And the mother read once more a letter which each already knew by heart.

"So he is safe and sound still, praise God," said the father, when the reading was done.

"Yes." said the mother, "he is a brave boy, ready to die for his country, but I believe God will bring him back safe."

In that same hour in a distant city a mighty contractor was reading again his Bible, that is, his contract; and he rubbed his podgy hands together as he lovingly caressed that document with his eyes, for he already felt the yellow gold kissing his passionate fingers. And he laughed low and long as he thought how he had tapped the government till once more; and he calculated rapidly the number of "common people" whose paltry taxes would be necessary to swell the golden stream that must flow into his already plethoric vaults as a result of this new deal. Yes, he was sure the war would last some months yet. And as those parents looking into the face of the setting sun had thanked their God for the safety of their boy, so he thanked his for the war's bounteous harvest.

That same night in a far island under an alien sky, a boy, joyously willing to bare his breast to the bullet's worst, languished out his life like a poisoned rat in a hole. When the scalding sun rose once more and the call to arms sounded, the boy did not answer. He never answered again. The magnate had had an earlier contract.

Quenchless tears flowed in one home, quenchless gold flowed into the other. But, after all, he was only a "common soldier."

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST SOLDIER-FUNERAL.

THE bells were tolling. The streets were deserted. Business had ceased. Traffic was at a standstill. The silence was more profound than that of a Sabbath day in the country where you used to live when a child. A pall of gloom had fallen like an enshrouding mantle over the entire village. The awe could be felt like a tangible thing. People met with averted faces. If perchance they spoke, it was in hushed, almost sepulchral tones.

What had happened? The first soldier boy from that community had been brought back from the battlefield—dead. The day of his funeral had come. Flags were half-masted. Every store and business place was closed. Every farm and garden were at rest. No sound of toil could be heard. The symbols of mourning were everywhere displayed.

The sorrow was as though the first-born lay dead in every home. A feeling of appalling tragedy was as pervasive as though the first citizen of the village had been wantonly assassinated in the public square. The solemnity was as though the body of a martyred President were lying in state in their midst. There was, too, an exaltation as though immortal distinction had been conferred upon the entire community. All wept that day with those who wept. All felt, from the oldest

to the youngest, from the richest to the poorest, from nearest relative to most distant acquaintance, as though they had sustained a personal bereavement.

Nay, more, each felt, from the most exalted citizen to the humblest, as though he himself had had a personal share in a glorious martyrdom and thereby had been uplifted and consecrated.

Never in the history of the township had such crowds attended a funeral, not even when the body of the ex-Governor of a distant State had been brought back for burial with his kindred dead in this the village of his childhood. The old church, spacious as it was, could not begin to admit the eager throngs. Every house poured out its every inmate from babe at the breast to tottering age. Farmers came in droves from miles around.

Never had the old white-haired pastor been so eloquent. Those who had sat under his preaching for well on toward forty years stared agape this day as they listened to his thrilling eloquence. His diction was superb yet perfectly simple, and as limpid and crystal as the waters of a mountain spring. His voice rang out clear and strong. His tones electrified. His face glowed with unwonted beauty and ardor.

Yes, it was the greatest, the saddest, the most exalted day that village had ever known.

But the war dragged on, six months, a year, two years—and still the end was not yet. All this time the lines of the contending hosts were scarce a hundred miles away. The stream of dead flowed from these battlefields to the little berg as steadily as the waters of a river to the sea—summer and winter, winter and summer.

There was a day, it was now long past, when all wept with those who wept. Now no one had a tear for another's sorrow. No one had a tear for his own sorrow. The fount of tears was dry. In the village cemetery there was a fresh grave in every family plot; on every heart the crape was hanging, and the hearse was commoner than the milk-cart.

CHAPTER VIII.

CRAPE ON THE DOOR.

He was marching under a broiling Southern sun. She was in the far Northland. Ten years before, in the flush of youth and joy and hope, they had stood side by side and hand in hand and repeated with tremulous ecstasy the solemn words—"in sickness and in health, till death us do part."

For ten swift love-lit years no shadow had fallen across the garden of their joy. Ten arrowy years of honeymoon, ten arrowy years of youth and joy and hope, ten arrowy years of tremulous ecstasy—these they had known. Her face was as youthful and fair to him when those years had flown as when they first stooped at the marriage altar to unfurl their wings for life's flight together. His form was as superb and his honor as bright and his love as unswerving in her sight as on the day when she slowly repeated the words, "From this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish and to obey."

She had known one long illness. He never left her side day nor night. He held her hand in the night watches, he looked into her eyes and she into his, lovers' eyes both, and she forgot her pain. Slowly she convalesced. He took her to the sunny South, to far islands, to foreign climes. The rose bloomed anew on her cheek. Roses bloomed anew in both their hearts.

Ten years came and went, and never a twenty-four hours that eyes did not look love to eyes that spake again.

Ten years had come and gone, and now he was marching under a broiling Southern sun. She was in the far Northland. He slept on the hard ground, under the stars, under the clouds, in the snow, in the rain. And she? She slept not at all. "Oh, my lonely, lonely, lonely pillow!" Yes, ten years had flown and war's raucous voice had wrenched asunder those whom God had joined together.

At first her letters had been long and brave, pitifully brave. They grew shorter. The handwriting began to look different someway, feebler as it were. Anxious inquiry followed anxious inquiry: was she well? Yes, she was well, so she wrote. But was she? Look at her face—the roses have withered. Look at her hands—her white, shrunken hands. How large the veins are. Watch her walk—is there a ball and chain dragging behind? Yes, but no one can see them—and no Samson could drag them long.

She stops taking her daily walk. That ball is growing larger, that chain longer, heavier, and harder to drag. A letter in a strange hand reaches him. Trying to open it, he tore the letter in two as well as the envelope. He asks his messmate to read it for him. They bend low by the flickering camp-fire. The letter is brief: "Sir: I am writing this unbeknown to your wife. In fact, she strictly forbade me writing at all. But she was unable to do so today and it is worrying her. It may be some time before she is able to write again."

He held the letter before his eyes all night long, but

he did not read it again: he couldn't; something was the matter with his eyes. Could he get a furlough? He dare not ask, a great battle was only a week off. Should he desert? No, that would cut off all hope. There had been several desertions of late and so vigilance had been trebled, detection would be almost certain, and detection spelt death. He must wait until after the battle, wait a week, and his wife perhaps even now dying. Wait? Could mortal man wait in such an hour?

Sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in an hour, twenty-four hours in a day, seven days in a week. 604,800 seconds in seven days, 604,800 separate eternities in seven days. His comrades thought he seemed rather queer after that night the letter came.

The battle was fought, he was unhurt, secured his furlough, and started North. Reaching the last station he rushed to the nearest livery. There was not a saddle to be had. He hired the fastest carriage horse, mounted bareback, and spurred into a run before he was through the barndoor. Farmers stopped work in the field as a foam-flecked horse shot past in a storm of dust. He whirled in at the gate, his staggering beast reeling with a broken blood-vessel. The blinds were closed. Crape hung from the door.

CHAPTER IX.

DON'T PAPA LOVE ME?

Among his business associates he was known as a rather hard man. And, in truth, while strictly honest, he was remorselessly exacting. One who knew him only in his relations outside the home would have described him as a cold, passionless, unfeeling man. And this description of him was correct as far as the world had an opportunity to judge.

But there was another side to his nature and that was tenderness to children. He had begun poor, amassed some property, married, and then labored all the harder to gather a fortune for the children he hoped would bless his home. Ten years he waited. Disappointment followed disappointment year after year. The tenderness of his heart was turning to gall in the bitterness of his unrealized hopes. Meanwhile his fortune piled up; but the higher it piled the less he cared for it, for whose should it be after him?

He was beginning to hate his wealth, it seemed like a marble memorial of his dead hopes. He grew morose, and his friends grew fewer.

Ten years passed, and then a baby voice was heard in his home, that of a little girl, and the man was transformed, born anew. She was the pearl of great price to him. Pearl should be her name, and a pearl she was. She was a jewel of indescribable beauty, of artless grace and charm. Her hair was gold, her eyes were dia-

monds, her teeth were pearls, her lips were rubies—so her father thought.

In the nursery he was an older brother to his child; nay more, he was a child her own age. He played all her little games, and it was a question whose laugh was the merriest, whose shout the loudest, whose eyes danced most.

The war came and he went. Ruthless as he seemed in business, he was yet honest and upright. His veins were full of Puritan blood and he believed in duty; he believed her voice was the voice of God, that her summons must be obeyed. And so he tramped away.

The child clung to him as he stood in the ranks of his company just before boarding the train. In her sobs she moaned: "Don't papa love me? Why papa leave me? Why leave his little Pearl? Take me, too, papa. Papa need his little Pearl."

He boarded the train. About a mother's neck clung a sobbing child. "Don't papa love me? Why leave his Pearl when he goes away?"

Months passed, two years passed, and papa had not come back. Not a day that the child did not repeat her question a dozen times to a desolate-hearted wife and mother. It was the last question asked and answered each night as little Pearl wept herself to sleep. Two years passed and the flowers were blooming once more, but Pearl was fading. On a summer's day she fell ill. Every hour she besought the distracted mother to write papa to come home. The mother had never written him of Pearl's ceaseless question; she had kept all those daggers sticking in her own bosom; but now, at last, there was no room for another. Pearl begged for a scrap of paper and a pencil. They were given her. And this

is the message her shaky little white hand spelled out in sprawling capitals:

D EAR P APA YOUR PEAR L IS VERY SI CK WHY DONT YOU C OM E TO HER S H E COME T O P A P A P A P A SICK D O N T PAPA L O VE ME YOUR L I TTLE P EARL

She handed the tear-stained paper to her mother. Her mother read it—after awhile. She said to herself she must not send it. The father's load was too heavy already.

But the child piteously begged and she promised. Her own heart piteously begged too—possibly, possibly he could come for a few days. She hurriedly sealed the letter and then rushed bare-headed to the office to mail it. rushed to do this lest her heart misgive her and she take out the crumpled little note for her husband's sake. The letter reached its destination. The father read it. Long he sat still, stony-eyed and stony-hearted. At last he got up, and, staggering under some invisible weight that seemed to have climbed up onto his bowed shoulders, he sought out his General's tent. With dry eye, dry throat, shaking hand, and silent lip, he handed to the General the letters of his wife and child.

The General read the two and tears rolled down his bronzed face. Silently he drew from his own breast a much-thumbed letter in a woman's handwriting. Silently he handed it to the waiting private. The latter read it through: that very day was the funeral of the General's only child. The men looked into each other's eyes. "Our country needs us." It was the General who spoke. These were the first words either had uttered. and they were the last. Silently and by a common impulse two hands were extended. For a moment

those two hands clung together, then fell limp at their owners' sides. They parted.

Unheedful of this scene, the demon, War, followed along on its slow, bloody trail. Two men turned back to their tasks.

In a peaceful, sunlit, Northern vale, a woman in black followed a hearse, alone. Alone she stood by a child's grave. Alone she went back to an empty house. Alone she lay down at night by a forsaken pillow.

Didn't papa love his little Pearl? Yes, but he had more sacred work to do than to hold the hand of his dying child—he was away killing other little girls' papas.

CHAPTER X.

THE CRIMES OF PEACE ARE THE VIRTUES OF WAR.

He was proud of his splendid mansion, and well he might be. It was of the purest type of Colonial architecture, large, massive, simple. For two hundred years it had been famous for its hospitality even in that region of unbounded hospitality.

Colonial Governors, Presidents, great Generals, Admirals, and Judges had shared its welcome and been charmed by its hosts and hostesses for generations past. The names of its owners were inwoven with every great event of national history; they wore the laurels among the mightiest of the living and dead.

Yes, he was proud of his historic name. But prouder still was he of the mistress who now dispensed its generous hospitality, and of the sun-kissed Southern beauty, his only daughter, who now lent added grace and splendor to its stately halls; and of the three sons who gave promise of more than keeping good the family's proud record of high deeds and stainless honor.

When the tocsin of fratricidal strife rang chill and menacing up and down that startled valley, he and his three boys, like other loyal sons of the Old Dominion who loved the nation not less but their State more, shouldered their muskets and took their places in the ranks.

That fertile historic valley now became the scene of hostilities, the battleground of hundreds of thousands

of armed men. Its fair fields shuddered neath the tramp of contending hosts day and night, and the roar of cannon was seldom hushed. He pleaded with his wife and daughter to take shelter with relatives in the far South. They refused. They said their honor was sufficient shield against the most ruthless soldiery, and was it not necessary for them to protect the remnant of the family estate, lest the close of the war find them penniless? Husband and sons were bearing their part of war's horrors; should Southern wife and daughter be less brave? And so they stayed where war's red voice was ever gleefully shouting forth the census of his victims.

The marvelous fertility of the valley and its latent recuperative energy made it the granary of supplies for menacing legions. The order went out from the iron commander of the countless swarms of their foes that the valley should be swept clean by fire and sword and pillage. A force was despatched to execute the order. An opposing force was detached to defend the peaceful homes therein.

Already the war had long been raging. The three sons had long since ceased to answer the roll-call. The husband and father alone survived. He was now in the division sent to protect the valley. The encounter took place within sight of his own home. All horses and cattle of every description were being seized and driven away by the enemy. Every home in sight was in flames —his own among the rest. His wife—his daughter—the pillaging, ravishing soldiery—great God! what would become of them? He tried to go to the rescue, to learn the worst; but a wall of steel and sheets of flame and mangled bodies and dying horses and seas of blood intervened.

Frantically, insanely, demon-like, he fought and raged. What man could do he did. What man could not do he did in that hour of his desperation. But the host of hell itself could not have broken through that cordon of hell's own allies. All that sunbaked afternoon the maddened hosts clutched at each other's throats and felt for each other's hearts with fingers of iron. With the going down of the sun went down also the smoking ruins of every home in sight, homes which, when the sun rose that fair morning, were rich in associations that make human hearts rich.

With the oncoming darkness came on also clouds and rain, blinding rain, and reverberating thunder that rolled and rolled among the hills. The lurid flashes would for a moment annihilate the inky pall of night and cloud, while their weird, ghostly light revealed the naked desolation man's handiwork had wrought—smoking hulks once homes, once the shrines of purest love, noblest chivalry, most generous courtesy.

Supperless the exhausted soldiers sank down to dreamless sleep on their gory arms on the sodden field of combat. Under cover of darkness the now soniess father stole like a hunted beast to his ruined halls. But his proud ancestral home—that was nothing. His wife, his child—where were they?

As he drew near a low moan smote his ears, a moan such as he did not know could break from mortal heart and lips. A flash of lightning—his daughter's huddled form was seen on a stone, thinly clad, the drenching rain pouring down her disheveled locks.

"My daughter," he shrieked. Startled, she leaped to her feet to flee; another flash of light, another call, and she sprang to his arms. "Are you safe? Are you unharmed?" he cried in frenzied tones.

"Yes, but mother!" was all she could answer.

When the home was fired the daughter was away. She had later fled to the woods in terror and there remained hidden till loving darkness came to caress her cowering form. Then she had stumbled back to the stone where her father discovered her crouching figure. Mother—where was she? Father—where was he? These had been the cries of her soul. The father had come, but the mother? Silently they went near the ruined pile before them, stumbling in the darkness. The mother had long been wasted with heart disease—was she? Gropingly the father picked up a stick. The rain had extinguished the last vestiges of the fire. Blindly he poked about among the ruins. His stick struck something soft and yielding. He stooped in the darkness, fumbled around with his fingers, and picked up a fragment of something.

A flash of lightning. He was holding a charred hand in his. On one of the fingers was a wedding-ring, a ring he himself had put on that finger in the long ago.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VIRTUES OF PEACE ARE THE CRIMES OF WAR.

THE white-haired old Quaker and his aged wife had just finished their evening meal. For fifty years they had lived in that home and dwelt at peace with God and man. Far and near they were known as the "friends of God." Not less were they the friends of men. The needy and the sorrowing ever sought their door and none ever left empty-handed or empty-hearted. No children had ever blessed their hungering love, and so they became father and mother to all the troubled.

A few days before this quiet evening meal, a cavalry raid had been made and a railroad cut scarcely twenty miles away. The raiding party had been overtaken and dispersed and many killed. The Colonel who led the force had escaped and was now a hunted fugitive with a price on his head. All the countryside had been warned against giving the enemy aid or comfort. Every home was in a state of tense excitement. There was but one topic of conversation at store or fireside.

The evening meal was finished. A great peacefulness of quiet, as of a summer's evening in the country, gently caressed the vineclad cottage of these white-haired children of God.

Suddenly pounding hoofbeats broke the solemn stillness of the hour. A jaded horse reeled in at the gate. A foam-spattered youth in a Colonel's uniform rushed

into the house through on open door. His face wore a hunted, sleep-starved, hunger-bitten look.

"Quick!" he cried, "give me a morsel to eat! I'm starving! Then hide me for God's sake or I am a dead man!"

The old man hesitated for a moment. For the first time in her life his wife suspected him of fear, and she spurned the thought as something that would shake the very pillars of her wifely love and loyalty.

"Art thou afraid?" she almost hissed. He turned on her with a look of fathomless pathos.

"Yes, for thee!" he quietly made answer. "It means death!"

A look of angelic tenderness lit up a saintly face. "Ah," said the wife in low tones, "I see." How she loathed her momentary doubt. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," she solemnly quoted. "Shall man's law forbid? I will give thee to eat." And so the enemy was given aid and comfort.

Hastily devouring the remnants left on the table, the fugitive then begged for a change of clothes and a fresh horse. "Who says thee nay?" spoke the wife. An instant later a youth in strange garb galloped away into the night on a fresh horse, away to life and safety.

The discarded uniform was forgotten. In the dead of night a squad of cavalry burst in at the gate, broke down the doors of the home, and searched every room. They found that grey uniform, and an aged couple were haled to prison. The husband only was put on trial. Full confession was made.

"Prisoner at the bar, have you any statement to make?"

The accused sat silent. The trembling old wife totteringly rose to her feet.

"It was I who fed him," she cried; "I who gave him aid and comfort; upon my head rest the penalty—'if thine enemy hunger, feed him.'"

She sat down. Silence sat heavy on every listener. Awe clutched every heart.

But it was a military trial. War was raging. An enemy had been aided to escape. The wife was ordered from the room. The death sentence was pronounced.

A last interview was granted the couple.

"Be brave," said the wife.

"I regret nothing," responded the husband. "Whether we ought to obey men rather than God, let man judge. But we? We have obeyed," he concluded. "Thank God," fervently responded the wife.

"Yes, thank God!" echoed the husband. Not a tear was shed, not a cheek blanched, not a lip quivered. But there was a light not of earth in four eyes that saw across a dark river a shining city.

The soldiers who witnessed that parting scene said afterwards that they had rather charge the cannon's mouth over a dead-strewn field than go through such an ordeal again.

And so the bullets sang out, and the old Quaker's soul returned to the God who gave it.

But who pities him? He deserved his fate. He had been guilty of an unpardonable crime—he had obeyed the second great commandment of the Son of God—"loved his neighbor as himself."

CHAPTER XII.

ONE OF THOUSANDS.

It was late in the afternoon. The sun was hastening to its rest. But still her body was bent low over the washtub. The sun's rest would bring no rest to her. Far on into the night she must toil. Far on into the years she must toil. The future held out no promises to her. The past was a little better—a little: it was rainbow-tinted blackness. And yet she thanked God for those shadowed tints.

Her husband—where was he? Yes, where was he? That was the passionate cry of her heart day and night. If only his body could have been identified, if only he could have died at home, if only she could have the solemn joy of knowing that some day she would sleep beside him. But this could never be. Where was he? Where his dead body resting? Nay, not resting, but where lying? Only the resurrection would make answer. How would she find him in that hour? They could not sleep together beneath the flowers, they could not rise together. O God, it was too awful!

He had been thrown into the trenches among the "unknown dead," after that blundering slaughter called a battle—thrown into the trenches like any other carrion. "Unknown dead"—her husband unknown, nameless? Her lover, her bridegroom, the father of her children—unknown? Nay, had he not a dear name? Were there not those who knew him, loved and cherished him? "Unknown?"

But what cared crimson War for a woman's crimson heart-blood. What, indeed? "Unknown dead" he was, "unknown dead" he would continue to be. And the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war still rolled on to new glories, the glories of filling every unsatisfied trench with nameless husbands, of shadowing washtubs with the bowed forms of unknown wives.

So the sun hastened to its rest that afternoon, and a woman hastened to her toil. Four children played about her cottage door, or tugged at her tattered skirts. She looked into their fatherless faces, she looked away at the dreamy hills, she saw visions of the past dancing in the sunlight: a marriage altar, the fragrance of flowers, a delicately reared bride, a stalwart groom, a sunbathed future, a husband resting under the trees at the footfall of the evening, the gleeful laughter of children's voices, a peaceful onflow of the years, white hair and grandchildren about their knees—yes, the visions were fair that danced in the sunlight, and her hand slackened its toil.

A child's cry of pain, a frightened vision, a grimy, steaming washtub; red hands—hands once so fair.

Who was she? Merely one of thousands, that is all.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SIEGE—A LITTLE CHILD—A CHRISTIAN WOMAN.

For six months the city had been closely besieged. All food supply had been cut off three months earlier. All hope of deliverance was now abandoned. Not well provisioned to start with, the inhabitants were face to face with starvation. Already thousands had perished by pestilence, but still the garrison held out. Every particle of food had been confiscated and was under strictest military guard day and night.

This was doled out sparingly once a day, chiefly to the famished garrison. Any attempt upon the provisions, however slight, was met by instant death. A death meant one less mouth, so a death was a good thing all round, a good thing for those who survived, an infinitely better thing for the one death caressed and carried hence.

Two men meet in the public cemetery, that is, in a public street—any street, for the dead are everywhere. Once they were millionaires, their lineage was long and honorable, their social standing princely. Both were paupers now. So there they stand, tall, gaunt, ragged, starving.

They talk of the siege, of the famine, the pestilence, and the dead.

"And your wife?"

"We buried her this morning—it is well."

"Have you anything to eat?"

"Yes, some rats; they seem to be multiplying. Plenty of food for such cannibals."

"Is that all you have?"

"Oh, no! Soup made of grass roots and occasionally a little mule if we get in at the death before the garrison find it."

"We will come to eating the dead yet."

A sickening horror spread over the other's face. His starving friend feebly grasped his arm. For a moment it looked as though both would fall. Perhaps they would have, but they clutched the shredded remnant of what used to be a giant oak before cannon and shells had done their work.

The man whose face had revealed such a spasm of horror finally found his voice; it was weak now; in fact, it had long been weak. "I saw a loathsome sight yesterday," he said, and then he paused as another shudder shook his emaciated frame. "It was a child—I know the child—parents both dead—it was—it was—ravenously gnawing a skull. And—good God, man! it made me hungry to see it."

And still the siege dragged on.

Three years before this a great city, a public address, the story of a famine in India, a Christian mother, tears of pity, prayer for relief of the starving, her check for $500. Now the same Christian mother, the same great city, a newspaper account of the progress of the siege, of gaunt famine within, of the certainty of the speedy success of the besiegers—and a woman falls on her knees rejoicing and thanking God for war's triumphs.

CHAPTER XIV.

OH GOD! HOW LONG?

Two boys of the same age. Two boys with high hopes of future usefulness and triumphs. Two boys with pure hearts and clean bodies. Two boys of Godly training in the home and church, believers in the Prince of Peace, believers in right and truth and justice.

The home of the one in the North, the home of the other in the South. War. A twisting, writhing, gnashing, bleeding serpent of hell, two thousand miles long, its gory jaws crunching men to death at the mouth of the Potomac; its gory tail lashing men to death at the mouth of the Mississippi; its gory body crushing men to death all the miles and miles between. Satiated with gore, starving for gore, hissing in every home North and South, "Give, give, give!" And homes North and South, giving, giving, giving. Each morning the monster awaking gaunt and famished, each day gorging himself to unrecognizable distortion, each evening lying down moaning with hunger, each night in his restless sleep hissing, "Give, give, give!" And still was given the fairest and the best.

And this was the gory monster that writhed and hissed and gorged and starved and stretched his bloody length between the homes of the boy in the Northland and the boy in the Southland. And they were going forth to feed his insatiate appetite, his ravenous blood

lust. They were going that very day. Their respective regiments were ready to leave in two hours' time.

Prayer is offered in the Southern home. At the same time prayer is offered in the Northern home. Two fathers, children of the same Father, praying for two sons, consecrating them at the same moment to the holy task of feeding each other's blood to the same dripping jaws.

The two regiments muster, one in the North, one in the South. The two boys are in their places. It is the same day, the same hour. Two saintly servants of the Prince of Peace step forth garbed in the garments of night and pray to the "Light of the World" to let His richest blessing rest upon the fell deeds of darkness.

In eloquent words of passionate thrill they both cry unto Him who lets not a sparrow fall to the ground without his notice, to give glorious success to every effort put forth by their beloved lands to stain the lips of that serpent of hell with the reddest heart-blood of His other children.

Breathlessly, reverently, every soldier in the two regiments hangs upon the devout outpourings of these proclaimers of "Peace on earth, good will toward men." And each man is sincere, the one in the North, and the one in the South. Each regiment to a man believes it is called of God to a high and holy task. Each starts forth on its sacred crusade with something of religious elevation and ecstasy. One faces Northward, one faces Southward. They journey toward each other's hearts—to tear them out: toward each other's breasts—to rend them asunder.

Above them the same shining sun, the same blue sky, the same God in heaven, the same banner of the Cross. About them the same smiling nature, the same

waving grass, the same singing of the birds. Behind them the same prattle of children, the same weeping of women, the same praying of fathers.

They reach the same field. With holy zeal they grapple in the name of their God and their firesides. In the name of their wives and their children they desolate other wives and children. In the name of their God they send each others' souls hurtling into the presence of their God. In the name of liberty they pour blood into that fell monster's dripping jaws, and while he crunches bones and spatters blood he bellows with muffled roar, "More, more, more!"

And the boy from the Southland and the boy from the Northland, each haloed by a father's consecrating prayer, meet face to face and each does the work to which he was dedicated—and still that muffled snarl, "More, *more,* MORE!"

O Sun in heaven, how long must thou look upon such red deeds as these? O God of love, how long will men cry unto thee to bless their hatred? O writhing Monster with the dripping jaws, how long wilt thou be able to persuade men they are doing God's service when they feed thee with the blood of their children?

O God! how long, how long?

CHAPTER XV.

WHY? WHY? WHY?

SHE was only three years old when her father left for the war. It seemed rather grand to her that day, child that she was. Of war, of course, she had not the slightest conception. Her father had often gone away before, but always came back in a few days; so his going this time had no terrors for her, much as she loved him and would miss him.

It was a very grand sight, so it seemed to her little heart: great big colored flags fluttering in the wind, showy uniform, and drums. My, what drums! and how they thrilled her wee soul. And all because her papa was going away to war. War certainly must be a fine thing. And what a great man her papa must be to have all this music and everything just because he was going away a little while. All this she felt, though her tumultuous little soul perhaps did not do much distinct thinking.

Why didn't they have wars oftener? They certainly would if only they knew how much little girls liked such things. She wished her papa could go to war every day. It would be such lots of fun. Ah, poor little child, your papa can go to war every day—every day till the years have passed over thine unknowing little head.

"Oh, mamma, isn't it grand! And papa is going, too! Oh, I am so glad my papa can go! How sorry poor papa would be if he couldn't go with the rest! Oh,

mamma, see! He is getting onto the train now. Oh, I hope papa can go to war lots of times, don't you, mamma?"

A dry, choking sob. The prattle suddenly ceases. A startled little face is turned up toward a face livid with agony. "Oh, mamma, what is it? What is it, mamma?" And a child bursts into frightened weeping. "Mamma, mamma, what is it? Why you cry? Won't my papa come back tonight?"

"No, not tonight, little one."

More convulsive weeping on the part of the child, for the mother's feelings have seized with icy clutch the very citadel of her little soul. "When papa come back? When papa come back? Mamma, mamma, when papa come back?"

Finally the mother is able to speak again:

"There, there, little one. Don't cry. Papa will come back to us as soon as he can. Maybe it won't be long. Mamma will take care of you, darling. And you must take care of mamma."

"Yes, me take care mamma." And her tears were dried for a time.

But the days wore on, the weeks wore on, the months dragged slowly past, but papa didn't come back. Papa was her playfellow, the sharer of all her little games, all her little pleasures, all her little troubles; but papa didn't come back.

"Where papa now?"

"Away at the war, little one."

"I hate war, mamma. When papa come back?"

"I can't say, dearie. I hope soon."

"You always say that, mamma, and now I have waited so long and my heart is just breaking."

And there was another broken heart under the same roof, but the little one didn't know it.

Days that were years followed days that had been years; but no papa came back.

"Mamma, what papas do in war?"

"Oh, they march and live in tents and such things."

"But why march; why live in tents? Why don't they go home where their little girls are?"

"They have to do these things, dearest. I can't explain it all to you."

"Who makes them do these things, mamma?"

"Oh, rulers; men with lots of power."

"I hate rulers. Keep papas away from little girls."

The child grew older, taller, wiser; but no papa saw these changes. One day she was playing with an older child, and suddenly the question fell from her lips:

"What papas do in war?"

"Fight. That's what they do. Shoot and stab each other. Let the blood out. Kill everybody they can."

A child dashed into the house, crying: "Oh, mamma, you didn't know it all what they do in war. They kill each other. They let blood out. Oh, mamma, will they kill papa?" And sobs stopped all farther questions for a time.

That night as a little white figure was being tucked in bed two great glittering eyes looked up into a mother's worn and weary face.

"Mamma?"

"Yes, dearest."

"Does God rule?"

"Yes, little one; why do you ask?"

"Does He rule all things?"

"Yes."

"Can He stop anything He wants to?"

"Yes, of course, dear. Why do you ask?"

"Does He rule in war?"

"Yes."

"Does He want papas to kill each other?"

"No, I think not."

"Then why does He let them do it?"

"Some men are bad, you know, and want to hurt the good men, so the good men have to fight."

"Yes, but why don't God take care of the bad men and let papas go home to their little girls?"

"I don't know, dearest. I think it is all for the best, some way. Now go to sleep, and don't ask mamma any more questions tonight."

A mother stooped down and kissed two fevered little lips, a tear fell upon a child's face, a woman's figure passed swiftly from the room; but two little eyes, wide open, stared into the dark for long, long after; and in a little brain was whirling white-hot a great iron wheel, tipped with a score of cutting diamond points, and that white-hot whirling of iron was the one word, "why, why, why?"

In another room of that same house there was kneeling for long hours the shrinking form of a woman, with a widowed heart; and a pallid face, whose hot eyeballs had burnt to cinders the fount of tears, was uplifted in the darkness toward unseen heaven; and lips which made no sound were still framing that same, desolate, unanswered cry, "Why, *why,* WHY?"

CHAPTER XVI.

HOME IN TWO WEEKS.

FOUR years—and what a story they had written. Its outward facts have been repeated a thousand times. Its meaning for a race told and retold. Its significance to the nation become a twice-told tale. Its larger place in the world's onward march accurately, or, at any rate, often charted and defined.

But what signifies all this to throbbing human hearts? There are other stories which have never been told, never will be told. There is no language in which to tell them. The dumb ache of invisible souls is the unpublished literature of this woe. And each tale is a separate masterpiece, an edition in one volume, an edition de luxe, bound by the walls of a beating heart, printed in its costliest blood, read by a single pair of eyes; but read over and over till the sight of those eyes fades away forever and the volume itself crumbles back to the dust.

Four years had passed. The children had grown larger, taller. But the wife, the mother? She had grown smaller, someway. The father was away, far away. His eyes noted not the children's growth, noted not the wife's slendering form. His eyes were on the battle line.

But the years had passed, not a scratch had he received. The end of the war was in sight. Victory was in sight, then home, and rest under the shade of the trees. And his eyes grew misty, and the old familiar voices were murmuring in his ears—voices of his little children, and the voice of his wife crooning an even-

ing song to her babe—his babe—at her bosom. Only one battle more, perhaps none; then Northward, then home, wife, children.

His heart is full, full of sweet gladness, full of a great thankfulness. He will write home, weary though he be with the day's march, and though it is not the day he usually writes.

"My dear Wife and Children:

"I cannot close my eyes without writing to you again. My heart is too full of gladness to keep it all shut up within. Peace is in sight. The war can't possibly last over two weeks more. The enemy is completely exhausted, without resources of any kind, and without the possibility of escape. Probably there will not be any more fighting, at most, only a little skirmishing. All danger is now over. I am well and sound. Soon I shall see your dear faces again. Do you suppose you will know father when he comes? And will he know all his big boys and girls? However much you have changed, yet I think father's heart would tell him who you are, even in the blackest night. Two weeks more and then I shall soon be coming to you. With thankful heart and all its love,

"Your Happy Father."

A home far away. A letter from the front of the army. Tears of joy that sparkle like a casket of rarest gems. Anthems in the heart that angels hear. A night of blessed sleep. Sunlit days acoming. Clouds gone—driven so far hence almost forgotten.

Thirteen days all glorified. One more day and then the formal surrender of the enemy. An accidental skirmish. A few empty saddles. A body shipped Northward to a waiting household. The two weeks were up.

Father had gone Home.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EVENING BEFORE THE BATTLE.

They reached the camping ground at the close of the day, hot, dusty and weary from their long-forced march. Tomorrow the battle would be fought, there could be no doubt of that. The enemy's lines were in plain view, and he was not retreating. For days they had anticipated a fight in the immediate future. That future had become the present.

As the sun sank below the bleak rim of the distant hills his last rays rested on three hundred thousand men at arms, making ready to grapple in mortal combat when once more he should return to shed his morning beams upon the evil and the good. Three hundred thousand men, three hundred thousand homes. Night. What of the morrow?

Worn out by their long march the men seemed indifferent to everything else, indifferent to the morrow, indifferent to eternity. Darkness came on. Campfires gleamed and flickered for miles and miles on either side the valley, a narrow space between. Tomorrow that space would be closed by two writhing monsters, become as one in their deadly embrace.

The spectacle the camps presented was beautiful, sublime, appalling. Gradually quiet settled down everywhere—quiet, ominous, creepy, unnerving. Silence was king. His reign undisputed. The men were beginning to think, to think of the morrow. Tonight in health and strength, tonight a comrade by their sides,

tonight full of lusty life, tonight young and the future fair—but tomorrow! Tonight soul and body together, tonight resting in their tent, tomorrow night—where?

The clouds which had obscured the sky gradually broke away. The stars came out one by one. The moon rose serene and untroubled. Never were the heavens more peaceful, never the light of moon and stars more soft and silvery. How calm and quiet the heavens above; how calm and quiet, unnaturally quiet, the earth below. What resplendent beauty as one looked from the camp toward the sky; what unmanning beauty as one looked from the sky toward the camp.

Was there ever a fairer landscape? Woods, open glades, meadowlands, pastures, silvery streams of crystal water sparkling and murmuring in the brooklets, the fragrance of flowers and orchard blossoms. Homes everywhere: peaceful, well-kept, beloved homes. Homes where brides had been brought, homes whence brides had gone forth. Homes where little children had laughed and prattled that very day, homes where little children were even now sleeping. Homes where old men sat and dreamed of the days that had fled, where boys dreamed of the days that were to come. Homes, every room of which had been hallowed by some memory sacred to human hearts.

A village of two hundred homes, four church steeples pointing skyward, evening worship, songs of peace.

Campfires all about, three hundred thousand men under arms—tomorrow the battle. Night and peace, the peace of nature. Night and long, long thoughts, the thoughts of the waiting hosts, hosts composed of individual men and boys, husbands, sons, lovers. Ah,

the thoughts of three hundred thousand men on the eve of battle. Ah, the thoughts of three hundred thousand homes on the eve of battle.

The men had not yet laid down to their rest, not all of them. Some, however, were already in sodden slumber. Of those awake and still up, some were drowning thought. Look at that little circle of dark and desperate faces. You can just distinguish the outline of their features by the dull glow of the campfire. What are they doing? Look closer. They are shuffling a greasy pack of cards, gambling, carousing, swearing, till your blood runs cold. And tomorrow the battle. Twenty-four hours and where will they be? Who knows? What care they? It may be their last night. They will enjoy it. They will drown thought. Life is a gamble, anyway; they might as well make the most of the time that is theirs. And so they gamble on, drink on, curse on. And so the evening wanes.

Farther along another low fire. A beardless boy crouching low by its feeble flicker. There is a little book in his hand. It is worn and tattered. His mother gave it to him the day he said good-bye. He is reading its old familiar pages ere he lays him down to sleep. Tomorrow is the battle. It may be the last time he will ever read in that little book. His face glows as he reads—is it the reflection of the fire? It cheers his heart. He finishes the reading. He sits quiet for a time. He is thinking. Perhaps his thoughts are of a home up among the hills now so far away. Perhaps he is thinking of her who gave him that book—will he ever look into her eyes again; ever touch her hand again? He lies down to sleep.

Another crouching form by another waning fire. A saddle for a writing-desk. A young man, a pencil, and a scrap of paper. Look at this youth. He is here at the call of God and of duty. But his heart and his love are far away. There is a maiden somewhere whom he left in tears back in a land called home, blessed land called home. Tomorrow is the battle—tomorrow night, what—where?

It is long before he begins to write. His thoughts are dallying with the past, the sweet enchanting past. He almost forgets the present for a moment, almost forgets the morrow. Once more they are strolling arm in arm by the water's side. Once more they are seated under the trees. Once more he is pouring forth in low, passionate tones the treasures of his overflowing heart. Again he sees her changing color, hears her low-spoken answer.

The dreamy days that follow. The future how radiant beyond words. War's alarums. His awful conflict, his decision, a pallid face, a swooning form, the last farewell. And tomorrow the battle. And the tomorrows that are to follow? A horse stamps uneasily; fear of the unknown has found its way even into the hearts of dumb beasts. The soldier boy is recalled from his musing. He must hasten his letter—it may be his last.

"Dear Heart:

"How can I write to you in such a place as this, and yet I must. I know your love and I know your bravery. I shall never forget your courage in letting me go. You were braver than I. It is hard enough down here for me, God knows. And yet I know it is harder for you,

for you can only wait. You know the battle is near, my own. But when you let me go you knew it was to battles with all their dangers. We must not flinch now. Your love has been the fairest thing in my life. It is worth while to have lived just to have known such love as yours. And now if I must needs give my life to my country, it is more your gift than my own, for I am all thine next to my God's. He will take care of you and he will take care of me and nothing can happen that is not for the best, however blind we may be as we look at it now. I have been thinking of every incident, every word, every look, which have been shared by us together. These thoughts have made me brave for the morrow. They must make you brave for all the tomorrows, my sweetheart, if you ever need such help. Oh, if I could only see you tonight, only hear your voice once more. And yet perhaps it is better that this cannot be. If anything happens tomorrow, remember my last night was spent in thinking of thee, my own, and the last thought of my life will be of thee whether it be tomorrow or in the long distant years. I am sure I shall come through the battle all right. And the future is all fair. I am not afraid and you must not be. I haven't written one-tenth of what is in my heart to say, but I wouldn't for worlds write a word which could in any event make the future harder for you. My last thoughts, all my thoughs and all my love are yours now and shall be to all eternity.

"Your Lover."

And tomorrow was the battle.

And while the lover was writing a father was thinking of his home, of his sweetheart, too, and of the little

ones who were growing and blossoming in their Garden of Eden. A fathomless yearning was tightening his heart-strings. Tomorrow was the battle. The little ones must be in bed by now, he was thinking, peacefully asleep. Ah, their sweet baby faces. How fair they were nestled among the snowy pillows. Perhaps the mother was standing by their cribs gazing down into the faces of those little ones—standing alone. Would she always stand thus alone in the future? Perhaps, for tomorrow was the battle. How often he had stood there with her, each with arm about the other. And what an ecstasy of light had haloed her face as she looked from his face to the little faces and back from theirs to his.

How looked that face tonight? Was it pale and shadowed? Was it weary and sorrow-laden? He would not have it thus. Was it serene and joyous as in the days that were now a memory? No, he would not have it thus, not quite, and he far away. How would he have it? He could not say.

Would he ever stand by her side again? Would he ever see that light in her eyes again? Would he ever look down into those sleeping faces again? Who could answer? Tomorrow was the battle. He would go mad if he asked such questions. It would unnerve him for the battle. It would make him a deserter.

What would become of that little household if father never returned? Ah, he must not ask such questions. He would return home. Yes, he must return. He must be spared. Home needed him as well as country.

He believed in prayer. So he had been taught. That belief did not desert him now. And so he knelt on that tented field. Weirdly awe-inspiring was his uplifted

face as the fitful gleam of the dying embers played over it. In his soul he was as much alone, despite the thousands all about him, as was that shepherd boy who, when the world was young, kept watch and ward over his flocks by night and saw God's handiwork in the heavens and talked with the Infinite Father of all the little concerns of his own adoring heart.

And so on the tented field a father poured forth his soul's broken cry for a home in a far-off land:

"O God, who hearest when thy children call, hear a father's prayer for wife and children. Art not thou a Father, and didst not thy heart yearn over thy Son? O God, save me in the hour of battle. Spare me for the sake of the children committed unto my care for a season. Thou hast called me into the service of my country. I have answered. Spare me that I may answer the other call, O God, if it be thy good pleasure. Deal gently with my lonely wife. May the eye that slumbers not nor sleeps watch over my little ones with infinite tenderness. And if on the morrow my soul is summoned into thine Infinite Presence, prepare it for its long journey hence. And, O God, if so it must be, prepare her who stood with me at the marriage altar, who is the mother of my children; prepare her for the blow if it must needs fall. Take care of my little ones lest their feet stray. May they find father and home in the after days when they, too, must lay them down to their rest. O God, spare me if thou wilt for others' sake. Thy will be done. Be gracious unto the fatherless where'er they be. And, oh, may this red carnage scourge soon pass away and return no more forever, through Jesus Christ, Amen."

And tomorrow was the battle. And the profane were

carousing, and the Godly were reading an ancient message that is always new, and lovers were writing farewell letters, and fathers were praying, and nature was smiling all about them, and the stars were looking peacefully down, and the night was waning, and the hour of blood was hastening, and angels were weeping, and demons were exulting—for tomorrow was the battle.

Three hundred thousand men, three hundred thousand homes—and the night before the battle. And three hundred thousand homes knew it was the night before the battle.

In those homes there were eyes wet with weeping. There were eyes red with weeping. There were eyes that had long forgotten how to weep, tears were a luxury exhausted long ago. There were tongues that were garrulous. There were tongues that were silent. There were tongues that spoke rarely, briefly, and yet said a thousand unspeakable things which they did not say.

There were faces in three hundred thousand homes. blanched faces, flushed faces, weary faces, pinched and drawn faces; faces made sick with hope deferred; faces scarred with red gashes of grief; there were faces of aged fathers and mothers, faces of deserted brides, faces of desolated wives, faces of forsaken sweethearts, faces of little children.

There were thoughts in three hundred thousand homes—thoughts of the aged, thoughts of wives, of brides, of sweethearts, of boys and girls—long, long thoughts, for tomorrow was the battle and three hundred thousand homes knew that tomorrow was the bat-

tle. Three hundred thousand homes, twelve hundred thousand inmates of those homes, twelve hundred thousand anguished hearts, twenty-four hundred thousand sorrowing eyes.

Hark! An aged couple are at prayer: "O God, thou who didst give unto us a son; we have loaned him to our country. Bring him back safely we plead with Thee. Oh, spare his life in the battle! Our boy, our boy! How could we give him up! O God, thou knowest he is all we have, our one support and comfort for our last days. Let not this last grief fall upon us. We are Thy servants. Shield us and the boy thou hast given us and we have given Thee. Spare him, O God, lest we die."

And a wife prays: "O God in heaven, spare my husband, the father of these my helpless children. Keep him in the hour of battle. Let him come back to us, lest we perish. The world is so large and so lonely. We cannot live without him. O God, be merciful. It is all I ask, just his life. It is so little for Thee to give, but it is our all, our all. O God, hear thy child's plea. Save him, O my God."

And a little child prays: "Dear Jesus, my papa is way off and left his little girl and mamma alone. Mamma say papa had to go 'cause you wanted him to. But I don't like war and I want you to send my papa back to his little girl. I'm sure you wouldn't like it to have your papa in a war. It is a dreadful thing, war is, for they kill papas. Mamma been crying all day, I know, though she tries to make me think she hasn't, 'cause tomorrow is a battle and my papa may get hurted. I don't know as I could love you so much if you let my papa be hurted. Oh, let me have my poor papa once more."

And so three hundred thousand homes were bombarding heaven with their cries of anguish. And so fathers in both camps were crying unto God for life for the sake of others. And so all night long the hosts of heaven had to listen to these piteous moanings of the children of the earth.

But heaven was impotent. War was king. The dark hours marched on. War's red glee was coming on apace. Tomorrow was the battle. Three hundred thousand men were waiting. Three hundred thousand homes were waiting. Two nations were waiting. Heaven and hell were waiting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WANING HOURS OF THAT NIGHT.

And so sable night marched on at its own imperious stride, unheeding what the morrow might witness, unheeding the cries of anguish that were going up in the darkness from homes scattered all over two vast nations, unheeding the fate of souls that were to be hurled into eternity—some to highest heaven and some to deepest hell.

O Night, calm, remorseless, imperturable Night! Neither men's fears nor men's prayers, men's tears nor men's ambitions, can alter thine unheeding onsweep. Thou refusest to quicken thy march. Thou refusest to slacken thy march. Thou art deaf, O Night. Thou art without heart, O Night. What carest thou for broken hearts of men? What carest thou for broken homes? What carest thou for fatherless children and husbandless wives? Naught, naught, naught! Since Time began thou hast swept on over man's dwelling place at that same serene and pauseless stride. Thou hast known what the sun trailing after thee would bring. But thou hast not cared.

Thou refusest to delay at the cry of the condemned. Thou refusest to hasten at the prayer of lovers. Thou keepest thine own counsel. None share thy thoughts, O Night. Thy heart is stone. Thine ears are stone. Tomorrow is the battle, but thou marchest on. Tomorrow evening a field red with the blood of the children of human homes will stare naked into thy shroud-

ed face. Carest thou not, O Night! Slacken thy dread speed. Tomorrow's eve Rachels will be weeping for their children. Carest thou not, O Night?

And so the Night strode on over the fated field where three hundred thousand men were sleeping—or trying to sleep. Her trailing garments as they dragged across that quiet valley sounded like the rustlings of the cerements of the dead. It seemed as though the air was filled with the ghosts of the slain of a thousand battlefields, as though these were preparing the shrouds for the living beneath them who ere twice twelve hours should have flown would join their own invisible hosts, while the battered bodies, whence they had escaped, would lie as mangled carrion in the darkness.

Night passed on. The morrow was the battle. Some on that tented field were sleeping. Others were trying to sleep and could not. But it was not fear that kept them awake. What was it? It was the visions which danced over their minds—visions of homes far away, of faces they knew and loved, the old days and memories.

The camp fires died down. Silence deepened. The night deepened. Awe deepened. Men were sleeping. Tomorrow night thousands of them would know a deeper sleep. A restless horse occasionally neighed his uncanny alarm. Weird and sepulchral it smote human ears—a sort of requiem. Men turned uneasily in their blankets. The quiet stars looked down. All nature was at rest. The birds were sleeping in the branches. The flowers were making ready to bloom on the morrow.

And soldiers dreamed that night. Here is a father lying wrapped in his blanket. Time has rolled back a few months. War's voice has not yet bellowed forth its

awful summons. He is in his little home. His wife is by his side. A little toddler is trying to walk to their outstretched hands. Two souls are dancing in two pairs of eyes, a little one looks up into those eyes, heaven has kissed human hearts: a smile plays over the face of the sleeper; the little one makes a last rushing plunge toward his arms, his hand seems to be tightening about a little hand. But that little hand is cold, it is hard; the sleeper suddenly awakes—it is his bayonet he has grasped. About him are three hundred thousand men. Tomorrow is the battle.

Another sleeper—another dreamer. The long-anticipated night has come. Never had she been so radiantly beautiful. Proudly he is leading her to the marriage altar. Clearly the solemn vows are spoken. A shining pathway slopes upward from that altar to the high stars. Arm in arm, hand in hand, he sees himself and that other now by his side in all the joyous stages of that lofty golden ascent. And birds are ever singing and flowers are ever blooming as they climb. A trembling horse paws the earth near by. His eyes fly open. Cannons, rifles, swords—and tomorrow the battle.

A soldier boy dreams. It is the night he leaves home —perhaps forever. But he is not at home. He is spending the last evening with her whose heart has become the home of his heart. Slowly and sadly they walk in the moonlight. Swift and sad are their thoughts. Will it ever be—that home of which they have joyously talked and dreamed these many moons? Who could tell? Again, in a flood of passionate tears she is beseeching him not to leave her. With ashen face and ashen lips he is trying to cheer her broken heart—his own heart breaking. He speaks of duty,

high and holy duty. . . . A comrade moans in his sleep. The boy wakes. The dream has fled.

And a father dreams. The battle is past. He is bleeding to death beneath a heap of slain—his wife, his children; O God, must it be? He thinks he sees his body tossed into a ditch along with other nameless carrion. He sees a wife going to a little country post-office day after day, day after day. But she gets no letter, no news. Months wear on. No news. Years pass. She is alone. No word ever reaches her. Only waiting, waiting—that is all. No, not all—death at last. The whole story. A shudder passes over the sleeper. Angels turn away their faces. Only a common soldier tonight—only common carrion tomorrow night. Only a waiting wife somewhere; only twoscore years of widowhood, and then—the grave.

Never mind. The dogs of war must be fed.

Three hundred thousand homes. Dreamers in those homes as well as on the battlefield. For tomorrow is the battle.

A wife, a lonely pillow, a dream. The battle has been fought. Night has fallen once more. The sun has fled in swooning terror from the ghastly spectacle. Darkness holds sway; darkness and storm. A woman, a wife, herself in sable garb, is wandering over the slippery field. Pelting rain in her face. Her husband is among the slain. She lifts up each desecrated sanctuary of a human soul—deserted sanctuaries now—gazes into those blue and whitened and reddened faces, if perchance the lightning glares. Otherwise her tender fingers trace the gory lineaments to discover if it is he. Night as long as eternity, a lone figure of woe,

pitiless storm, an endless search, a fruitless search. And so a wife dreams on.

Another wife dreams. The war is over. A letter comes, the husband, the father, will be home on the morrow. She tells the children—shouts of glee. The long waiting is past. The morrow comes, an approaching form a beloved form, a wife and children rushing and shrieking their welcome, a fainting embrace. War only a horrible memory. . . . Day breaks in reality. Drowsy wakefulness. Joy! the dream seems true. The awful awakening; it is the day of battle.

A bride dreams. Her wedding day only a month back. They have just returned from their short honeymoon to begin their long honeymoon. A home of their very own all paid for: small but their very own. their home. his and hers. Their first meal together just finished, all prepared by her own hand. It has been a splendid success. How her husband praises every dish. What an appetite he has. What love shines in his eyes as he looks across the table into her eyes. How hers answer back. . . . A baby cries out in its sleep. The bride-mother springs from her lone bed in nameless fright. Ah, no, he is not just across the table with his lovelit eyes. He is away tenting on the battlefield. Tomorrow—the clock strikes four—today, O God, today the battle.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE.

THE boy had been a lover of history since earliest childhood. Anything by that name he literally devoured, ancient or modern, no matter what the nation, no matter how dry the subject-matter, how juiceless the style. The history of his own nation he knew by heart. Her great men were more familiar to him than the men whom he met daily on the street. How he exulted in every high deed of patriotic devotion and valor. How he gloried in his country's glory.

What joy to die in a holy cause, to shed one's blood for the right and for one's native land. How the story of his country's wars stirred his young blood and fired his youthful imagination. Why hadn't he lived in the heroic days of old? Why were wars a thing of the past? Why couldn't he have an opportunity to prove his courage and devotion, to die if need be for the land he loved?

War unexpectedly came. How he openly rejoiced. He enlisted the first day. He marched away. What holy zeal was his: to die for his country—what glory to be compared with this.

The battle was on. He was in the forefront of the thickest fight. Valiantly he fought and unafraid. Come wounds, come death, what cared he. The foe were being hard pressed. They were pushed back through the streets of the city. He was in the column that led the attack. The enemy were forced across a

narrow bridge. A little way back they had a powerful concealed battery which commanded the approaches. It commanded the bridge. Heedless of the storm of lead, the advancing column pressed on to that narrow bridge. The head of the column melted away. Dead and wounded piled high. And he was among the wounded, a leg shattered. But the battery must be taken. The order rang out: "Clear the bridge!" The hands of comrades seized dead and wounded alike and hurled them into the river below.

They seized him. He cried out in his pain and terror, begging to be borne to a place of safety; he was only wounded, couldn't they see? He was not dead; they must see, they must hear, they must spare his life! Over the bridge they toss him. Down beneath its turgid waters he sinks. He rises to the surface. He is an expert swimmer, but there is his broken leg. Even so, still he can swim ashore. He sets out for the shore, for life, for safety. Life is sweet, after all.

Dead men floating all about him. The river choked with the dead. Livid, terrified faces of the wounded all about him. They see he has some strength. They clutch his arms, his body, his legs. Together they sink, sink to rise no more.

So this was dying for one's country.

He had been in the thick of the bayonet charge on the enemy's breastworks. Nine-tenths of his comrades had fallen, killed or wounded. He was among the fallen beneath a heap of the slain, not yet dead.

The charge was successful. An opening had been made, but it must at once be supported and followed up by a cavalry charge. There was but one way to

reach the foe, the one the infantry had taken, the one now paved with human bodies—some dead, some alive.

The charge was ordered. On came the galloping cavalry. Spongy was their footing. The horsemen trembled in their seats. It was not terror; the wounded were writhing beneath iron hoofs, merely that. Horses slipped and staggered.

The boy would have lived; his wounds were not at all dangerous. He might have gone back home, years of usefulness might have been his—might have been.

Four hoofs on his chest—a shudder, then all was still. He had gone Home.

And so men went Home that day. On distant hills dumb cattle huddled together; they saw strange sights, heard strange sounds. And dumb terror held them in thrall. Birds forsook their nests and flew about in aimless fright above the smoke of battle. The sun locked down. The world rolled on through space in its appointed orbit. Watches slowly ticked. Clocks tolled off the hours. Women were wringing their hands in three hundred thousand homes—and some of these would wring their hands on through the years till they should fold them for the last time.

CHAPTER XX.

AND NIGHT ONCE MORE.

THE day's work was done. The battle was over. The sun had fled, reeling, swooning, falling to his rest. Night came on. What cared Night! How often she had looked upon the deeds the children of earth had done. Unblinking, unsurprised, unafraid Night.

Angels had wept because the day was so long. Demons had wept because the day was so short.

In the morning how fair the white homes glistening in the sun's soft caresses! How peaceful the cattle grazing on a thousand hills! How green the grass, how golden the grain, how crystal the brooks! Night. Man's work done. Where now are those white cottages? Where the singing birds? Where the cattle on a thousand hills? How red the grass, how red the trampled grain, how red the flowing brooks!

He was among the defeated. Broken, shattered, dispersed was the proud and mighty host of which he had been a part in the morning. Their wounded were now at the mercy of the night and the foe. Supperless he was skulking alone in the corner of a brush-tangled fence. All night long he heard the onrush of the victor's pursuing cavalry, as they swept forward in their remorseless chase. The battle was lost, the cause was lost. Ah, the terrors of that night. Suppose he were discovered, perhaps instant death. If not, then prison, worse than death.

Another squad of cavalry; he crouches lower still; they pass on; he is safe once more. And so the frightened hours drag by.

When her husband kissed her sobbing face good-bye he told her he knew he would come back safe and sound. He was needed now at the front, he must go. He was needed, too, at home; he would return when the war was over and the other duty done. She must be brave, and she was brave—brave for his sake, brave for the children's sake. She believed his promises to return because she wanted to believe them. An empty, lonely, starving heart must feed itself upon something, on memory or on hope, and she chose hope. But the waiting time—yes, she must wait.

When he took leave of home the children had hovered near. But they understood not its tragic significance. They were too young for that. Yet something unknown, mysterious, uncanny, had clutched at their little heart-strings, and they wept in terror. What meant this strange sorrow of papa and mamma? Where papa going? When papa come back? Why mamma cry? What papa going to do? Papa bad make mamma cry. . . . Hush, little ones; dear papa has to go away. Kiss papa good-bye. There, there, little ones, don't cry; papa come back. . . . And so he had left his home, his face almost blistered by burning kisses, a woman and three little children at the gate watching him out of sight.

And night once more. Night after the day's work was done; night after the battle. Uncounted thousands of dead husbands and sons all about him. Uncounted thousands of wounded husbands and sons all about

him. Uncounted thousands of dying husbands and sons all about him—he in their number.

Slowly his blood ebbs away, slowly his life ebbs away. Night. Darkness. Memory. A home—a woman at the gate with quivering face—children with frightened faces—farewell embraces—promises to come back to them. And now he is dying. Oh, what will she do, what will she do when the news comes? He will not be there to comfort her. No, he will never be there to comfort her again. O God, must it be? Is this thy will, O Father of all?

"O God—help—my—poor wife—comfort her if thou —canst. My—children—my—children—what will become—of—my—children."

And so a father was gone. And so a wife and children were left behind. War does that sort of thing, you know.

Every night, every day; yes, every hour, she committed her soldier-lover unto the Eternal keeping. She believed in prayer. It was her one only resource all the dark days which had passed. She believed that all things were possible to one who believed sufficiently. She believed that if she prayed earnestly enough her lover could never be harmed. And so she prayed with all her soul and strength, day and night.

He, too, lay on the field of death. He, too, was dying. And while he was dying she was glorying in the assurance that her prayers were all heard and answered. A battle had been fought, she knew. But had he not been through many a battle and come out unharmed? Were not her prayers an armor no bullet or sword could pierce?

And so she lay down to pleasant dreams. And so he lay down to that sleep which knows no waking.

His mind wanders; it wanders back to the maiden he loves. "Yes, darling, the war is over. I am come back to you, back to your love. We will part no more forever. Ah, how sweet it is to be with you, just to be with you once again."

And the maiden dreams: "Oh, my lover, my lover! I knew God would keep you safe. I knew my prayers would shield you from all harm. Oh, God has been so good to us."

And he answers her: "Yes, I am here, sweetheart. We must be married at once; our little home is all ready, just as we left it when I went away."

And she murmurs: "Yes, married, and then our little home. Oh, life is so fair!"

"Home," she echoes again.

In the morning he awoke not.

In the morning she awoke, and there was a telegram from his comrade.

A youth had fallen in the fight, but his wound not being mortal he had managed to stanch the flow of blood. He was lying near a piece of timber, so during a lull in the conflict in his part of the field he crawled to the edge of the woods and concealed himself behind a huge log. He knew enough about surgery to feel certain his wound would not leave him maimed in any way. Life was lusty in his veins, and a few weeks would see him in the ranks again.

The combat deepened. The wooded knoll whereon he lay became a strategic point. Again and again the tide of battle rolled back and forth over him and all about him. But he was securely protected and re-

mained uninjured by cannon shot or trampling horse. The hill was piled high with the wounded and the slain.

Not until long after dark did the firing cease; then completely exhausted, and neither side having won the fight, the soldiers sank to sleep on their arms without daring or being able to remove the wounded to the rear.

The night was murky. All was still save the moanings of dying men and horses. Nothing was visible, not even the uplifted, contorted limbs of dead men and dead horses. In the late hours, when campfires had all burned to ashes and even sentinels were sleeping at their posts, there crept forth from the denser shadows of the woods some shapes like those of human beings, but their motion is as that of the sinuous serpent writhing along, body to earth.

These nameless shapes have hands. They crawl over the dead. They wriggle through pools of blood. Their hands find the pockets of the slain—those pockets are left empty. The shapes writhe on.

One of them wriggles up to the wounded youth behind the log. He is in a gentle doze. A feeler gropes out from the wriggling form and clutches the youth's watch. He wakes with a start and seizes watch and unseen arm. But that shape in the darkness thrusts out another feeler—there is a knife in it—a gurgle—something wet and warm—the watch is gone—the shape crawls on.

The boy never went back to the service.

The last gun had at last been fired. All day long the lines of battle had swayed backward and forward. And as they thus swayed they grew ever thinner and the heaps of those who swayed no more grew ever higher.

But the day was past now. The soldiers were returning to their tents—some of them were returning. A boy had reached his. In the confusion of the fight he had somehow been separated from every face he knew. But as he groped his way back to the spot whence he started in the morning, it was with a sense of the pleasure it would be to see his comrades again; to see the familiar faces; to hear the familiar voices; to talk over the events of the day as they drank together their steaming coffee by the campfire.

He reached his tent. No voices sounded in his ear. Profound silence. No fire. That was strange. Surely they couldn't have eaten and fallen asleep so soon. He looked about. No, they hadn't got back yet. How late was it? Why, it was ten o'clock already. Surely some of them ought to be here by this time. Perhaps they had got lost in the darkness on the way back. He would start a fire and make the coffee, then wait. They would soon be there, and how they would rejoice to find supper ready and waiting.

He kindled a fire, he prepared the coffee, he sat down, he waited. Strange they didn't come in. Some of the boys ought to be able to find the camp. He waited longer. He was becoming impatient. Why didn't they hurry? He wouldn't wait another minute. He lifted a cup to his lips, then his hand paused, it shook as though palsied, his face went white. It hadn't occurred to him before—suppose—suppose they never came back. And they never did.

Three hundred thousand homes. The night after the battle. Which aged parents were childless? Which wives were husbandless? Which children were fatherless? Which maidens robbed forever? Three hundred thousand homes—and the night after the battle.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AFTER DAYS.

THE day after the battle the post-offices all over the country, in city, village and wayside hamlet, were thronged with multitudes from every rank in life, but all had this in common—blanched faces, haunted, sleep-starved eyes, drawn and quivering lips. There was tottering age leaning on well-worn cane; there was the little child with dumb terror; there was the wife and mother; there was the maiden with the far-away look in her eyes. There was every kind of raiment to be seen—women in their silks, women in their rags—but one great common fear was the chain that fettered them to every spot where news of the battle could possibly be had. Invisible ties bound every heart to that fated field. Oh, when would they know? When, when? So day after day they came—any letter yet? Yes, there was a letter today—trembling hands, blazing eyes, relief that left one faint. Any letter yet? No, none. A heart sinks deeper, steps become slower, more uncertain.

Day after day a maiden hurried to the office after mail, though her home was more than a mile away. Day after day the postmaster sadly shook his head when she inquired at the window. Her coming got on his nerves—the nerves of his sympathy, of his soul. He shuddered with dread whenever he saw her hastening figure coming up the dusty road; he turned away his eyes

whenever he saw the tense, eager face mutely ask: "Any letter yet?" Tears came to his eyes when he saw the dumb, quivering hope die out into ashen silence.

Day after day she came. Day after day she went away, empty-handed, empty-hearted.

Her lover was in the battle. The postmaster understood. She was a favorite in the village, so was her lover. Finally a letter came. How the postmaster's heart bounded with gladness. He wouldn't have to shake his head that day. He wouldn't have to see again that quivering lip, that ashen face. He glances out of the window, he can hardly wait her coming. He is sharing her delight, her relief. Why doesn't she hurry this day of all days? He picks up the letter again. He scans the address. Why, it is in a strange handwriting. What can that mean? Does it mean——the letter falls from his nerveless hand. How can he give it to her? Mechanically he stoops down, picks it up, and lays it aside.

He looks out of the window, a maiden's hastening figure, a tense face, an eager step on the threshhold. He thrusts out the letter as a thing of death, then turns around and sits down weakly.

A little cry of joy, a great cry of anguish, the death of a dream. He was among the slain. And she? She was among the living.

An aged couple sitting by the evening fire. They have waited many a day—are waiting still. How the wind moans. How desolately the rain beats against the uncurtained windows. How black it is without.

"Perhaps there will be a letter tonight." It was the gray-haired old man who spoke. "Of course he has been on the march ever since the battle; but he knows we will be anxious to hear."

"Yes, there might be one," the sad-faced wife gently made reply.

"I guess I will go to the office and see." And stiffly the old man rose.

"Don't you think you better wait till morning, father? It is a mile and a half there and the storm is growing worse. It might be bad for your rheumatism to venture out in the rain."

"I don't mind the rain."

"Well, as you think best."

And so the old man tottered away into the night, for his boy had been in the great fight, and he hadn't heard since.

"Any mail tonight?"

"No."

"Well, I didn't expect any; just thought I would drop in and see." Out into the night and storm again.

An aged face—a woman's face—pressed against a curtainless window—rain beating against the glass, cold, pitiless rain, rain and darkness. A stumbling step off there in the night somewhere. Out into the darkness bareheaded, without a wrap.

"Any mail?"

"No."

They sat in silence about the dying fire awhile, then to bed. And the storm moaned.

Day after day a bowed figure that seemed to be growing shorter and shorter went to a little country post-office, and then it tottered back. Day after day a silent shake of the head, then feeble steps—four of them—back to a little house. Weeks wore past—the same silent tragedy each day. At last the old man received a paper. He tore off the wrapper at the office, borrowed some ill-fitting glasses and scanned a

marked column. There was a list of the killed in a certain regiment. He read on till he came to a name to which a fair-haired child used to answer up in that little home on the hill.

He got back home, he never knew just how. A woman at the gate. Once she was a bride—his own—how fair she was then. She was a mother; how radiant she was with the babe on her bosom. The child was racing about the home; how her eyes devoured its every motion. Now she was old, and feeble, and gray, and the little boy—where was he?

"Any letter?"

The old man lifted his eyes to hers. And then she turned and went into the house.

The father was not to blame. Little he dreamed of war when he led her to the marriage altar. But the war came and he had to go. And she was left behind; it is always that way for the woman; alone and yet not alone. He was in that awful fight. And he stayed there—that is, his body did.

A few days later she received word. A few hours later a child was born. The child never looked into a father's face. The father never looked into the child's face.

The wife journeyed on alone.

His body was recovered by his comrade and sent back to his wife and children for burial. The wife was notified in advance. The children were too young to realize what death meant. When the wife saw the wagon approaching the house bringing her dead to her, she hurried the children from the room that they might not witness her first paroxysms of grief.

In cold, quiet tones she directed the neighbors where to deposit the casket, and then silently dismissed them. The moment they were out of the house she shut and locked the doors, uncovered the sheeted face, and fell on her knees before God, with only her dead husband to bear witness.

An hour passed. In the room above shouts of childish glee. In the room below a father and a mother—the father dead. They were too young to know; she bore it alone. How peaceful the dead face—doesn't he know? Doesn't he care? Silently he sleeps on. The shouts of his chillren bring no smile to his impassive lips; the anguish of his wife no tears to his eyes; those days are gone—gone forever. And so she kept vigil with her unresponsive dead.

At last she glances at the clock; it is long past the hour for the evening meal. Soon the children will be clamoring for their supper. And must they eat? Can they eat? Can one eat with that lying in the house? Yes, for they did not know. Well, it was better that they didn't. The mother finally rouses herself and goes absently to the kitchen.

The little ones are tiring of their play. They are getting hungry. They descend the stairs and search for mamma. They see an open door; mamma must be in there. They rush in. Mamma is not there but papa is. They were not expecting to see him, and so for a moment they pause. Then with incoherent shouts of welcoming gladness they rush forward and leap upon his breast and cover his face with kisses. For a moment in their ecstasy of delight they discover nothing amiss.

Then they begin to wonder why his arms do not tighten about them; why he doesn't speak; why he

doesn't kiss their little lips. They draw back and silently survey him.

"Papa asleep. Don't know we here."

"Yes, papa sleep. Papa tired—poor papa."

"Let's s'prise papa. Me tickle papa's nose," and a little head brushes curly hair across his face as in the dear days that are gone.

"Me t'ink papa just 'tending to be s'eep. Me tickle papa," and little fingers bore into the unheeding bosom of the sleeper.

"Papa, papa! Wake up! Here we are. Papa, papa! Don't sleep any more! Don't you hear us? Don't you love your little girls any more? Papa, papa!" And tears well up and overflow four shining little eyes.

Mechanically the mother has prepared the evening meal. She goes to the stairs and calls. No answer. She calls again. No answer. She goes out into the yard and looks about the house, no golden little heads in sight. She re-enters the house and passes that open door—she must take one more look. She comes to the threshold and stops. Before her stand two little girls transfixed with grief and wordless fear, gazing upon a dead face—their papa's. They have not heard the mother call. They have not heard the mother's step. For a moment she can find no voice; at last a strange voice is heard—somebody's voice—could it be hers?—has cried out, "Children!"

The little ones wheel about and rush to the mother hysterically sobbing: "O, mamma; papa is asleep! We can't wake him up. O, mamma, mamma! wake papa up; please do. We want to love him. We have been kissing him and he don't kiss us at all. Don't papa love us now? Why papa won't wake up?"

And what answer could she make?

Part III.

AFTER THE WAR

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HOME-COMING.

He had been in the army four long years. Not once had he taken a furlough. He had not received a single wound though he had been in over fifty pitched battles, and under fire more than three times that number. But the war was at last over. He had received his honorable discharge. He was already on the way home. Home—how his heart grew soft when his lips pronounced the word; and his lips did pronounce the word over and over again. He had received but few letters from home during his absence; still this had not worried him any, for none of the home folks were any hands to write. The last letter was several months back now.

Within twenty-four hours he would reach that loved spot—the home where he was born and reared, where he had played as a child, where the holiest memories life knows were linked with things visible and material —a house—a home, barns, trees, creeks, hills, a well, gardens, fields, woods.

His discharge had come three days earlier than he expected, but he had not written home about this. He would take them by surprise. By walking crosslots over the hills and through the woods—a distance of some three miles—he could so time his arrival as to reach the house just as they were sitting down to supper. He saw the picture, every detail of it. The old clock on the mantel shelf; the kitchen stove; the cheap,

dear pictures on the walls, the faded carpet, the rusty sofa—home, a king's palace, royal splendor and beauty.

He counts the faces—all there. Father, mother, younger brother, two little sisters—how they must have grown since he went away. He would approach the house from behind the barn. He would burst in upon them just as father finished asking a blessing upon the evening meal. What a noble face father has! He hadn't seen one like it in four long years.

Never a youth loved home more than this one. It was his whole world. He had never been fifty miles away from it nor forty-eight hours absent until he heard his country's piteous cry for his help, and he had gone forth with leaden steps yet unafraid heart. For four years the dull, homesick ache had lain in his bosom. Home was his last thought every night as he rolled himself in his blankets under the stars; home was his first thought every morning as he awoke to the days that might have no night—rather an endless night —for him; home, he thought of it in the smoke of battle; he thought of it in the midst of the bayonet charge; he thought of it when the dead lay in windrows like the mown grass on his father's farm.

Would the war never be over? It was over now, and every turn of the mighty wheels, every throb of that iron heart were bringing him nearer home.

Home? What was home? Dear faces? Yes, they were home, in part. In part? Yes, in part, for home included even more than these. It included the plain little white house, the plain furniture, the weather-beaten barns, the pear trees and apple orchard, the old beech with the thick, low branches just made for boys to climb.

He had to change cars at one station. The next train, the one he was to take, was three hours late. How could he ever stand it! And he would be late for supper! Hurry as he would over the hills, it would be nine o'clock before he could reach the door of that little house.

The time passed some way. It always does. He has just reached the summit of the hill that overlooks the home valley. It is quarter to nine. Darkness has long since fallen. With what rapture of expectancy he lifts his eyes to see a little light flickering down in that valley at a spot his heart knows so well. Why, in densest night without any light in the window at all, his eyes would unerringly rest upon the precise spot where home is—home. He looks—no light. That's strange. Perhaps the night is too bright for a lamp to show so far. No, that can't be it. The night is rather dark. A light in the window would show afar.

He looks up and down the valley—not a glimmer anywhere. Well, it is rather late. Farmers are abed. He hurries on, but a strange premonitory uneasiness is creeping into his bosom and it grows chill. But soon he will be pounding on the door and then what a surprise for all—what a welcome! And a little ecstasy shakes his whole being. He jumps a little stream—he had waded in that stream when a boy. In its sparkling waters he had caught his first fish. What a home feeling comes over him.

But where is the orchard? That's strange! It was just the other side of the brook. Why doesn't he come to the barn? He must have crossed the creek at a different place from what he had thought. A little vexation stirs him; he didn't suppose he could be fooled

about a single square foot on the whole farm even at night. But why doesn't the house show up? Surely it isn't dark enough to conceal that, near as he now is. Strange he doesn't find house or barn or orchard. Can it be he got twisted coming through the dense woods on the hill, and is in another locality altogether? Perish the thought. Such an idea is treason to his heart.

But what is wrong? Something, surely? The creek seemed the same, the lay of the land the same; but that is all. The barn—it is gone. Gone the old beech tree! Gone the orchard! Gone the pear trees! Gone the garden fence! Gone the shade trees. Where are the home-folks? Gone, too, but where?

What means this, his benumbed brain asks itself.

A quivering flash of thought shoots athwart his mind's murky night—there has been a war.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ONE WHO REMEMBERED.

It was a bleak November day. The sky was cold and leaden. Gusts of wind tossed the dead leaves in homeless, restless heaps, only to scatter them again and again. The branches of the trees were bare and cold.

An occasional flake of snow fell, mute herald of Winter's oncoming kingship and white desolation. A stranger was riding along the highway wrapped up to his ears to ward off the pitiless assault of the cutting wind. As he rides along busy with his own thoughts his attention is suddenly arrested by the sight of the swaying tops of some tall spruces by the wayside—a glance at the ground—cold, white shafts of marble chill his blood still more. God's acre in the country! How many stones are there! How sparsely the community is populated, but how thick the sleepers lie here—and how quiet.

And by each stone there has once stood a little group of country folk in sable garb of sorrow, and each foot of the soil of this sacred resting place of the dead has been bedewed many a time by what salt tears. And here heads have reverently bowed down, and here prayers have gone upward—was there One who heard?

But what is that object by yonder stone? Why, it is a woman's form. Yes, a woman's—aged, wrinkled, white-haired, and feeble. There is a shawl, a faded shawl, thrown over head and shoulders. What can that bowed form be doing in this bleak place this bleak

day? The woman has a pail. She seems to be scrubbing that stone by her side. Yes, that is what she is doing—scrubbing that stone.

The stranger stops his horse some distance away. Evidently he has not been noticed. The trembling woman, trembling with age and shivering with cold, completes her task. She straightens up—that is, straightens up as much as she can. She will never be quite straight again; those days are past. They don't return. She silently surveys the stone before her. Her fingers touch it caressingly. She wipes her eyes, then slowly passes out of that God's acre and away across the fields out of sight.

The stranger drives on a few rods, stops and hitches his horse, then reverently approaches that glistening stone. It was the year 1895, thirty years after the close of the war. With misty eyes he reads the chiseled letters. A boy's name is there; then the words: "Killed at Cold Harbor, 1865."

The mother had once more cleaned the moss from the marble and so there was one who remembered.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CHILD'S PLAYTHING.

THEIR home was in the valley where the battle had been fought, but that was fifty years ago, so all traces of its devastations were long since obliterated. They were happy in their little home, and little they thought of the blood which had been shed on the acres that were now their own. Men had died there, hundreds of them. Blood had flowed in crimson streams as large as the little brook which sang by their cottage door all of a summer's day.

Time and nature had done their work. The ugly gashes are all healed. Men's memories are short. Homes are fair where war was red, and pasture lands lie smiling languidly in the golden sunlight.

Two children are at play in a thick clump of cedars —a very paradise for little folks. Those cedars were there fifty years ago—or others like them on the same spot. Men in uniforms had crouched here where the children were now so carelessly, so joyously, at play. Cannons had been trained on this very spot. A bayonet charge had been made on the sharpshooters hidden among the cedars. Death had held high carnival here. But this was a twice-told tale.

One day when poking around an old stump one of the children unearthed something grayish-white, with greenish patches. What a find! It would make a new plaything. It was hollow; therefore, it would be fine for holding things. They could dig with it, too.

Why, it would be useful in a hundred different ways. And they laughed in their glee as they played with the new toy. In what seemed to be the front there were two round holes, and the children stuck their fingers in the holes and laughed a merry laugh.

Forty years before this an aged mother in a distant State had gone down to her grave in sorrow. Where, where, where, was lying her noble boy, the boy that once a babe used to sleep on her breast, the boy that as a little child flooded the whole house with the sunshine of his smile and the melody of his laughter?

And even while the children are playing with their new toy and the cedars are a-tremble with their hysterical shrieks of laugher, a lone woman, past three score years and ten, in garments of grief that she has never laid aside, is sitting by her desolate hearthstone, desolate now as fifty years ago—aye, ever more desolate as the lone years have come and gone.

And as she sits there and the children play there, she repeats over and over again these words: "Oh, if I could only be laid by his dear side, how gentle the grave would be. O God, where is he, the husband of my youth, my bridegroom, my lover? Must we sleep apart till the resurrection? O God, must it be?

And while she calls upon her God, this desolate, broken-hearted, forsaken bride—bride fifty years ago—the children thrust their fingers through those round holes in their new toy and shout again with laughter. A fair-faced young mother comes to the door of a near-by house, listens, smiles, and goes back to her household task.

I wonder if other children as merry as these will be playing with their skulls on some distant battlefield fifty years hence—and some woman sitting alone.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN OLD SOLDIER.

THE other day I saw an old soldier, perhaps seventy-five years of age, slowly tottering toward what he called home. His step was feeble and uncertain; his hair long, thin, white, and unkempt; his beard yellow and scraggly; his hat old, rusty, battered, and sagging to one side; his coat dirty and ragged; his trousers patched and baggy; his face bleared, his nose red, his eye faded and watery.

I entered his home; the floors were bare, the windows curtainless, the walls dingy, the furniture scanty and broken. It was chill there. The fire was low and feeble, the larder empty.

I looked over the years he had traveled—forty unbroken years of intemperance, poverty, loss of position after position, ever sinking lower and lower, until at last this pitiable wreck of manhood before me—old, feeble, friendless, besotted—a pensioner on the nation's bounty, that pension all going to the rumseller's till.

I saw back of these past forty years a young man, one of the bravest of the brave, the color-bearer of his regiment. I saw him carrying the old flag unflinchingly in storm of lead and iron where hundreds were going down like mown grass all about him. I saw him the first to scale the ramparts of the enemy. I saw him the uncrowned hero of a hundred fights. I saw him a youth of flashing eye and flaming patriotism—tall, athletic, of heroic mold physically and morally. I saw him

taking his first glass of liquor—a government ration—after a weary day's march. And then I looked at the old man before me. Was this that youth? Is this the same person? Yes, the same—and yet not the same. And this was war—glorious war.

I saw back of the soldier a boy stepping across the invisible line which separates youth from manhood—clear-eyed, proud, ambitious, all-conquering youth. There was no ordinary prize of life that was not easily within the reach of his industry and integrity. And then I looked at the old man before me.

I saw back of the youth and boy a babe on a young mother's breast, a laughing, blue-eyed babe. I saw the mother look into the eyes of that babe, and I caught a fleeting glimpse of heaven in four eyes on earth. And then I looked at the old man before me. Could it be that this old man was once a babe on a young mother's breast? And here he was at seventy-five—here he was what he was. And this was war—glorious war.

I wonder if his mother ever sees him now. I wonder if he will ever see his mother again.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LITTLE COTTAGE BY THE WAYSIDE.

She was now well past seventy—a maiden still. She lived alone in a little cottage by the wayside. For years she had lived alone. An aged mother had died long ago; an older sister a few years later followed the mother to her rest; brothers were married and away with families and cares of their own. They were old men now with children and grandchildren gilding and empurpling and haloing the years of their setting sun. And she was alone in her little cottage by the wayside, alone with her memories and her fancies.

It was not the kind of life she had dreamed for herself fifty years ago, when the dew of youth was on her cheek. She had a lover then. The war came, he went away; he never came back; and so she lived on in the little cottage by the wayside.

She had always been shy, even as a school-girl and maiden. As the years came and went she became ever more retiring and reserved. Only children could fully draw her out and open her heart. Friends dropped away one by one. They were taken and she was left.

Of late she had been growing feebler, and the neighbors who dropped in from time to time saw that her last illness had come. Under various pretexts, and against her protests, they managed so that some one of them was with her most of the time.

As the end drew near her mind would wander from

time to time; and she would talk to her soldier-lover, at one time as though it were the evening of their betrothal; at another time they would be planning their future home; again it was their last evening together and they were saying farewell just before he left her forever; still again she would talk to him as though he were present, an old man—as though all their dreams of wedded life had come true. How her face lighted up with happiness as she prattled on. The neighbors had never seen her look like that before.

All this, however, they could understand; they had known, every one had known, that her lover had gone away. They knew that other lovers had come to woo in the after years, but that none had ever been permitted to tell his tale. Yet there was something in her talk that none did understand. She often spoke the names of others—names of persons who had never been known in the community. These seemed to be the constant topic of conversation between her and the husband she imagined by her side. She always called these others by their first names, or by pet names, and so no clue to their identity could be discovered. And so those about her did not understand.

But after she was dead, then they understood. They found her wedding-dress—the dress she never wore—carefully packed away. But this was not all they found. With it they found complete suits of baby clothes which she had made from time to time during the years since the war. These she had made, these she could not help but make, to deaden the ache in her yearning, empty, mother-hands.

And so while the world saw only a shy, lonely, rather prosaic single woman of sweet, sad face, going si-

lently about among them, her heart was living in a dream-world of her own creation. And thus on the husks of fancy she strove to nourish as best she could her starving mother-heart, and thus she busied her starving mother-hands.

I wonder if there have been many women in the world like that.

I wonder if these childless mothers will be childless over There.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A ROSE-COLORED GOWN.

SHE was in her room hastily dressing. She put on her rose-colored gown because he had requested it the night before—the night of their betrothal. She was adorning herself now to see him off—off to war. Her hands were trembling, her heart wildly fluttering. She glances at her mirror, her face is pale, tears are in her eyes. That will never do. She must be brave for his sake—she must be brave lest she betray their secret, their secret which is not to be known until he comes back from the war. She dashes the tears from her eyes, puts a rose in her hair, rubs her pale cheeks a moment, and then descends the stairs.

There is a tumult of joyous greetings rolling up the street. She glances in the direction of the noise, and then she understands; and the light grows brighter in her eyes, and her heart beats high in its happiness, and her pale face flushes with love and pride. She might have known, it is her lover approaching. All the boys of the town are about him, following him, and shouting their greetings and good wishes; for he is their hero —their ideal—a handsome youth, brave, clean, true, athletic, jovial, a leader in every sport.

Aged women love to catch his sunny smile; and he has one for all, the lowliest as well as the richest. Men speak enthusiastically of him and prophesy a brilliant future. Mothers hold him up as a model for their sons. He is without a single enemy or ill-wisher. His

friends are all who know him, from the oldest man to the youngest child.

No youth like him in all the village. And so a maiden in a rose-colored gown—of her betrothal of the evening before—with a rose in her hair, watches the royal progress of this regal youth as his steps are turned toward her gate. What a kingly form and carriage; what a noble face; what a character and mind to match face and form—so she muses, and such was truth.

He tarries a moment at her gate, she comes blushing forth to join the throng of old and young about him; his journey to the depot is a triumphal progress.

Other young men, his comrades, are going, too, moved by his example. With each is a little group of relatives, and friends greet them kindly, pleasantly, but turn from them unconsciously to smile again at him, the leader, the pride of the whole village.

At the last moment he turns once more to speak to her, to hold her hand, to murmur her name; but a surge of admirers catches him from her side, a chorus of cheers drowns his voice. A pang of jealousy and a thrill of pride strive for mastery in her wildly fluttering heart.

The train rolls in, he struggles free, mounts the step of the car, searches the crowd about him with piercing eyes, they catch hers, soften, and then he disappears, and the train rolls away. She goes back to her home and waits.

Four years pass—pass some way. Other youths who went out from that same village had already been back several weeks. Why doesn't he return? Why, oh why,

does he tarry? He has not once been wounded; he has not seen a sick day; why doesn't he hurry to her side? Ah, if he only knew how she loves him. If he only knew how hard it is to wait.

And there was another strange thing. At first his letters came regularly and surprisingly frequent. But as the war drew toward a close they became rarer and rarer, and were ever more brief. What little he did write had completely lost its old ring. What could be the matter?

During these years his mother had died and he had now no home to come back to, so others did not wonder particularly at his not returning—they had never guessed her secret. So there was one—only one—who wondered at his tarrying.

At last he came, unexpectedly to her, for he had not written. Her first knowledge of his arrival was the eager shouts of the boys in the streets calling to one another that he was in town, had just got off at the station. In five minutes the entire village knew it, she among the last.

It was strange. She thinks—tries to think—it was to give her a glad surprise. She flies to her room and again hastily and with trembling hands, puts on the rose-colored gown he so praised four years before, the gown that he wanted her to wear the day he went away. It shall be the gown he first sees her in as he comes back—perhaps he will remember. So, out of style though it was, she dons it once more. It has not been worn in four years, it has been kept sacred against this day, the day of the home-coming of her lover. Will he understand? Will he care?

She tarries at her glass—she is twenty-four now.

Does she look as young, is she as fair, as four years earlier? Fairer! For the long wait is past now instead of just beginning. Her eyes never sparkled before as they do this minute; her color was never so brilliant; her face never so radiant.

She goes to a vine-covered piazza at the side of the house to wait his coming. And he is coming her way. A throng of boys is following him now as then, the same boys, but youths now. But who is that who is singing that coarse drinking song? She peers through the vines—some one in the approaching crowd is singing it. Why doesn't her lover stop it? Drive the singer away?

They pass her hiding-place; she clutches the vines, breaking them in her shaking hands; it is he who is the singer. They pass, and he does not stop, barely glances her way.

An hour later he comes back to her home. She is a limp and shrunken form, lost in a large chair in the darkened parlor. She hears a step on the gravel walk, a strange, heavy, uncertain step. She does not rise. A loud knock. Aged ten years in an hour, she unsteadily goes to the door. No word of greeting from either. He enters unbidden. He offers no caress. The day for that is past forever.

He talks constrainedly of coming back to see his mother's grave. She appears to listen, but says not a word. He makes no reference to the past. She makes no reference to the past. He says he has enlisted in the Regulars and leaves for the far West next day. Listlessly she hears his words, but offers no comment.

At last he leaves her—leaves; that is all—no farewell. Before night the whole town had seen him, eagerly they had sought him out. They found him, or one who bore

his name, the boy who went away they found not; the stranger who had stolen the boy's name they did not know.

That night she lay awake all the long, weary hours, alone, weeping, heart-broken now forever. Long past midnight she heard him pass her home once more. Once more she heard uncertain steps, ribald song and laughter, boon companions were with him. And thus ended her four years' dream.

Next morning she cannot stay in the house. She knows it is all over; he will not come to her again—and yet—

Her fingers busy themselves with the roses near her gate, her eyes, unbidden, search the street. At last she sees him; he is leaving now; she will speak once more; any memory must be better than the one of yesterday.

Yes, it is better. The step is steady now, the flush is gone from the face.

He takes her hand and speaks haltingly, but his shifting glances will not meet her steady eyes, and words are few. "He has treasured—will always treasure the memory of her friendship, and—will she care for his mother's grave? He will probably never be back again. And"——a far, faint whistle. "He believes he can catch that freight when it stops for water."

So he goes. Alone now. Even the boys have shrunk away from him.

In her room she snatches from the floor her rose-colored gown—it is all she has left—and crushes it against her heart, forcing back her sobs, straining her ears almost against her will to catch the last faint whistle of the departing freight train, after which—silence.

Part IV.

THIS PICTURE AND THAT

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

SHE had a mother's heart from her earliest years. In childhood no little girl ever so loved and cared for her dollies. She would sacrifice her play any moment under the pretense that one of her dollies was sick and needed her.

Before her marriage she mothered every child that came near her, and none was so unattractive in looks or disposition but that she found a charm about it somewhere. And children loved her. None was ever afraid of her approaches even for a second, no matter how timid or how terror-stricken at the caress of other strangers. Few mothers but were jealous of the affection their children lavished upon her if they were with her for long.

From the day of her marriage she dreamed of a child, a boy who should be like her noble husband in every respect. No queen ever so anticipated her crowning day as she the day she should clasp to her famished heart a little one of her own. The day came when she did clasp such a little one, and much as she had anticipated that hour the realization eclipsed the anticipation beyond all imaginings. She was intoxicated with joy. She was delirious with ecstasy unspeakable. Her eyes shone like blazing diamonds. Her whole face was a transfiguration of delight. It dazzled with its brilliancy of light. It almost blinded the eyes with its effulgence of glory.

To be in the room with her for a few seconds only was a revelation of the beauty of maternity. It was heaven come down to earth. It was earth exalted to high heaven. In the presence of such love there was a divine emanation of purity that seemed to burn away the dross in human thought and character. One felt like Moses in the presence of the burning bush, as though the shoe must be loosed from off one's foot, for the ground whereon they stood was holy.

Every second of the twenty-four hours, whether waking or sleeping, was for the mother a joy which was almost as poignant as a pain. As she gazed upon her child she would often catch her breath and clutch at her bosom as though a spasm of pain caught her heart, the pain of a joy that was too large for the place it filled.

The passing present was more than she ever dreamed heaven could be. And yet, rich as it was, like all other mothers, she constantly dreamed of the happiness yet to be—how glorious beyond words to see him begin to toddle about, to hear him first say "mamma" and "papa." To see him a laughing schoolboy; to look into his eyes when they should be on a level with her own; to read there purity and honor and truth and love.

And then his youth and young manhood—how holy, how divine, to be a mother, to have such a son as hers would be. How his life would bless others. What a career of usefulness was before him. What laurels he would win. Ah, God, it was almost too much, such happiness as this. And her whole being, physical and mental, was shaken with an ever-present thrill of expectancy. The vision of the Holy City vouchsafed to

the aged exile of Patmos was not more resplendent or indescribably glorious than the vision this mother had of the future of her boy.

If you could have seen her the evening the little one took his first few steps alone from his father's outstretched hands to hers, if you could have seen him throw his little body forward with an abandon of loving trustfulness as he came near those yearning hands of hers and at the same moment look up into her face and say "mamma" for the first time—if you could have witnessed that scene, if you could have looked into the father's face, then into the child's face, and then last of all into the mother's face—well, heaven would have no surprises for you as a revelation of what love means.

If you could have seen her face when she and a boy her own height talked and dreamed of his future life and work, you would have seen what eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man. A glimpse of those two faces in such an hour of holy communion would have transformed a man of unclean life and thoughts into an apostle of purity forevermore.

He was the only child that ever came to bless the shoreless ocean of her love.

He reached his twentieth birthday. War reached out his red, omnivorous clutches and drew her boy to his reeking breast. For forty-eight sleepless hours his father stumbled over the slippery field where for forty-eight hours men had been hewing and hacking each other to pieces.

At last at the bottom of a heap of mangled carrion —dead horses and dead men—he found what was left

of his boy. He identified him by a ring, his watch, and a locket on his chain. The father took home that which he found. Yes, took it back to the mother who bore it. But war had done well his work—she knew not the face or the form of her dead.

Twenty years ago and now; a child taking his first steps; a youth of twenty; a distorted something had taken its last step; a babe in its mother's bosom—carrion from a battlefield that a mother did not know. The beginning and the end—the beginning and the end of a life made in the image of God; the beginning and the end of a mother's dream.

And this was war—glorious war. Oh, for some new poet to arise to sing thy praises, O War, with voice of angel and harp of gold. Oh, for a dramatist who could lure the dead from the cemeteries where lie the buried dreams of human hearts!

CHAPTER XXIX.

A HOME—AND AFTERWARDS.

A MAN was hurrying along the street just as the dusk was settling down. It was late in the autumn of the year and the wind was cold and piercing. Added to all the bleakness of season and hour a raw and chilling sleet was falling. The man hurrying past was a stranger in the town. A terrible loneliness was dogging his steps. He was homesick and heartsick. Between thirty and forty years of age, he had, some six months previously, passed through a great crisis of grief which had left his life completely desolate—his wife and only child had been taken from him the same week.

At the moment we catch a glimpse of him everything seemed to be conspiring to make his burden unbearable —a strange town; not an acquaintance in it, night, autumn winds, a driving sleet, memory. There was but one more touch lacking to the picture, and that touch was not to be left out.

He was just turning a corner when his eye was caught by the sight of a cozy little house almost the exact duplicate of his own. He paused a moment in the storm, for a vision of the past rose in his mind with such overmastering vividness that his feet forgot to move. The curtains of the little home had not been drawn down, though it was already dark without. While he stood there in the storm gazing at the house before him and at the vision within, a man brushed past him and turned in at the gate. Just then a woman

followed by a little girl some two years old—the age of his own lost child—appeared in the room into which he was looking.

They came to the window and pressed their faces against the sleet-battered panes—they are watching for papa. They hear a step on the walk, they fly into the hall and open the door, they fairly seize a muffled figure from the clutch of the storm—and the stranger in the street sees the rest, and he remembers.

Fascinated by the little drama of purest happiness within the home, the man in the storm stands unmoving, heedless of the driving sleet which beats in his face, feeling not the freezing wind which whips his coat about like the limbs of a tree in a tempest. The impropriety of his action never occurs to him.

Supper is waiting, the three—father and mother and child—sit down to the daintiest and yet most abundant of suppers. The storm roars without but warmth and good cheer and love reign within—what matters the night and the storm!

They had been married about four years. The days had been cloudless from that moment to this. Many a rich suitor had she turned away in order to marry the man of her choice, and he was worthy of her favor. Without influence of any kind or a dollar to back him, he had put himself through college and then through a professional school. Their engagement had been long. They had had to wait four years after his studies were finished before the income from his profession warranted him in establishing a home of his own.

But at last their dreams came true, and they were married. The long wait but enhanced the joy of that hour. In radiant beauty, the reflex of their hearts'

joy, they began their journey together. Never were four years fuller of every noble satisfaction of the human heart. Home, perfect love and sympathy, a beautiful child, extending fame and rapidly increasing income—what more could the heart of man or woman ask?

They were too happy in the present to think much about the future; but when they did, the upward-sloping pathway of their life was speedily lost in a glory of light that was too dazzling to gaze upon for long.

The stranger in the street read all this and his heart-hunger made him feel his own loss with a hundredfold greater intensity. Before this household only years of happiness—before himself, only years—that was all.

Another year passed. He who stood in the storm that night was in the hospital corps of the advance army. The first battle had been fought, a long and gory fight lasting all day and far into the night. The army to which he was attached remained masters of the field. It fell to him along with many others to search for the wounded all the hours of darkness that followed.

Down by a log that was fallen across a little stream where the wounded had crowded to drink and die, he discovered one whose life was fast ebbing away. The wounded man was still able to gasp a few words when found.

"Please—send—my—body—back—to—her," and the dying man's voice failed.

The stranger bent low his ear till it almost touched those pallid lips. "Who is she? Where shall I find her? Speak quick or it will be too late!"

No answer. He poured a little liquor between the

silent lips. The dying man's eyes opened blankly. "Quick, quick! her address!"

"Yes—the—address—it is, it is—what is it"—— more stimulants were given. Again the stranger bent low his head. The white lips moved, the address was faintly articulated. Merciful God! It was the city, the street, the number of that home of the wild night when he had stood in the storm without.

And another Eden was no more.

CHAPTER XXX.

AND BOTH WERE SPEECHLESS.

I KNEW the old Doctor well, had always known him. He had been a surgeon in the Civil War and I loved to hear him recount his experiences in that memorable struggle. He was a graphic and picturesque story-teller. Few were gifted with an equal power of making pass before your very eyes in all their vividness and detail the scenes of which they had been witnesses.

When he was in the mood for it, it was not difficult to induce the Doctor to narrate some of the stirring events which had filled his life for four years when with the army in the field. But almost invariably his stories were of some deed of exceptional valor and heroism, and were usually enlivened with a touch of humor here and there. The deeper pathos and tragedy of the battlefield he always passed over lightly, and could never be induced to dwell in any fulness upon the more sanguinary and revolting or distressing aspects of a scene of human slaughter.

But it chanced one day, when I was driving with him several miles into the country, where he had been called in consultation, that he seemed to be in a more reminiscent mood than usual, and there was a note of pensive melancholy in his words and tones that was exceedingly rare with him. Our conversation drifted to the ever-recurring topic of the Civil War, for the fascination of its events was ever strong with me, especially when with the Doctor.

On this occasion he touched again and again that

deep note of tragedy which I had never before known him to strike.

At length I was emboldened to ask him what was the most memorable sight he witnessed during the entire four years of the war.

I expected, if he was willing to answer my question at all, that he would speak of some terrible carnage, or state the number of dead and wounded he had counted on a given area; or, perhaps, portray some isolated deed of heroism, or suffering; or, maybe, describe a cavalry charge as only he could describe such a charge.

When I asked the question the Doctor's brow immediately clouded and an expression of deepest pain was depicted on his face. I at once knew that he would not have to cast about in his mind to consider which scene was the most memorable he had ever witnessed. The scene was before him that moment—perhaps had never left him. I knew also that it was one that he had never even alluded to in all our years of intimacy.

At first I was all expectancy; but he was silent so long that I began to regret my question, for I saw he was suffering even yet by the memories I had thoughtlessly called up.

Finally I said: "I beg your pardon, Doctor, for my question. You need not answer it. I see I have awakened painful memories. I never thought of doing so. I supposed it would be something you had perhaps already told me. Or, at any rate, something thrillingly dramatic."

Upon this he replied: "No, I have never told you the most memorable scene of all. In fact, I have never told anybody. But I know but too well what it was. There is no other to dispute its pre-eminence." And here he paused.

Again I spoke up and said: "I beg you will forgive me, Doctor. I wouldn't have pained you for anything. It was thoughtless for me to ask. Try to forget the question. I don't want you to answer it."

"Yes, I will answer it. You shall hear what impressed me most of all the sights and sounds of death in a thousand forms.

"I was going over the field the next day after the battle. The wounded had already been removed by our very efficient hospital corps; but I never could feel satisfied unless I went myself over as much of the scene of conflict as I possibly could, as soon as there was the slightest let-up in my duties at the operating-table.

"I don't recall that I ever found a wounded man who had been overlooked, still I could not give up my habit and I clung to it to the close of the war.

"On the occasion I have just referred to, I saw what was to me the most memorable scene of the entire war." Here the Doctor paused for some time, and there was a look of horror in his face and eyes as though the scene were still before him. Consumed as I was with breathless curiosity to know what the scene was, I again forced myself to beg him not to continue a narrative so painful to himself. Without making any reply to what I said, he resumed his story, but it was evidently a struggle for him to go on.

"It was two dead men—only two. Each had fallen with the bayonet of the other thrust clean through his body; a hand of each was clutching and tearing the hair of the other. And so they had fallen, and so they remained. But it was not the physical aspects of the case so much, not that; I had seen many similar sights on previous battlefields.

"It was their faces, their eyes, the expression that

both men wore. That I had never seen anything like. Such hatred, such fury, such murderous blood-lust—why, I never dreamed the human features could be distorted in hell to depict such a frenzy of murderous fury as I read on those two faces." The Doctor stopped again, fairly shaken by the memory of the horror of that spectacle, so vivid was it even yet, thirty-five years after the close of the conflict.

Again he went on after a heroic effort at self-mastery.

"Accustomed as I was to death in every form of disfigurement and physical agony and distortion, I had never seen anything like that. I turned away from the sight with a sickening horror such as I have never felt before nor since. I was faint, yes, faint, and I a surgeon in an army that waded in blood all the time. But it was a moral faintness more than a physical one. Those faces, how they haunt me still. Why, man," he exclaimed, turning and seizing my arm with a convulsive, vise-like grip, "I have seen them in my dreams for thirty-five years. I saw them again last night, just as they were that day, just the same, just the same.

"Oh, it is awful, awful! A weaker man would have been driven insane by such dreams years ago."

Again the old Doctor stopped in his narration, and seldom have I seen a man so agitated even by a present distress or fear. I thought he had reached the end of his story, or, at any rate, would be unable to proceed farther. For a few minutes of painful silence I, too, was completely dumb; and, I will confess, also somewhat shaken by the powerful emotions which were racking both mind and body of the elder man by my side.

After a time, however, my companion began speaking once more and this time finished what he had to say.

"I was slightly acquainted with the Union soldier,

and from a wounded Confederate who was picked up among our men and brought into our hospital, I learned some facts about the other party to that horrible death-grapple.

"Two little white country churches, one in a secluded valley of northern New York, the other in a remote region of Georgia. These two men were the most honored deacons in those churches, stanch, noble, Godly men; models in the home, tender and sympathetic—the finest men in their respective communities, honest and upright. They were leaders in every sense of the word, both in church work and in everything that was for the good of the towns in which they dwelt.

"Such were the men in their homes; such they might have died, with friends about them and the peace of God in their hearts. But war came—and their dying thoughts, their dead faces, oh! it was dreadful, dreadful!

"And there is always a sequel to my dream of those distorted faces. I see them rising together to the gate of heaven; and each, without perceiving the other, knocks at the same time for admission. An angel opens the gate and asks each what he wishes. The instant answer of both is that they seek admission to the city of the redeemed.

"The angel gazes, sad-eyed, upon the two naked souls before him; and then asks them in low, pain-riven tones: 'What was your last deed on earth, and what your last thought?'

"Each now for the first time perceives that another soul is waiting at the gate. Slowly each lifts his eye till he gazes full into the other's. Recognition is instantaneous—and both are speechless."

The old Doctor's story was done. We rode on in silence.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"MY STRENGTH IS AS THE STRENGTH OF TEN."

I WAS visiting a friend of mine in June, 1896. It happened that I was there over Sunday. Toward evening my friend asked me if I wouldn't like to go with him to the young people's prayer-meeting which preceded the preaching service. He said he did not ordinarily attend, but that evening there was a young man to lead who had been recently converted and in whom the entire church was particularly interested. This was the first meeting the young man had ever led.

So we went together to the service. I noticed my friend spoke with enthusiasm of the youth, and yet evidently thought he was understating his high qualities, desirous that my impression should be at first hand, confident that I would be as enthusiastic as he after I had once seen and heard. I will confess I was but mildly interested.

It was a hot night, so I was not prepared to see many at the service. We ourselves were early but the room was already packed when we arrived and we had to wait standing a few minutes for more chairs to be brought in. The moment we entered the room my friend exclaimed with ill suppressed excitement, "There he is!"

I glanced at the leader, more in curiosity than anything else, wondering what could so enthuse my companion at the mere sight of him or mention of his name. But one glance was enough. My attention was riveted

to his face at once. I did not notice when our chairs were brought until my friend spoke to me a second time, and even after that was obliged to tap me on the arm.

The youth in the leader's chair was only sixteen years old, but there was a manly fascination about his face that I have never seen equaled. He was fully six feet tall, dark, slender, and of athletic build. His countenance was the finest blending of beauty and intellectuality I have ever beheld. He was rather pale, despite the intense heat. This was probably due to excitement or nervousness in his unaccustomed position.

That he was intensely popular, the very leader of the young people in everything clean and worthy, was unmistakable. One need only look into the admiring eyes of the throng in that hot room, to be convinced of this fact.

Two or three opening hymns were sung, and I noticed the leader of the meeting was also the leader of the singing as well. And what a splendid voice he had. He was still somewhat nervous, though this was gradually wearing away. I admired him all the more for the fact that he was not too self-assured.

The first singing done, he opened a little Bible which I fancied was a present from his mother when he was a child. He read the evening lesson in a clear, manly voice, though a voice which slightly trembled. He was not yet entirely free from self-consciousness and trepidation. But the trembling tones gave an added thrill to his ringing enunciation.

I wondered if he would say a few words on the topic. I hoped that he would, however brief he might be. My interest in him was deepening all the time. I had not

long to wait in suspense. The reading was short. When finished, he announced the topic: "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure." As these words rang out I was thrilled by a new power that seemed to be poured into them, familiar as they were. Each word fell from his mobile lips like a new-coined gold piece.

His first few sentences were a little broken, but almost immediately thereafter he seemed to lose all fear and all consciousness of self. He swept us all off our feet by his eager, boyish, yet manly portrayal of the masterly, all-conquering strength of a pure heart and clean life. It was partly what he said and more what he felt and the passionate earnestness with which he spoke, that made our feelings vibrant with every high purpose and resolution.

But thralled as I was by the speaker, yet my attention was diverted from him after a few moments to another face, the face of a woman in a distant corner of the room. I can't conceive how I ever came to notice her in the first place, but notice her I did. After that I could scarcely take my eyes from her face, even to glance at the speaker.

Much as the boy's face shone with his high thoughts and eager speech, the woman's face shone still more. She was leaning far forward in her seat, though what the boy was saying could easily have been heard double her distance away. Her eyes were so glued to his face that her lids scarce seemed to move once during the time he was speaking. Her soul was in her eyes, and I almost fancied that it was leaning a little out of and farther forward than her eyes themselves.

She was his mother. No one told me so. I had never

seen or heard of either before that day, but no one could have been so blind or dull as not to have guessed.

The meeting over, my friend's enthusiasm knew no bounds as we were on our way home. He could talk of nothing but of that youthful leader: his noble character, his splendid promise, his leadership in the past in the social life and school life and athletic interests of the young people; and now, of his equal interest and enthusiasm in Christian work, and what a power he already was among not only the young but among all classes.

I was equally interested in the woman in the far corner and asked about her. "Yes, she is his mother," my friend replied, "and a proud and happy woman she is. When the boy was a baby, she dedicated him to the Foreign Mission field. But she never told him about that until recently, not until he made the decision independently and uninfluenced by any one. After he had made his decision he told her of it with fear and hesitation, dreading her opposition to his going away so far, as he is her only child. Then it was she told him of his consecration to that work in his infancy. What a scene that hour must have witnessed in that home!"

The rest of his story was told me a few years later by another friend of mine, who was for a time in the commissary department of an army in the tropical islands of the far East.

It was sometime along in the fall of '99. My friend was going through a hospital with a young doctor with whom he was on intimate terms. In one cot he caught a glimpse of the most pitiable human wreck he ever saw, even in that land of vice: hair nearly all dropped out,

the rest entirely white; teeth falling from his mouth; skin a livid yellow, throat ulcerous, voice a mere husky whisper. My friend said he turned from that revolting spectacle with a dizzy, sickening weakness.

It was the same youth who had led that prayer-meeting three short years before. Companions had lured him to an institution regularly inspected by the army physicians, and here he was rotting away under a broiling sun in the land of the East.

They buried him over there. On a little white stone they chiseled these words:

"Died for his country."

Died for his country? Good God! who will answer for that boy's soul in the day of judgment?

And so he, like thousands of others of the bravest and the best, went on a "foreign mission."

Part V.

THE UNKNOWABLE

CHAPTER XXXII.

TEN O'CLOCK THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE.

It is ten o'clock in camp the night before the battle. The sky is without a cloud: the light of moon and stars brilliant in the extreme. The heavens never wore a more peaceful aspect; nature never wore a more peaceful aspect. The murmuring of running water can be heard. The fragrance of orchard blossoms is in the air. Spring is supreme everywhere, and summer acoming. Fields are greening, cattle are on a thousand hills, now taking their rest. Birds have folded their wings in the branches, their songs are hushed. Nature is at peace. But on every hill and in every valley for miles and miles are the glowing embers of dying fires. Rolled in blankets about these dying fires are two hundred thousand sleeping soldiers—sleeping and dreaming, dreaming of the past, dreaming of the morrow. They oft stir uneasily, their sleep is troubled. On the hills are six hundred cannon waiting for the morrow. Generals are consulting in their tents. Spies are crawling about under cover of bush and shadow. Sentries are pacing their weary rounds, with ever and anon the cry, "Who goes there?" Horses are restless and occasionally break the stillness with a plaintive neigh. Tonight nature so fair; men in the prime of their years; silence profound, menacing, ominous.

It is ten o'clock in two hundred thousand homes the night before the battle. These homes all have their empty chairs, their vacant beds, their aching hearts, their sleepless eyes. Sons, husbands, brothers, lovers,

fathers, are in that far camp waiting the morrow. Sons, husbands, brothers, lovers, fathers, will camp there till the resurrection. Tears, prayers, moaning grief, dumb agony; waiting, waiting, waiting—what else for homes to do but wait?

It is ten o'clock in heaven the night before the battle. Eyes are straining over heaven's battlements down toward a speck of dust floating in far-off space. Those eyes are fixed on a part of that speck of dust which is now curtained in a shroud which men name darkness, and a darker shroud named sorrow, and a darker still named death. Those heavenly eyes are fixed upon two hundred thousand men now wrapped in their blankets, a third of whom in less than twice twelve hours will be wrapped in eternal silence. Those eyes are fixed upon two hundred thousand homes scattered all over two mighty nations. There is a mingled roar of never-ceasing cries for pity and protection battering the ears of all the heavenly hosts—the prayers of two hundred thousand homes, and prayers from the battlefield itself. All space is atremble with the upward rush of those salt and bitter cries. There is a moan which fills all space, the cumulated heart-sobs of the children of Time: that moan penetrates the remotest frontiers of that "better country." The faces in the heavenly city are unutterably sad; there are tears in the eyes of angels. Heaven itself is helpless. Heaven itself can only listen and wait. Angels pace its high ramparts. They are gazing upon that sleeping host below. The ears of angels are agonized by the far-carrying sound of oaths and revelry in parts of that fated field. Shaking fingers are pointing downward—angels are counting the sleepers who will sleep in hell ere two suns more shall rise.

It is ten o'clock in hell the night before the battle. A holiday has been proclaimed throughout all that sulphurous realm. Even the stokers are given a night off. It is an hour of demoniac glee. Tomorrow hell's harvest will be garnered. Bulletins are constantly being received and read aloud to those bedlam myriads.

Bulletin No. 1: "Men in camp drinking and carousing"—howls of glee.

Bulletin No. 2: "National hatreds deepening and darkening"—more howls of glee.

Bulletin No. 3: "Preparation for slaughter and death complete"—demoniacal, maniacal laughter that shakes the foundations of deepest hell and echoes to far heaven.

Bulletin No. 4: "Less than half the men in either army prepared for eternity"—the damned wallowing on the floor of hell, drunk with ecstasy.

Bulletin No. 5: "The slaughter will be beyond all precedent, new machine guns arriving, mines to be sprung, dynamite to be dropped from balloons"—and here the laughter of the lost completely drowns the reading.

Bulletin No. 6: "More room needed in hell than first deemed necessary"—shrieking salvos of applause. And then the countless hordes scatter, each vying with other to make swift preparation for the great reception to be held on the morrow.

TEN O'CLOCK THE DAY OF THE BATTLE.

It is ten o'clock on the battlefield the day of the battle. The sun's face is darkened by the smoke of cannon. Birds and beasts have fled in terror. All the green of nature is now dyed one red. Men are charging everywhere, men shouting everywhere, men falling,

dying everywhere. The ground is piling high with writhing heaps of the wounded and the dead. Red War is glutting his insatiable blood-lust. Cannibal War is feeding him fat on the flower of a nation's youth. Swords are feasting and gorging, and still crying, "More, more!" Armies are melting away; men are going down into silence; the unlived years and the unrealized hopes will remain unlived years and unrealized hopes to all eternity.

It is ten o'clock in two hundred thousand homes the day of the battle. And two hundred thousand homes are—waiting.

It is ten o'clock in heaven the day of the battle. And all heaven is in commotion. Some in the throngs of dead who, fresh from the battlefield, crowd the gates of the celestial city, are pointed by angels with flaming swords and veiled faces to another eternal abiding place. Look into the faces of that procession turned thitherward—no, don't look! An eternity of heaven could never blot out the memory. Watch those admitted to heaven—foes on earth a moment before, feeling for each other's heart, now face to face. What are their thoughts now? So all heaven is in commotion this hour; friends long there, waiting to greet friends just arriving; enemies on earth clasping hands here in love. And at the gates of the city some going away into——

It is ten o'clock in hell the day of the battle. All its gates swing wide. High carnival reigns; the reception committee is overworked; the hospitality of the lost is overtaxed. An endless procession is arriving, those unable to enter where all is pure and of good report. Loud and long laugh the damned, and loud and long

laugh they. Oh, that war would last forever! "War, war, glorious war!"

TEN O'CLOCK THE NIGHT AFTER THE BATTLE.

It is ten o'clock on the battlefield the night after the battle. Sixty thousand men dead and wounded—fathers, husbands, sons, brothers, lovers. Hospital corps searching for the wounded, thieves searching for gold, brooks choked with those who have crawled there to slake their battle-thirst, earth soaked with blood, the air aquiver with the agonized moanings of men and horses. Death, mutilation, distortion, disfigurement—man's handiwork, war's handiwork, civilization's masterpiece.

It is ten o'clock in two hundred thousand homes the night after the battle. The day's work is done. Eternity cannot undo it. Who is living? Who dead? Who will return? What homes are broken forever? Which wives husbandless? Which parents sonless? Who, what, which—oh, when will they know? But they must wait, all must wait: waiting, that is their share in red, in glorious war. And some must wait forever.

It is ten o'clock in heaven the night after the battle. There are joyful reunions in that realm of day; wives have received their husbands and parents their children. The battle has done this for some. But there are others there: they, too, have been waiting at the gates all day. They have been waiting years for the arrival of loved faces; they have seen those loved faces today—caught a glimpse of them; they were in the procession that passed hence. Their waiting is now over—nay, rather, will never end.

It is ten o'clock in hell the night after the battle. New faces are there, thousands of them. They awake, they look about them, they understand.

Cover thine eyes; let the curtain fall.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AND THE LAST TRUMP SOUNDED.

It was the resurrection morn. The Lord himself had descended from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the last trump had sounded.

The dead were everywhere rising. Whole families were rising together, hand in hand, where they had been sleeping together for hundreds and thousands of years. There were reunions in little country cemeteries, in vast city cemeteries, reunions everywhere. The air was vibrant, vocal, athrill, with songs of joy and triumph.

There was one very noticeable feature of the scene. Those killed in battle were raised last as a final manifestation of heaven's disapproval of fratricidal strife—and all war is fratricidal strife.

There were joyful scenes to be witnessed that day, there were pathetic scenes to be witnessed that day. But the most pathetic of all were not those in the world's cemeteries, whether of city or countryside. The most pathetic of all was the sight of women who had been sleeping alone in the cold ground for uncounted centuries, mothers leading little children by the hand, searching among the dead on the world's thousands of battlefields. Wherever a battle had been fought in all the ages of time, there on that battlefield you could see the same sight on this resurrection morn when the last trump sounded: women in black, with sad, pale faces, leading their little children, hunting among the unknown dead for husband and father buried in the

trenches like slaughtered curs. Yes, hunting among the unknown dead for husbands and fathers. "Unknown dead"? Husbands and fathers "unknown"? God save the mark! Whose handiwork has so defaced God's handiwork that husband and father is "unknown"?

Man's handiwork, War's handiwork, glorious War's! And so the resurrection morn itself was shadowed and shrouded by War's black pall.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DOGS OF WAR.

I SEEMED to be taking a long, solitary walk. I had entered a narrow valley, lying between two lofty hill ranges. Communing with my own thoughts, I was little heeding any outward sights or sounds, when suddenly the fierce baying of distant dogs smote my ears. The dissonant uproar jarred me out of my musings and I looked about somewhat startled as does a man who hears the pursuing howl of timber wolves which may be on his own trail. A half mile up the valley I perceived a group of men who were considerably excited, and thence proceeded the barking of the dogs which I now heard continuously.

I couldn't make out who the men were nor what the commotion was about, so I turned my steps in that direction and hastened rapidly toward the scene. I suspected there was a dog fight on back here in the hills where officers of the law would not be likely to interfere. And say what you will about the cruelty of it, few men will look the other way when a fight is taking place right under their noses.

As I drew nearer the deafening uproar grew louder, men shouting to each other, and to the dogs which were baying ever more fiercely. Soon I began to recognize familiar forms and faces—those of world-renowned statesmen.

A Prime Minister was holding in leash a monstrous Great Dane, which was bloodthirstily howling as he

stood on his hind legs frantically pawing the air, eyes bulging and tongue protruding. He was a horrible specimen of power and ferocity. Opposite was another famous statesman holding in leash a slavering Mastiff, which was in much the same attitude as the Great Dane. I loitered about determined to see what would come of it all.

The master of the Great Dane was holding back somewhat and his antagonist seemed desirous of avoiding a fight altogether, though he showed no particular signs of fear and his dog showed none whatever. But a noble rabble of statesmen kept whispering in the ears of those who held the dogs, "Let 'em go, let 'em go!" And back of these and all about was a swarm of buzzing men whom I did not know, but I learned by inquiry that they were editors and reporters; and most of these were shouting till red in the face—"Sick 'em! Sick 'em! Sick 'em!"

A little distance away in another group stood some interested spectators of the scene—the rulers and statesmen of the great Christian nations of the earth. These kept whispering and snickering and nudging each other as the game went on. Finally a leash was slipped and with a "crimson roar" the Great Dane hurled himself at the Mastiff's throat. At the same moment the latter was unchained and rose to meet the murderous onslaught.

Then a wondrous transformation took place in that scene, which I could in no wise account for. The dogs had vanished and in their places were two long lines of men rushing at each other with deadly intent, yelling like demons, flourishing swords and firing guns.

I looked into the faces of these men—were they in-

deed men or were they demons incarnate? Yes, they were men; they were members of homes; they were sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, lovers. How do I know? Because I saw marks on the faces of each—the marks of the burning farewell kisses of women and little children. I saw drops of water on their warrior garb—tears of women, not yet dry.

Spellbound, horrified, I watched to see what would happen. Guns crashed, men yelled in agony, blood spurted. Arousing myself from my dazed horror I grabbed a soldier near me and cried out: "For God's sake, stop, man! Don't you know what you are doing? You've killed a man, killed a man, I say!"

"That's my business," he grimly replied.

"But why did you do it? Did you hate him? Has he wronged you?"

"Hate him? Wronged me? Why, man I don't have any idea who he is nor what he has done. Probably he hasn't done anything. But didn't you see those valorous politicians whispering together? And didn't you hear the crowds yelling, "Sick 'em, sick 'em?"

"Yes, I did!"

"Well, that's what we're here for! That's what we've got to do—Sick 'em."

Another crash of guns. I turned from the sickening sight. Then, lo! behind each line of soldiers, only a few feet away, I saw a long row of women of all ages, and little children, all chained fast to stakes driven deep in the ground. These women were praying, weeping and wringing their hands. The children, pale with terror, were crying out in mortal anguish and clinging to the skirts of the women.

At the second discharge of guns I saw that every

bullet which went through a soldier's heart likewise went through the hearts of three women. I saw that these same bullets were mutilating the children, and again I saw blood spurt. I heard screams, yes, screams. Say, you never heard a scream, my friend. I never did before.

Again I turned to the soldiers near me and fairly yelled: "For God's sake, stop! Can't you see? You are shooting women and children!"

"Can't help it if we are. Don't you hear those voices still shouting, 'Sick 'em, sick 'em'? "

I was powerless. I turned to flee and escape from the heart-breaking spectacle.

I soon passed beyond the line of shrieking women and children, and at once came upon a line of farmers and small tradesmen at their toil and business. Among these I saw a lot of mounted men, ruthless freebooters, riding up and down and robbing the laborers of the fruits of their toil. Infuriated I sprang to the defense of one poor old farmer and his wife who were being held up and robbed by one of the horsemen. No sooner did I begin to interfere than the robber smote me over the head with the flat of his sword and I was felled to earth. While writhing there in my pain he shouted down at me, fairly choked with fury: "I will teach you to interfere with the majesty of the law! Our fighting dogs must be fed."

I then rose and rushed frantically about on the wet and slippery ground, trying to find those noble Christian statesmen who had started the fight, and see if I couldn't induce them to call off their dogs. But I couldn't discover one of them on that blood-soaked field. Finally above the roar and snarl of the fight I

heard in thundering tones those never-ceasing words, "Sick 'em, sick 'em!" I lifted up my eyes and on the highest ridge of a far-distant hill I descried a few men. I hastened thither and found on that pinnacle, far out of range of rifle and cannon shot, the very men I was seeking, and each had an enormous megaphone, and into these they were bawling with red faces: "Sick 'em, sick 'em, sick 'em!"

So up on the mountain top, safe and secure, renowned statesmen were bellowing, "Sick 'em, sick 'em!" while down in the valley sons and fathers and brothers were killing each other; and tethered behind these were defenseless women and children, while bullets were boring through their hearts and red blood flowing out.

"Sick 'em! Sick 'em!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY.

As I ponder the glories of war, I often have a vision of an undiscovered country, a realm of gloom in a corner of space so remote that God has forgotten it. And no eye in all heaven is keen enough of sight to discern it.

Its oceans are the blood of those wounded and slain in war since time began. Its rivers are the tears shed since time began because of the miseries of war. On its rivers of tears and oceans of blood float all the naval craft used in war since time began. There are mountains in that realm of woe—mountains made out of the heaped-up instruments of death used in war, mountains of the piled-up property destroyed in war, mountains of the money wasted in preparing for war and in carrying it on.

There are clouds in that land, clouds that never leave nor pass away. All the smoke of burning homes and burning cities set on fire by War's red hand, all this smoke has found its way thither, and there it remains forever, unchanged and undiminished.

No sun ever shines there, no moon and no stars. The only light which gleams in that murky gloom is the red light of war. The flash of every gun has found its way thither; the flame of every cannon has found its way thither; the blaze of every dwelling and the conflagration of every city have found their way thither; and there all these remain forever, unchanged and undiminished.

Every sound of every battlefield since time began has found its way thither, and there these sounds go on forever, unchanged and undiminished. All the shouting, all the clash of ancient armor, all the roar of cannon, all the shrieks of the wounded, all the groanings of dying men and dying horses, all the cursing and swearing, all these sounds have found their way thither, and there they go on forever, unchanged and undiminished. So also have all the sounds of grief and lamentations of all the homes made wretched by war in all time found their way thither, and there they go on forever, unchanged and undiminished.

And who are the inhabitants of this undiscovered country, this realm of gloom in a corner of space so remote that God has forgotten it? The inhabitants of that land are all those who have been guilty in any way of the crime of bringing on war, and all those guilty of any of the crimes that attend the carrying on of war—all these are there, and none others; and there all these will remain forever.

The robber of the wounded and the slain the night after the battle is there. He is condemned to crawl over the rotting bodies of the dead forever, dragging his plunder behind him by a rope about his neck.

All dishonest contractors who have furnished armies with supplies of any kind since time began are there: and there they will remain forever. They are seated at a table in the banqueting hall of that realm of shadows. All the plate on that groaning table is solid gold. The table is piled high with costliest viands. But adown the middle of that table, from end to end, is a continuous row of corpses, feet to head—corpses of those who in war died the victims of dishonest con-

tracts; and the open, glassy, unseeing eyes of the dead are staring into the eyes of the would-be feasters. These latter have a look of frozen horror on their faces; they try to fly from that banqueting hall, but they do not do so—they cannot. They are chained there, and there they remain forever.

All kings, emperors, rulers, statesmen, politicians who have unjustly brought on war are there; and there they remain forever.

These men have delighted in military parades and reviews when on earth. They have them there, four a week. Every Sunday they stand in line—stand, not sit, not ride. They stand in line, and there pass before them all the women made widows by war since time began, all the orphans made fatherless by war, all the maidens made maidens forever by war. All these pass by that reviewing host and taunt them as they will, and then they pass thence. On the following Sunday the same review is held and so on forever.

On Monday that same line of reviewers must take their weary positions again, and there pass before them all those wounded and mutilated and diseased by war since time began; and these taunt them as they will, and then return whence they came, to heaven or hell as the case may be, and there remain till the next Monday; and so on forever.

On Tuesday that reviewing host must be in line again, and there passes before them the procession of all those who have gone to hell from battlefields since time began; and these taunt them as they will, and then go back to their abiding place till the following Tuesday; and so on forever.

On Wednesday that reviewing host is once more in

line, and there passes before them the procession of all those killed in war since time began; and these taunt them as they will. And beside each dead man in this endless procession there stalks the ghost of his unlived years—the ghost of his untasted pleasures, the ghost of his unachieved successes, of his unrealized hopes, of his unrendered services to man and his Maker. And if it be a dead boy that passes by those reviewers, there stalks by his side other ghosts—the ghost of his unbuilt home, the ghost of his unwedded bride, and of his unborn children. And these dead men and their ghosts taunt those reviewers as they will; and then the dead pass back to their abiding places, to heaven or hell as the case may be, till the following Wednesday; and so on forever. . . . Yes, the dead pass—but the ghosts remain behind in that realm of doom, remain behind to keep the reviewers perpetual company.

On Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, those reviewers have another task to perform; they must crawl over the world's battlefields which have all found their way thither, and take the census of the slain. And the last three days of the following week they have to perform their labor all over again; and so on forever.

There is no sleep in that undiscovered country, in that realm of gloom in a corner of space so remote that God has forgotten it. The homeless and wandering ghosts of the unlived years of the slain are chanting a dirge day and night, a dirge of such unrelieved pathos that frightened, sad-eyed sleep has fled those shades forever.

Yes, it is a strange land—a strange, strange land.

THE END.