

THE CRUCIFIXION.

Anon the earth was shaken by the tempest's vlewless form—
The winds obeyed the mandate of the sternly solemn storm—
Thick clouds in anger gathered on the far horizon's verge,
And the elemental roar was our Savior's funeral dirge.

All things were wrapped in darkness—in the darkness of the tomb;
The earth was clothed in sackcloth, and the skies were veiled in gloom,
Save when the vivid lightning fiercely clove the vault of heaven,
And the dread and sombre pall by its blazing arm was riven.

Old ocean's billows wildly dashed against the rock bound shore,
Blending deep, sepulchral voices with the tempest's awful roar—
Whilst startling thunders madly crashed, with an appalling sound,
And hurled their frightful echoes the trembling earth around.

The graves gave up their tenantry to living men unknown,
The temple's veil was rent in twain, and cleft the hardest stone;
The outraged earth in horror shook, with dread convulsive throes,
And mourned the Savior's dreadful doom amid relentless foes.

Whilst earth in terror was convulsed, and heaven wrapped in gloom,
The Savior drank the bitter cup, passed through the fearful doom—
Cried, "It is finished!" meekly bowed to the avenging rod,
And, suffering death, he conquered Death, and rose our Savior God!

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ORIGIN AND DESTINY.

Among those who aspired to the hand of Laura Woodville, was a young man named Percival, whose father, a poor day-laborer, had, by self-denial through many years, succeeded in giving him an education beyond what was usually acquired at that time by those in the lower walks of life. When sixteen years of age, an attorney of some eminence who perceived in the lad more than ordinary ability, took him into his office, and raised him to the profession of the law.

At the time of which we write, Percival, who was twenty-five years old, had already gained some reputation at the bar, having conducted to a successful issue several very important cases.

Mr. Woodville, to the hand of whose daughter, as has just been said, Percival aspired, was a merchant in rather reduced circumstances, but connected with certain families more distinguished for aristocratic pride than virtue. This connection was the more value in consequence of the loss of wealth through disasters in trade, and the inability to keep up those external appearances which dazzle the multitude and extort a homage that is grateful to weak minds.

Laura, a beautiful and highly accomplished girl, was a favorite in all circles, and there were many among the wealthy and fashionable, who, for personal attractions alone, were ready to approach and offer the homage of sincere affection. Among these was a young man named Allison; whose family had, in the eyes of Mr. Woodville, everything to render a marriage connexion desirable.

But Laura never encouraged his advances in the least; for she felt for him a strong internal repulsion. He was wealthy, accomplished, attractive in person, and connected, both on his father's and mother's side, with some of the oldest, and so called 'best families, in the state.' These, however, were not, in her eyes, attractions sufficiently strong to induce her to overlook qualities of the heart.

Already in her contact with the world had she been made to feel its hollowness and selfish cruelty. For something more than mere fashionable blandishments had her heart begun to yearn. She felt that a true and virtuous friend was a treasure beyond all price.

While this state of mind was in progress, Laura met Henry Percival. A mutual regard was soon developed, which increased until it became a deep and sincere affection. In the meantime Allison, confident from his position, became bolder in his advances, and as a preliminary step, gave Woodville an intimation of his views. The old merchant heard him gladly and yielded a full prosecution of his suit.

But perceiving what was in the mind of the young man, Laura shrunk from him, and met all his advances with a chilling reserve that was not for an instant to be misunderstood. In the meantime, Percival daily gained new favor in her eyes, and was at length emboldened to declare what was in his heart. With ill-concealed pleasure Laura referred the young man to her father. As to the issue of the reference, she had well grounded fears.

The day that followed this declaration was one of anxious suspense to Laura. She was alone, late in the afternoon, when her father came into the room where she was sitting. She saw instantly what was in his mind; there was a cloud on his face, and she knew that he had repulsed her lover.

'Laura,' said he gravely, as he sat down by her side, 'I was exceedingly surprised and pained to-day to receive from a young upstart attorney, of whose family no one has ever heard, an offer for your hand, made, as was affirmed, with your consent. Surely this affirmation was not true?'

A deep crimson flushed the face of Laura, her eyes fell to the floor, and she exhibited signs of strong agitation.

'You may not be aware,' continued Mr. Woodville, 'that Mr. Allison has been to me with a similar application.'

'Mr. Allison?'

The eyes of Laura were raised quickly from the floor, and her manner exhibited the repugnance she felt.

'I can never look upon Mr. Allison as more than a friend,' she said calmly.

'Laura has it indeed come to this?' said Mr. Woodville, really disturbed. 'Will you disgrace yourself and family by a union with a vulgar upstart from the lower ranks, when an alliance so distinguished as this is offered? Who is Percival? Where is he from? What is his origin?'

'I regard rather his destiny than his origin,' replied the daughter, 'for that concerns me far more dearly than the other. I shall have to tread the way my husband goes, and not the way he has come. The past is past. In the future lies my happiness or misery.'

'Are you beside yourself?' exclaimed he, rather losing his self-command before the rational calmness of his child.

'No, father,' replied Laura, 'not beside myself. In the principles that govern Mr. Allison, I have no confidence, and it is a man's principle that determines the path he is to tread in life. On the other hand I have the fullest confidence in these of Mr. Percival, and know where they will lead him. This is a matter in which I cannot look back to see from whence the person has come; everything depends on a knowledge as to where he is going.'

'Do you know,' said Mr. Woodville, not giving the words of his child the smallest consideration, 'that the father of this fellow, Percival, was a day-laborer, in one of Mr. Allison's manufacturing establishments! A mere day-laborer!'

'I have heard as such. Was he not an honest and honorable man?'

'Madness, girl!' ejaculated Mr. Woodville at this question, still further losing his self-control. 'Do you think that I am going to see my child, who has the blood of the P——'s and B——'s and W——'s in her veins, mingle it with the vile blood of a common laborer? You have been much in error, if for a moment you have indulged in the idle dream, — I positively forbid all intercourse with this Percival. Do not disobey me, or the consequence to yourself will be of the saddest kind.'

As her father ceased speaking, Laura rose weeping and left the room.

A deep calm succeeded to this sudden storm that had fallen from a summer sky. But it was indicative of a heavy and more devastating storm. Laura communicated to Percival the fact of her painful interview with her father, and at the same time gave him to understand that no change in his views was to be expected, and that to seek to effect a change would only be to place himself in the way of repulse and insult. Both of these the young man had already received.

A few months later, and fully avowing her purpose, Laura left the house of her parents and became the wife of Percival. A step like this is never taken without suffering. Sometimes it is wisely, but oftener unwisely taken, but never without pain.

In this case the pain on both sides was severe. Mr. Woodville loved his daughter tenderly, and she felt for her father a more than common attachment. But he was a proud and selfish man. The marriage of Laura not only disappointed and mortified, but made him angry beyond all reason and self-control. In the bitterness of his feelings he vowed never to look upon her nor forgive her.

It was all in vain, therefore that his daughter sought a reconciliation, she met only a stern repulse.

Years went by, and it remained the same.— Many times during that long period did Laura approach her old home, but only to be repulsed. At last she was startled and afflicted with the sad news of her mother's death. In the sudden anguish of her feeling she hurried to her father's house. As she stood with others who had gathered around, gazing upon the lifeless form of her dead parent, she became aware that the living one had entered the room, and to all appearance, unconscious of her presence, was standing by her side. A tremor went through her frame. She felt faint and ready to drop to the floor. In this season of deep affliction might he not forgive the past.

Hope sprung up within her. In the presence of the dead he could not throw her off. She laid her hand gently on his. He turned. Her tearful eyes were lifted in his face. A moment of thrilling suspense! Pride and anger conquered again. Without a sign of recognition, he turned away and left the chamber of death.

Bracing herself up with an intense struggle, Laura pressed her lips to the cold brow of her mother, and then silently retired.

During the time that intervened from his marriage up to this period, Mr. Percival had been gradually rising in the confidence, respect and esteem of this community, and was acquiring wealth through means of a large practice at the bar. As a husband he had proved most kind and affectionate. As a man he was the very soul of honor. All who knew him held him in the highest regard.

After the death of his wife, Mr. Woodville fell into a gloomy state of mind. His business, which had been declining for years, was becoming less and less profitable, and to increase his trouble, he found himself progressing rapidly toward embarrassment if not bankruptcy. The man whom of all others he had wished to see the husband of his daughter, married a beautiful heiress, and was living in a style of great elegance. He met the brilliant bride occasionally and always with an unpleasant feeling.

One day, while walking with a gentleman, they passed Allison, when his companion said:—

'If that man does not break his wife's heart within five years, I shall think she has few of woman's best and honest feelings.'

'Why do you say that?' asked Mr. Woodville, evincing much surprise.

'In the first place,' replied the friend, 'a man

with bad principles is not the one to make a right-minded woman happy. And, in the second place, a man who regards neither virtue or decency in his conduct, is the one to make life wretched.'

'But is Allison such a man?'

'He is to my certain knowledge. I knew him when a boy. We were school-mates. He then gave me evidence of more than ordinary natural depravity; and from the training he has received, that depravity has been encouraged to grow. Since he became a man I have had many opportunities of observing him closely, and I speak deliberately when I say that I hold him in exceedingly low estimation. I am personally cognizant of acts that stamp him as possessing neither honor nor, as I said before, decency, and a very long time will not, probably, elapse, before he will betray all this to the world. Men like him indulge in evil passions and selfish desires, until they lose even common prudence.'

'You astonish me,' said Woodville, 'I cannot credit your words. He belongs to one of the best families.'

'So called, but judging by a true standard, I should say one of our worst families.'

'Why do you say that?' asked Mr. Woodville, evincing still more surprise.

'The virtues of an individual makes his standard of worth. The same is true of families.—Decayed wood, covered with shining gold, is not so valuable as sound and polished oak. Nor is a family raised by wealth, or any external gilding, into a high social position, if not possessed of virtue, half so worthy of confidence and esteem as one of less pretensions but endowed with honorable principles.'

The father of Mr. Allison, it is well known, was a gentleman only in the Chesterfieldian sense. A more hollow-hearted man never existed. And the son is like the father, only more depraved.'

Mr. Woodville was profoundly astonished.— All this he might have known from personal observation, had not his eyes been so dazzled with the external brilliancy of the person condemned, as to disqualify them for looking deeper, and perceived the real character of what was beneath the brilliant gilding. He was astonished though not entirely convinced. It did not seem possible that any one in the elevated position of Mr. Allison, could be so base as was affirmed.

A few months later and Mr. Woodville was surprised at the announcement that the wife of Mr. Allison had separated herself from him, and returned to her father's home. Various causes were assigned for this act, the most prominent of which was infidelity. Soon after an application for divorce was laid before the Legislature, with such proofs of ill-treatment and shocking depravity of conduct, as procured an instant release from the marriage contract.

By this time, the proud, angry father, was beginning to see that he had probably committed an error. An emotion of thankfulness that his child was not the wife of Allison arose spontaneously in his breast, but he did not permit it to come into his deliberate thoughts, nor take the form of an uttered sentiment. Steadily the change in his outward circumstances progressed.

He was growing old, and losing the ability to do business on an equality with the younger and more eager merchants around him, who were gradually drawing off his oldest and best customers. Disappointed, lonely, anxious, and depressed in spirits, the conviction that he had committed a great mistake was daily forcing itself more and more upon the mind of Mr. Woodville.

When evening came, and he returned to his silent, his almost deserted dwelling, his loneliness would deepen into sadness, and then like an unbidden but not entirely unwelcome guest, the image of Laura would come before his imagination, and her low and tender voice would sound in his ears. But pride and resentment was still in his heart, and after gazing on the pensive, loving child for a time he would seek to expel the vision.

She had degraded herself in marriage. Who or what was her husband? A low, vulgar fellow, raised a little above the common herd! Such and only such did he esteem him; and whenever he thought of him, his resentment toward Laura came back in full force.

Thus it went on, until twelve years from the time of Laura's marriage had passed away, and in that long period the father had seen her face but once, and then it was in the presence of the dead. Frequently, in the first year of that time had she sought reconciliation; but repulsed on each occasion, she had ceased to make approaches.

As to her husband, so entirely did Mr. Woodville reject him that he cast out of his mind his very likeness, and not meeting him, ceased actually to remember his features, so that if he had encountered him in the street he would not have known him. He could, and had said, therefore, when asked about Percival, that he 'didn't know him.' Of his rising reputation and social standing he knew but little; for his very name being an offence, he rejected it on the first utterance, and pushed aside rather than looked at any information regarding him.

At last the external affairs of Mr. Woodville became desperate. His business actually died out, so that the expense of conducting it being more than the proceeds, he closed up his mercantile history, and retired on a meagre property scarcely sufficient to meet his wants.

But scarcely had this change taken place, when a claim on the only piece of real estate, which he held, was made on the allegation of a defective title. On consulting a lawyer he was alarmed to find that the claim had plausible basis, and that the chances were against him. When the case was brought up Mr. Woodville appeared in court, and with trembling anxiety watched the progress of the trial.

The claim was apparently a fair one, and yet not really just. On the side of the prosecution, was a subtle, ingenious, and eloquent lawyer in whose hands his counsel was little more than a

child, and he saw with despair that all chances were against him. The loss of this remnant of property would leave him utterly destitute.

After a vigorous argument on the one side, and a feeble rejoinder on the other, the case was about being submitted when a new advocate appeared on the side of the defense. He was unknown to Mr. Woodville. On rising in court there was a profound silence.

He began by saying that he had something to say in the case ere it closed, and as he had studied it carefully and weighed with due deliberation all the evidence which had appeared, he was satisfied that he could show why the prosecution should not obtain a favorable decision.

In surprise Mr. Woodville bent forward to listen. The lawyer was tall in person; dignified in manner, and spoke with a peculiar musical intonation and eloquent flow of language that marked him as possessing, both talents and education of a high order.

In a few minutes he was perfectly absorbed in his argument. It was clear and strong in every part, and tore into very tatters the subtle chain of reasoning presented by the opposing counsel. For an hour he occupied the attention of the court. On closing his speech he immediately retired. The decision was in Mr. Woodville's favor.

'Who is that?' he asked, turning to a gentleman who sat beside him, as the strange advocate left the floor.

The man looked at him. 'Not know him?'—said he.

Mr. Woodville shook his head.

'His name is Percival.'

Mr. Woodville turned his face partly away to conceal the sudden flush that went over it.

After the decision in his favor had been given, and he had returned home wondering at what had just occurred, he sat musing alone, when there came a light tapping as if from the hand of a child at the door. Opening it, he found a boy the not over five or six years of age, with golden hair falling over his shoulders, and bright blue eyes raised to his own.

'Grandpa,' said the child, looking earnestly into his face.

For a moment the old man stood and trembled. Then stooping down, he took the child in his arms, and hugged it with a sudden emotion to his heart, while the long sealed fountain of his feelings gushed forth again, and tears came from the lids that were tightly shut to repress them.

'Father!' The eyes were quickly unclosed, there was now another present.

'My child!' came trembling from his lips, and Laura flung herself upon his bosom.

How changed to the eyes of Mr. Woodville was all, after this. When he met Mr. Percival he was even more surprised than in the courtroom at his manly dignity of character, his refinement and enlarged intelligence. And when he went abroad, and perceived what he never before allowed himself to see the high estimation in which he was held by all the community he was still further affected with wonder.

In less than a year after this reconciliation, Mr. Percival was chosen to a high office in the state; and within that time Mr. Allison was detected in a criminal conspiracy to defraud, and left the commonwealth to escape punishment.

So much for origin and destiny. Laura was right; it concerns a maiden far more to know whither her lover is going than whence he came; for she has a journey with him in the former and not the latter way.

Groping Nine Miles Under Ground.

In the month of September the writer, accompanied by a young friend, gratified a long cherished desire by a visit to the celebrated Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, ninety miles south from Louisville. This wonderful cave, it will be recollected, has been traversed for sixteen miles without reaching the end. Some of its apartments are eight acres in extent and one hundred feet high.

A stage-coach journey of eighteen hours brought us to Bell's hotel, a comfortable roadside inn, where the coach deposits passengers for the cave. Mr. Bell, the host, is well known on the road, and is famed for not having seen the Mammoth Cave, although a thirty years' resident within seven miles of it. A gentleman and his wife from Lexington, Kentucky, were our sole and agreeable companions to the cave. After two hours' jolting in a buggy over a most uncomfortable road, through beautiful, rolling, oak-clad "barrens," we were housed in a good hotel, erected for the accommodation of the cave visitors.

Having fortified ourselves with a good dinner as well as coarse woolen jackets and caps, we set out for our first day's excursion under ground. Mat, our negro slave guide, with nothing slavish in learning, dress or language, provided a lamp for each of us, and led us down a steep path into a deep dark ravine. At the bottom appears the Mammoth's Mouth, a wide orifice of very forbidding aspect, to which we descended by rude steps constructed of the loose rocks and earth. On entering, we were met by a flight of bats, numbers of which inhabit the outer parts of the cave.

The part immediately within the entrance is comparatively contracted, although about the size of a railway tunnel, and is known by the name of the Narrows. This expands into a more spacious section called the first Saltpetre Vats. Here was an extensive manufactory of saltpetre for gunpowder during the war of 1812-15. It was obtained by lixiviating or leaching the fine alluvial earth with which the floor of the cave is deeply covered. The wagon tracks and foot prints of oxen employed in the work are still distinctly visible. Lines of wooden pipes, by which the ley was conveyed to the evaporating pans, numerous wooden vats and other erections, show the great extent of the work carried on in this pandemonium—truly a fit place for the preparation of the death-dealing material. The roof of