

The Student's Scrap-book,

FAITH AND DESPAIR.

R. L. MARSH, '84.

A sultry summer's day had just been passed;
 The tireless sun had hid his flaming face;
 No moon came out to cheer the dismal earth;
 The stars were veiled in thick'ning, threat'ning clouds,
 And gloomy darkness hid all things from sight,
 Save when the lightnings, growing frequent, gleamed
 Their signal of the far-off thunder's roll.
 As passed the hours away the gloom increased,
 Which soon gave way to terror, as the bright
 And hateful lightning flashes cleft the clouds,
 And fearful thunders muttered, rolled and roared
 In their loud, defiant, angry, scorn of all
 The weak protests of men, until they shook
 The very heavens with their din. Through all
 A quiet little village lay and slumbered—
 All save three restless souls whom the fitful gleams
 Revealed to sight. Beneath a towering tree
 A wretched woman sat; against its trunk
 There leaned a fairer, younger form. The one,
 As with her hands upon her knees, her face
 In them she hid, now moaned, now sobbed, and now
 Wept bitterly; a brutal voice said "Come!"
 And on her head a rough hand heavy fell.
 She trembled at the touch, then sudden rose
 And shrieked, and with a voice as harsh and hoarse
 As from an iron throat, she cursed the man
 Who spoke—"Ay, come, and where! oh man so vile
 That nothing can pollute thee! Monster born!
 Thou sin-dyed wretch! They say there is a God;
 But if there be, why dost thou then yet live
 In form of human flesh and blood! O that
 Almighty power were mine! I'd hurl thee down
 To deepest depths of liquid fire and set
 Upon thy soul ten times ten thousand fires,
 To stay with thee and torture thee and tell
 Thee of the human pains thou didst delight in!
 But if there be a God, His curse on thee!
 And may my hatred cling to thee, burn thee,
 Consume the vigor from thy blood, and from
 Thy frame the strength; until thy guilty soul
 Depart and, man nor God to pity thee,
 The birds and beasts shall take thee for their prey!"
 The villain smiled nor deemed reply worthwhile,
 But silent stretched again his brutal arm,
 When on it quickly fell a slender hand,
 And she, who ere in statue-stillness stood,
 Moved with new life, grew more erect, and from
 Her marble Grecian face two eyes of fire
 Shone on the stricken wretch who stood and quailed,
 And burned their way into his coward heart
 And with a dreadful calmness, free from fear,
 The girl voice spake—"Mother, there is a God,
 And in that God I trust." Then to the man—
 "I judge thee not, may mercy yet be thine;
 But here before the Judge of all the earth,
 I call thee to account—stir not from hence
 Till thou hast heard my words. Then know'st me not,
 Nor till this day have I my story known.
 Ten dreary years and eight have passed since thou
 That infant—fruit of union most unholy—
 Didst leave for dead and, fleeing, saw no more.
 She, fostered by a pauper mother, lives,
 Her own—my own wronged mother to protect.
 There is a God, though but for faith in Him
 This day had brought me rest in death; for who
 Would choose a life from parent so unworthy?
 But God is just: and her, myself and you
 I leave with Him. Beware what now you do!"
 The coward's gaze had fall'n, his arm dropped nerveless,
 Silent he stole away. The thought of God,
 The sense of justice and unpardoned sin
 Had conquered him. * * * What power through all those years,

Those wearisome, uncertain, trying years,
 Had kept that girlish life? And still sustained
 When the death blow to every fond, bright hope
 Came in the story of her parentage?
 And gave her now a quiet heart, as free
 From hatred as from fear, in presence of
 That parent all so vile and loathsome? Ay,
 And made the strong man weak before her? Sent
 Him forth from thence unnerved and vanquished? Ah,
 The heart that stays itself on God can dare
 And can endure all things. And who will doubt
 That He, unseen by whom no sparrow falls,
 Had kept and given strength unto that soul!
 Had heard her, early taught to pray, because
 She trusted Him? Oh, who would take away
 The Christian's faith? The same destroys the stay
 Of many burdened hearts, the sweetness of
 Ten thousand bitter lives. Go, snatch the babe
 Asunder from its mother's breast and comfort
 It and her; tear love from love's embrace,
 And set their hearts at rest; then canst thou take
 This faith in God, this simple trusting faith,
 From human lives and leave them happy still.

THE MENTAL STRENGTH OF WOMAN.

Philosophers and scientists have long discussed the question of the relative mental strength of man and woman. It is held that two facts alone proclaim woman's inferiority in mind; first, her brain, as a rule, weighs less than man's, second, she has produced no masterpiece in literature or art. It is true that Sappho, Mrs. Hemans and Mrs. Browning rival in their song many of our celebrated poets, but these "poetesses" were leaders of their order and kind and should therefore justly be compared to the master poets. When thus compared with Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton or Shakespeare, their inferiority is discovered and confessed. It is claimed that she shares not man's advantages, but it is just as certain that she is excused from bearing many of his burdens; again, if her mind equalled man's it would be idle to maintain that in all the world's history opportunity never would have permitted her to write a Hamlet or paint a Madonna, for circumstances often especially favor her and, if otherwise were the case, such genius declares itself in spite of circumstances. It is true that until very recently she has been denied the advantages of a college course, but neither have many of the world's greatest men shared them. I have somewhere read the wise mention that even if woman rivalled man in mind, her physical weakness would prevent her from passing through those prolonged seasons of profound and wearisome thought necessary for the success of great mental achievements; but whilst this is true we must not rashly conclude from it that therefore to her physical weakness alone should be attributed her failure to produce masterpieces in literature and art and that mentally she is man's equal; just to the contrary; since her physical weakness must assert rather than disprove mental inferiority; for though mind and body are often unequally yoked, it would be to doubt seriously the wisdom of providence to suppose a whole sex so unfortunately constituted as to have masculine minds joined to forms infinitely weaker. What again, would be the design of giving to a whole sex mental powers that their physical weaknesses prevented them from developing or employing? And if, indeed, this unequalled alliance of mind and body did exist in woman we should find ten women to one man driven to insanity or death through excessive mental work; whereas the opposite fact is quite true