Select Poetry.

Epithalamium.

I saw two clouds at morning,
Tinged with the rising sun:
And in the dawn they floated on,
And mingled into one:
I thought that morning-cloud was blest,
It moved so sweetly to the West.

I saw two summer currents
Flow smoothly to their meeting,
And join their course, with silent force,
In peace each other greeting;
Calm was their course thro' banks of green,
While dimpling eddies play'd between.

Such be your gentle motion,
Till life's last pulse shall beat!
Like summer's beam and summer's storm,
Float on, in joy, to meet
A calmer sea, where storms shall cease—
A purer sky, where all is peace!

Miscellaneous.

"DRIFT."

Washed ashore!

There was a crowd on the beach that morning. A sullen sun struggled through the grey clouds, and looked down upon the scene—a frail spar or two floated out to sea—a dismantled hulk tossed in the distance on the still heaving billows, the debris of a wreck.

On the beach the wan sunlight fell upon a ghastly spectacle. From the sand and seaweed where they lay, dead faces looked up, cold and white—eyes whose light of life had gone out last night when the fierce tongues of flame had lit up the strife and torment of sea and air—eyes whose last of earth had been that dissolved view of flame and wreck, and boiling waters.

'Here, Steve, lend a hand.'

'Och, it's dead she is entirely. Look till this boy, an' there's breath—life in him. Where's the whisky? Sure an' it'll call back the life if it's within hear in.'

'Here's Charlie. Make way for Doctor Charlie.' some of the men called out, with that fondness in the tone which denoted a general favorite.

A young man with a grave and eger face drew near. The east wind raised brown curly locks from off a brow white and smooth as a child's. The eyes, brown and fearless seemed to look far into the depths of being, to scan motives, to read the strange hieroglypics of the human heart. None of those rough men would have lied to Doctor Charlie; but they would never owned that it was because they feared him, but because they lovod him.

He stopped by the body of a young woman.

'Och, an' she'll niver draw breath again,' one said.

But Dr. Charlie was not so sure He held a hand, white and cold as marble, for a moment in his own; he looked at the riged face, where the yellow hair, glittering like sunshine in the dun, chill day, was washed back, and fell in tangled masses, in which the seaweed clung.

A fair face, full of some pathetic history, that seemed written in every line—a white, calm face, which seemed never to have found peace before. Would it be a mercy to break that awful calm with the jar of earth again?

Dr. Charlie did not pause; he ordered restoratives; he prescribed various remedies; he put the men to various tasks in the way of rubbing with spirits. But this woman, the only woman saved, for he had detected a faint sign of life—what should be done with her?

'She must be taken to the nearest house, that is all; and they must take her in,' decided Dr. Charlie.

The nearest house was a neat, little, white box, with a bit of a garden in front, and tiny walks, bordered with whitewashed oyster-shells. All was prim and precise as the mistress, who stood shading her eyes with a thin hand as the men bore the ghastly burden to the gate.

Dr. Charlie opened it without pause.

'I counted on your humanity, Miss Hepsy,' he said. 'If this poor girl's life's to be saved, there's no time to be lost.'

Miss Hepsy looked at the white, fixed face, the closed eyes, with the dim, purple shadows beneath, the marble hands folded on the breast, as if death had fixed them there in the act of eternal prayer.

'Poor 'cre'tur'!' she said; 'she's seen heaps o' trouble, I'll be bound; but she looks as if it was all over now. Come in, come in. I suppose, as it's a matter of life and death, I can't ask you to wipe yer feet on the mat. Lor' bless me! sich a passle of dirty boots never walked into my house in my life. Orful dirty men folks are, to be sure?'

But Miss Hepsy, though she longed intensely to wash out the mud tracks at once, controlled her desires and made herself useful. With a sigh of relief, she saw the men go out, leaving Dr. Charlie and herself with the still insensible girl. They chafed her hand, and forced brandy between her lips.

'Why, bless us, she's married?' cried Miss Hepsy, holding up the right hand, where a thin thread of a gold ring glittered. 'The poor young thing! One heart will be sore after her.'

'Oh, we'll save her,' said Dr. Earnshawe. 'There is more flexibility now, and a feable pulse.'

Even as he spoke, he had a strange sensation about this girl—as if he were somehow controlling her fate, and bringing her back to a world of sorrow. If those white lips could speak, might they not say, 'Let me go—let me glid out of all the ills of life into the great peace of death!' Perhaps the untraled glooms and avenues of death might be sweeter to this weary soul than any path of life, and yet he was forcing her back into earth's thorny ways. It seemed but a vague speculation, Yet this woman appealed to his inmost sympathies as one who had come through great tribulation.

A warmer tinge began to hover over the white face. He saw a faint tremble in the golden curve of the eyelids—a pale rose-tint touched the lips.

Miss Hepsy had wound up the damp yellow hair into a great coil that seemed like a glittering crown. What a rare and lovely face it was, with the beauty of a lily in the sun!

'I declare if she don't look like one of them 'ere sculped saints,' said Miss Hepsy, admiringly. She's too pooty to be thrown about on beaches like an old chip.'

Miss Hepsy talked as if the storm and waves should have had respect for looks in their wild frolics, an idea which made Dr. Earnshawe smile.

'We'll have her all right in no time,' he said, 'and as pretty as ever, in spite of the liberties of the waves, with your good nursing, Miss Hepsy; and he bowed.

'I do hate mortally to be messing over sick vittles, to be sure.' said Miss Hepsy; 'but,——

'A work of mercy,' suggested Dr. Charlie; 'and for the expense I'll be responsible.'

So the maiden lady's mind was set at rest, and she went down stairs at once to concoct something stimulating and nourshing for the invalide.

Dr. Earnshwe remained alone, watching the strange mysterious process of returning animation.

Where had the life gone that was now by slow and subtle changes coming back to this beautiful casket? Where had it found an abiding place—to what far realms of earth or air?

A stir—a convulsive thrill—a broken exclamation disturbed his thoughts. With strange spasmodic strength the girl raised her head, and reached out her hands. The blue eyes, dark with pain and dilated with terror, fixed themselves on Dr. Charlie's face.

'Where—where is it?' she cried.

Dr. Earnshawe touched her brow with the caressing touch we give to a child we love.

'My poor girl,' he asked, 'what is it?'

She looked at him with a strange terror, and a strong shudder convulsed her frame. Some half-uttered word died on the lips, which faded once more to their ashen hue. The faint rose-tint flitted away from cheek and lip again, and she fell back on the bed in a dead swoon.

'Ah, all my work to do over again,' said Dr. Charlie, with a sigh, as he plied her patiently with more restoratives. 'I think I was right about the poor girl. Life has not been all sunshine and roses to her. No wonder she is not in a hurry to come back to it.'

But she did come back to it in time. She took up the burden, whatever it was, at last. Not in the old way, but quietly, and with a deep sigh, she opened her eyes. She did not say one word.

'Now I will leave her to you, Miss Hepsy,' Dr. Earnshawe said. 'With feeding up she'll get on. Don't let her talk much yet awhile.'

'Lor' bless ye, doctor!' said Miss Hepsy, bustling about with her bowl of gruel, 'why should I pant her to talk? I hain't the least curiosity in the world It would be all one to me if she was deaf and dumb, fur as pryin' an' findin' out was concerned; not as I'd wish her afflicted, poor thing! Now, some folks would.'

'I know; it's all right,' said the doctor. 'I'll call in the morning. I must see to the others.'

The girls eyes followed him wistfully as he passed out of the room. Some unspoken question seemed to hover on her lips.

'Speak out, if you feel it would ease your mind,' Miss Hepsy said, aching to know all about her strange guest.

'Thank you. I will sleep if you please,' and the wistful eyes closed wearily. But Miss Hepsy saw a sligh shudder, and heard the word 'others' repeated.

'I reckon she's in a bad way about some body on that 'ere boat.' Miss Hepsy decided; 'but if she won't speak out free, I can't help her. Should think she would nigh about bust up with the thinking she keeps up, without opening them lips.'

For the patient literally obeyed the doctor's orders, and kept quiet all day, swallowing all that was offered with a low 'Thank you,' and then turning wearily to the wall, as if she never cared to look at anything in the world again. But life and color and strength came back as if she had prayed for them all, instead of lying there in such stony indifference.

'Oh, yes; she is well enough,' Miss Hepsy replied to the doctor's inquiry at the door in the morning; 'and I reckon you won't find her the wuss for talkin'. Why, she hasn't propounded a single question to me, but takes it all as nateral—bein' here as if I'd raised her. Now that ain't in natur—not as I take it.'

'Well she's very weak,' Dr. Charlie began.

'Oh fiddlesticks,' Miss Hepsy said, with and indignant sniff; 'if I should wake up in heaven some mornin', do you think I'd make no remarks, but make out I'd been an angel all my life? It's my opinion.'

'Don't form a hasty opinion, my dear madam. We'll know in time,' interrupted Dr. Earnshawe; 'and, of course as she's an inmate of your house, I shall feel bound to tell you what I find out.'

This was said in a low and confidential tone, that mollified the lady considerably. The smile that illuminated her thin face was like a ray of bleak wintry sunshine, and she went up before the doctor with some alacrity.

'My dear,' she said, throwing open the door, 'I don't know whether you'll recognize him ag'in, but here's the gentleman who saved poor life, by the blessin' of God.'

The young girl raised a pair of sad eyes to Dr. Charlie's face, and seeming to find it pleasent to look at him, did turn away. A faint color came to her cheek as he took her hand.

'What! sitting up already,' he said cheerily. 'This speedy recovery is a great compliment to my skill.'

She appeared weak enough, though, bolstered up in an old crimson-stuffed chair, her delicate face looking like a clear-cut white cameo against it. Miss Hepsy had done best with blue, merino dress, but it looked old and worn, with carefully darned places here and there.

'I must get well. I have no time to be sick.'

'No time! Ah, we all take time for that; and last night you were very near death. It takes time to come back from that.'

'I wish to God I had died!' exclaimed the girl with a violence that made Dr. E., start and drop her hand. He was glad Miss Hepsy had gone out of the room.

But by a great effort the girl calmed herself. She looked like a girl in spite of the glittering thread of gold on her finger, which proclaimed her a married woman.

'Excuse me, Dr.; you have been very kind to me—you ment it for kindness; but never mind, tell me about the others?'

'You had better not talk of those terrible scenes yet,' Dr. Charlie said calmly; the mere memory of such a shock is enough to unsettle you.'

'You must tell me—I shall not get well if you don't,' she said nervously, and Dr. Charlie thought she was anxious about her husband,

'Was any one dear to you on board?' he asked.

A strange look flitted across the beautiful face.

'My husband was there.'

Ah! here was a new task for the poor doctor. How could he break the terrible news to this poor young wife? He knew that not one of your four men saved could be her husband; he had seen them all that morning, and he knew all about them.

'What was his name?'

'Never mind; don't ask me yet; but tell me how soon I shall be able to move. I have no money. I can never pay this good woman for her care. I cannot afford to rest. How soon can I go?'

Doctor Charlie felt such an infinite pity overcome him as he looked at the frail creature lying in the chair that he could hardly speak.

'You must not talk of moving,' he said; 'it would be death. When you are able — I — you saw, I suppose'—— with extreme hesitation.

'Oh, yes; but I must get away from here,' the young girl said in a nerveus way, clasping her thin white hand together with a sort of repression of inward pain which the gentleman felt with a thrill of sympathy.

'Promise me to be content one week, and we will see,' said Dr. Charlie, and he hoped much from that week.

At the end of it. Dr. Charlie came in with his usual sheery laugh.

'Well, Miss Hepsy,' he cried out, 'all my patients from the wreck are off my hands but this one. I saw the last fellow off with his mother just now. Oh, how she hung around his neck and thanked me!'

'Did they all go off with friends?' said a low voice from the window, and the doctor thought it must be as a death knell to her hopes when he said:

'Yes'

Miss Hepsy bustled down to get tea and the doctor sat silently waiting to think of some word of comfort, but the woman broke the silence:

'I know what you are thinking about, she said; but you are mistaken. I am glad.—glad!'

Then the doctor was too much surprised to speak.

'Perhaps you have never heard, in this favored country, of husbands who are brutes,' she went on, rapidly—'mancowards, who vent every malignant feeling, every disappointment on the poor woman whom the law has given them. Talk of slavery as the English do—there are no worse slaves than most of the wives of their working men, I know—I have endured it for two years. Ah, it is over—I am free!'

'But,' said Dr. Charlie, still hesitating, 'excuse me—you do not speak like the wife of a working man—your language?—'

'I will tell you all. You have been kind to me,' said the poor creature, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes glittering with excitement. 'I shall feel better to talk to some one. I have had some education, but I've always been miserably poor. The first I can recollect is living in one of those tenement houses in London—in a stuffy, close room, where we cooked and slept. My mother sewed half the night; but she taught me. She had seen better days, but had run away to marry a dissipated and improvident man. She was a widow, and her friends had cast her off. I remember one dreadful November day, when a kind of sleety rain was falling. We had no fire, and the sharp wind crept through every crack and pinched us with the cold. I think my mother must have been in a disparing mood for days, but it had made no great impression on my childish mind. I stood at the window drearily looking out at the puddles of slush and water that made dirty dimples in them now and then. Oh, how it all comes back to me to-day! My mother came toward me.

'Here, Nell,' she said, 'put this shawl about you, for you look nigh clemmed with cold.'

'And what will you do, mother?' I asked, for she was taking the shawl from about her own shoulders.

'Oh, I'm warm enough,' she answered. 'I feel as it I had fire in my veins; besides, I'm going to drink this, and I'll never feel cold again.'

'She was dropping some dark stuff out of a vial when she said this, and I cried out:

'Give me some, too, mother, of the wonderful stuff.'

'But she smiled—oh, such a bitter smile! I felt, child as I was, that something was wrong, and I watched her, half afraid, as she sat silent for a time with her head on her hand. Then I heard her say:

'Poor little Nell! Poor little Nell!'

'She often said such pitying words, but something in the tone then seemed to stir my heart. I ran over to her and leaned my head on her knee. She looked sick and white.

'You've got an aunt, child,' she muttered.

'Well, I don't care,' I answered; 'I don't want her.'

'But you will want her, dear, and—I think—she'll forgive you then—when I'm gone—people can't be angry with the dead—I believe—and she's very comfortable—you'll be better off.'

'Then I noticed the change in my mother's face—the strange, convulsed new face that seemed to have taken the place of the old familiar one, and my childish screams of grief and terror brought in a crowd. But I make my story too long. She was dead!—dead by her own hand! The dark drops were laudanum. Don't think she was a sinner,' cried the poor girl, fiercely, turning on the doctor—"don't judge her.'

'I will not, I assure you. God forbid,' said Dr. Charlie. 'Do not go on.'——

'I will make the rest short,' she said. 'I went to my aunt's—a grim, iron-grey old maid. She had once been on the eve of being married, and had even her wedding dress made, when the gentleman found his courage fail, and left for parts unknown. Her fierceness against the other sex amounted almost to insanity. 'No followers, girl,' she said, sternly, when I first went to her. I was only twelve, and didn't understand what she ment, but as I grew older she made the matter plain in many a tirade and lecture. I had a miserable life of it, but even so I should not have left it, for'——here the voice stopped for a moment—'Oh, let me get over it,' she went on impatiently; I had to work hard enough, but I had enough to eat, and I ought to have been happy—(with some scorn in the tones). 'One day I happened to be caught in the rain. A young man who—well, who had expressed some admiration for me, over took me and held an umbrella over me. to my aunt's door. I had never spec:

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