There was a slight touch upon my arm, my wounded arm, as it chanced, that lay beneath the blanket, a touch that sent a pang like the piercing of a hot iron through it, and a sweet voice said:

"Can I do anything for you, my poor man? The surgeon will be here immediately, and I thought it best to waken you," it added, as I opened my eyes upon that neat, quiet little figure which I had long before seen.

The recognition was mutual.

"Captain Hale!"

"Mrs. Dumarcie!"

"I did not expect to see you here!" a mutual exclamation, and there was time for no more, for the surgeon, followed by his assistant with a hideous paraphernalia, had come.

Then followed an awful hour. I think I received a full idea of the meaning of the word torture during its passage. At last they left me, the ball extracted and the arm bandaged, but utterly exhausted by pain, long fasting and want of sleep.

I did not wake until the following morning and then to an intolerable pain and smarting in my arm. The bandage seemed like a ligature, and there was a burning, as of hot iron, from finger ends to shoulder. I was writhing with the torture, and feeling strangely weak and powerless when she came to me. Her voice roused me from my trance of agony.

"Can I do anything for you, Captain Hale?" she said, in those quiet, even tones that were a sedative in themselves.

"Yes, thank you. Send some one to loose my bandage—my arm is intolerable."

"I will do it myself. I know how perfectly;" and before I could utter an expostulation she had my arm tenderly in her little hands, and was deftly removing the bandage and loosing the folds. She hurt me very badly, but there was something soothing in her touch that made me bear it without much shrinking.

"Your arm is badly swollen, but I think that will be better," she said, at length, as she gently disposed the wounded limb above the blanket. "I will go to the office and procure a lotion for you."

And with the word she was gone. I had been greatly relieved, and could think of something besides my sufferings. And my thoughts went back as I followed the quaint little figure with my eyes to the time I had seen it last, and in such different surroundings.

It was five years before at a grand ball, at the house of one of the diplomatic corps, in Washington, that I saw Helen Dumarcie, a bride. As a child I had known her well, and had met her once or twice as she grew to womanhood, when she paid rare but welcome visits to my sisters. We renewed our acquaintance then, and she introduced me to her husband, a splendid-looking young officer—a South Carolinian of French-Huguenot descent. I was pleased with his grand, courtly manner, and Helen seemed equally proud of him. Her father's reverses had made her a governess in the South, and there she met Paul Dumarcie. I heard that the Dumarcies felt the marriage a misalliance, but I think Paul Dumarcie did not feel that he had condescended in marrying the pretty little creature who hung upon his arm.

She was splendid that night—in some rich dress from her trousseau—I am not a man milliner to describe it—with the soft gleam of pearls in her golden hair and a necklace, with a great emerald blazing amid the lucent pearls that surrounded it, upon her bosom. She was too little to bear much bravery of dress, and with all her splendor I thought I had seen her look better in the pretty muslins that suited our village gatherings afar in the old New England home.

I had scarcely heard from her since,

HELEN WOULD OFTEN TAKE MY THROBBING HAND IN HERS.

for my life had been one of roaming and excitement, afar from old associations. But what a change! I could even now scarcely realize it. Where was Dumarcie? Surely he had gone with the South in this war! And yet how came she here, a nurse in this Union hospital?

Still in the maze of thought, I saw her coming back with the surgeon by her side. The poor fellows on their cots raised themselves to look at her as she passed back, and fell back smiling if she but glanced at them kindly, or spoke a few words in that wonderfully calming voice.

The surgeon looked grave as he saw my arm. He gave his orders rapidly, and I could see a shade pass over Mrs. Dumarcie's face as she listened. She followed him just out of earshot, as he moved away, and spoke to him earnestly. His parting words only reached my ear.

"As he is a friend of yours, certainly. The room is empty, and, as the fever is coming on, he will, of course, be more comfortable where pure air can be obtained. Give your own orders, if you please, for I am too busy just now to attend to it."

"Do you think you could bear being moved upstairs?" Helen Dumarcie said, coming back to me. "There is an empty room I shall have prepared for you; but first you must have your breakfast. Do you feel hungry?"

She spoke in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, as if she had been all her life a nurse in a hospital, and then she went away and presently brought me a dainty mess of something that she said I must eat, because she had cooked it with her own hands. I had no appetite, but I tried to eat, because she bade me, and something of the weary sense of exhaustion left me when I had finished. About noon men came, and with Helen to superintend, lifted my cot and carried me away to the quiet, lone upper room that had been prepared for me.

When they had gone Helen bustled in, smilingly, and introduced to my notice a big, shiny-looking contraband, who gave my tired senses a first impression of mingled patent-leather boots and piano keys, who, she said, would stay with me all the time, and take care of me when she was obliged to be absent. Then she said something to him apart about "erysipelas" and "giving the medicine regularly."

I remember feeling an air of comfort

I WAS PLACED ON THE FATAL TABLE.

in the clean, bare room and a delicious sense of quiet, after the roar of battle and the sounds of pain and anguish that had been ringing in my ears ever since I was wounded. Then followed a blank, whether of sleep or delirium I know not, with occasional intervals of waking, always to intolerable pain and burning in my arm, in my whole side, with a ringing in my ears and a fevered restlessness entirely beyond my control. Through my dreams flitted Helen, now in the sheen of pearls and satin, now in plain hospital garb. Time passed in this strange, dream-like existence, that was peopled by many another sight, scenes borrowed from the fury of battle, the sudden terror of attack, quiet mountain bivouacs and picket stations under the stars, on drear plains that seemed stretched to mysterious, unending distances, in the shadowy light.

Helen would often come in, sit beside my cot and take my throbbing hand in hers. Sometimes she was accompanied by a sweet-faced Sister of Charity—one of those angels of mercy, whose presence in army hospitals is familiar to all wounded soldiers, and whose gentle ministrations have soothed the agony of many a dying hero.

I know that I was carefully tended, but all care could not prevent what followed. One morning I was lifted from my cot and placed upon the fatal table. When they placed me in my bed again the arm was gone, and with it the awful burning pain, and much of the danger that had threatened my life.

It was not long, then, before I emerged from the shadowy semi-delirium in which my days and nights in that quiet chamber had been passed. I began to recognize and identify Jem, the shiny contraband, as something tangible; to feel amused at his quaint ways, and odd, indistinct mode of speech; and to feel pleased when he answered my dim smile by a hearty guffaw and a fearful display of the piano keys And I began to make Helen's visits the events of my monotonous life; to watch for her at her accustomed hours, and to sink back, every nerve soothed and muscle relaxed, in the deeps of a measureless content when she came. I had lost my arm, my good right arm, a poor man's emblem of power to do and dare, and which was all that stood between me and the cold world's charities. And yet I was strangely happy.

Gradually, with strength, my thoughts came back to the interests of life. I had many brief talks with Helen, but they had been chiefly of our old home; she had never alluded to herself, nor told me why she was there. It had been enough, in my illness, to know that, however she came, she was there, and I getting well in her care—and Jem's; for I will not be ungrateful whatever else I am.

But at last I came to wonder at this, though I dared ask no question. Thinking thus, I spoke aloud, as one sometimes does in musing, quite unaware that I had done so, till Jem, crouching by the window in the full rays of the sun, answered me.

"What can have become of Captain Dumarcie?"

"Master Paul's dead," was Jem's answer; "killed down to Newbern last year."

"You knew him, then?" I cried, startled, being unaware, you see, till he spoke that I had uttered my thought aloud.

"Yah! yah!" burst out Jem, "reckon I did, marster; used to 'long to him, me an' all my folks."

"You! Paul Dumarcie's slave? And Helen's now?"

"No, sir. Miss Helen never would own wedem. Tell us to go North, and when she cum I stick to her close, you bet. But I 'spect I own myself, now," replied Jem with another laugh and a mixture of negro patois and Yankee slang in his speech.

"You do, of course, Jem," for his last remark was half question; "there are no slaves here. But was Captain Dumarcie in the army?"

"Yes, sir. 'Long of the Confederates. When he killed, Miss Helen come North to get his body, and, oh, how she weep when she find he been buried many days! She nebber go back any more. She been here ebber since, and Jem with her."

"Ah!" I said. "But I am very thirsty. Will you bring me a drink, Jem?" I would not question a servant, but I had received information enough to think about for one day.

Helen was a widow, then! How lonely she was, and what a hard, hard life after the years of luxury she had enjoyed in her southern home!

A few days afterward, when I was nearly well enough to be discharged, Helen spoke to me of herself. She told me of the dreadful parting that was final. Of her journey northward when tidings of her husband's death came, and finding only the grave where his mutilated remains were laid days before.

"My little Phillip died but a month before," she said, "and I had no longer any tie to bind me. My dream of love and home was past. Stern, sorrowful realities presented themselves. Intelligent nurses were wanted, and I resolved to take my place among them. My life is dedicated to the work."

"But, Helen, you need not sacrifice your life. You are looking pale and worn. When my mother comes to take me home, go with us. You know how welcome you will be."

"I thank you, Charley," she answered, as if something in my words had recalled our youth, calling me by the old, familiar name, "but my work is here; I cannot leave it. After the war is over, perhaps, if I live till then—"

Her tone was very sad, but she looked up as she paused, and a touching smile, full of resignation and hope, dawned over the marble pallor of her face. She rose up and went away.

When my mother came she added her entreaties to mine, and even something of the authority which her age and long friendship justified. But Helen, with warm thanks, put her aside, as she had done me. Her work was there, she said; she could not leave it. And so we left her to her patient rounds and mournful duties.

I went home a crippled man. No more of outward striving life for me, no dreams and successes, no ambitions to be realized. The future seemed a drear blank. I fell into a morbid state—thoughts introverted self prominent, bitter, uncharitable, unreasoning. I supposed I was grateful to Helen, but I often found myself wishing she had let me die. And, as I could not yet hold a pen in my left hand, I made that an excuse for not writing to her, when either of my sisters would gladly have written for me, and often did write on their own account, and thanked her over and over again for preserving to them the brother, who had been too sullen and bearish to deserve such kindness ever since his return. Helen answered briefly—her time was so occupied—but she said little about herself.

It came upon us all with a great shock, then, when, about two months after my return home, the papers brought us tidings of her death.

Faithful to the end, she had never left her post, even to die. When she could no longer resist her weakness and disease she lay down in the great, bare room, and upon the very cot I had laid on to die. There poor, faithful Jem watched her, with all a woman's tenderness, to the last, and kind,

"MASTER PAUL'S DEAD," WAS JEM'S ANSWER.

though stranger friends, of her own sex, gathered round her. Her burden had been too heavy for her, but she had borne it well, and her monument is in a hundred warm hearts that will always beat quicker with love and gratitude whenever her name is mentioned or their thoughts revert to her.

Costly Bible.

The most costly book in the Royal library at Stockholm is a Bible. It is said that 160 asses' skins were used for its parchment leaves. There are 300 pages of writing, and each page falls but one inch short of being a yard in length. The covers are solid planks four inches thick.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"THE BALANCES," THE SUBJECT ON SUNDAY.

From Daniel 5: 27 as Follows:—Mene, Mene Tekel Upharsin — Thou Art Weighed in the Balances and Art Found Wanting.

Babylon was the paradise of architecture, and driven out from thence the grandest buildings of modern times are only the evidence of her fall. The site having been selected for the city, two million men were employed in the rearing of her walls and the building of her works. It was a city sixty miles in circumference. There was a trench all around the city, from which the material for the building of the city had been digged. There were twenty-five gates on each side of the city; between every two gates a tower of defense springing into the skies; from each gate on the one side a street running straight through to the corresponding gate on the other side, so that there were fifty streets fifteen miles long. Through the city ran a branch of the river Euphrates. This river sometimes overflowed its banks, and to keep it from ruining the city, a lake was constructed into which the surplus water of the river would run during the time of freshets, and the water was kept in this artificial lake until time of drought, and then this water would stream down over the city. At either end of the bridge spanning this Euphrates there was a palace—the one palace a mile and a half around, the other palace seven and a half miles around.

The wife of Nebuchadnezzar had been born and brought up in the country, and in a mountainous region, and she could not bear this flat district of Babylon; and so, to please his wife, Nebuchadnezzar built in the midst of the city a mountain four hundred feet high. This mountain was built out into terraces, supported on arches. On the top of these arches a layer of flat stones, on the top of that a layer of reeds and bitumen, on the top of that two layers of bricks closely cemented, on the top of that a heavy sheet of lead, and on the top of that the soil placed—the soil so deep that a Lebanon cedar had room to anchor its roots. There were pumps worked by mighty machinery fetching up the water from the Euphrates to this hanging garden, as it was called, so that there were fountains spouting into the sky. Standing below and looking up it must have seemed as if the clouds were in blossom, or as though the sky leaned on the shoulder of a cedar. All this Nebuchadnezzar did to please his wife. Well, she ought to have been pleased. I suppose she was pleased. If that would not please her, nothing would. There was in that city also the temple of Belus, with towers—one tower the eighth of a mile high, in which there was an observatory where astronomers talked to the stars. There was in that temple an image, just one image, which would cost what would be our fifty-two million dollars.

Oh, what a city! The earth never saw anything like it, never will see anything like it. And yet I have to tell you that it is going to be destroyed. The king and his princes are at a feast. They are all intoxicated. Pour out the rich wine into the chalices! Drink to the health of the king! Drink to the glory of Babylon! Drink to a great future! A thousand lords reel intoxicated. The king seated upon a chair, with vacant look, as intoxicated men will—with vacant look stared at the wall. But soon that vacant look takes on intensity, and it is an affrighted look; and all the princes begin to look and wonder what is the matter, and they look at the same point on the wall. And then there drops a darkness into the room, that puts out the blaze of the golden plate, and out of the sleeve of the darkness there comes a finger—a finger of fiery terror circling around and circling around as though it would write; and then it comes up and with sharp tip of flame it inscribes on the plastering of the wall the doom of the king: "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting." The bang of heavy fists against the gates of the palace is followed by the breaking in of the doors. A thousand gleaming knives strike into a thousand quivering hearts. Now Death is king, and he is seated on a throne of corpses. In that hall there is a balance lifted. God swung it. On one side of the balance are put Belshazzar's opportunities, on the other side of the balance are put Belshazzar's sins. The sins come down. His opportunities go up. Weighed in the balances—found wanting.

There has been a great deal of cheating in our country with false weights and measures and balances, and the government, to change that state of things, appointed commissioners whose business it was to stamp weights and measures and balances, and a great deal of the wrong has been corrected. But still, after all, there is no such thing as a perfect balance on earth. The chain may break, or some of the metal may be clipped, or in some way the equipoise may be disturbed. You can not always depend upon earthly balances. A pound is not always a pound and you may pay for one thing and get another; but in the balance which is suspended to the throne of God, a pound is a pound, and right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a soul is a soul, and eternity is eternity. God has a perfect bushel, and a perfect peck, and a perfect gallon. When merchants weigh their goods in the wrong way, then the Lord weighs the goods again. If from the imperfect measure the merchant pours out what pretends to be a gallon of oil, and there is less than a gallon, God knows it, and calls upon his recording angel to mark it: "So much wanting in that measure of oil." The farmer comes in from the country. He has apples to sell. He has an imperfect measure. He pours out the apples from his imperfect measure. God recognizes it. He says to the recording angel: "Mark down so many apples too few—an imperfect measure." We may cheat ourselves, and we may cheat the world, but we cannot cheat God, and in the great day of judgment it will be found out that what we learned in boyhood at school is correct; that twenty hundredweight makes a ton, and one hundred and twenty solid feet makes a cord of wood. No more, no less, and a religion which does not take hold of this life, as well as the life to come, is no religion at all.

But, my friends, that is not the style of balances I am to speak of today, that is not the kind of weights and measures. I am to speak of that kind of balances which weigh principles, weigh churches, weigh men, weigh nations and weigh worlds. "What!" you say; "is it possible that our world is to be weighed?" Yes. Why, you would think if God put on one side of the balances suspended from the throne the Alps and the Pyrenees and the Himalayas and Mount Washington, and all the cities of the earth, they would crush it. No! No! The time will come when God will sit down on the white throne to see the world weighed, and on one side will be the world's opportunities, and on the other side the world's sins. Down will go the sins, and away will go the oportunities, and God will say to the messengers with the torch: "Burn that world! weighed and found wanting!"

So God will weigh churches. He takes a great church. That church, great according to the worldly estimate, must be weighed. He puts it on one side the balances, and the minister and the choir, and the building that cost its hundreds of thousands of dollars. He puts them on one side the balances. On the other side of the scale he puts what that church ought to be, what its consecration ought to be, what its sympathy for the poor ought to be, what its devotion to all good ought to be. That is on one side. That side comes down, and the church, not being able to stand the test, rises in the balances. It does not make any difference about your magnificent machinery. A church is built for one thing—to save souls. If it saves a few souls when it might save a multitude of souls, God will spew it out of his mouth! Weighed and found wanting!

So we perceive that God estimates nations. How many times he has put the Spanish monarchy into the scales, and found it insufficient, and condemned it! The French empire was placed on one side of the scales, and God weighed the French empire and Napoleon said: "Have I not enlarged the boulevards? Did I not kindle the glories of the Champs Elysees? Have I not adorned the Tuileries? Have I not built the gilded opera house?" Then God weighed the nation, and he put on one side the scales the emperor and the boulevards, and the Tuileries and the Champs Elysees, and the gilded opera house, and on the other side he puts that man's abominations, that man's libertinism, that man's selfishness, that man's godless ambition. This last came down, and all the brilliancy of the scene vanished. What is that voice coming up from Sedan? Weighed and found wanting!

Still the balances are suspended. Are there any others who would like to be weighed, or who will be weighed? Yes; here comes a worldling. He gets into the scales. I can very easily see what his whole life is made up of. Stocks, dividends, percentages, "buyer ten days," "buyer thirty days." "Get in, my friend, get into these balances and be weighed—weighed for this life, and weighed for the life to come." He gets in. I find that the two great questions in his life are: "How cheaply can I buy these goods?" and "How dearly can I sell them?" I find he admires heaven because it is a land of gold, and money must be "easy." I find from talking with him, that religion and the Sabbath are an interruption, a vulgar interruption, and he hopes on the way to church to drum up a new customer! All the week he has been weighing fruits, weighing meats, weighing ice, weighing coals, weighing confections, weighing worldly and perishable commodities, not realizing the fact that he himself has been weighed. "On your side the balances, O worldling! I will give you full advantage. I put on your side all the banking-houses, all the storehouses, all the cargoes, all the insurance companies, all the factories, all the silver, all the gold, all the money vaults, all the safe deposits—all on your side. But it does not add one ounce, for at the very moment we are congratulating you on your fine house and upon your princely income, God and the angels are writing in regard to your soul: 'Weighed and found wanting!'"

But I must go faster and speak of the final scrutiny. The fact is, my friends, we are moving on amid astounding realities. These pulses which now are drumming the march of life may, after a while, call a halt. We walk on a hair-hung bridge over chasms. All around us are dangers lurking, ready to spring on us from ambush. We lie down at night, not knowing whether we shall arise in the morning. We start out for occupations, not knowing whether we shall come back. Crowns being burnished for thy brow, or bolts forged for thy prison. Angels of light ready to shout at thy deliverance, or fiends of darkness stretching out skeleton hands to pull thee down into ruin consummate!

* * *

But says the Christian: "Am I to be allowed to get off so easily?" Yes. If some one should come and put on the other side the scales all your imperfections, all your envies, all your jealousies, all your inconsistencies of life, they would not budge the scales with Christ on your side the scales. Go free! There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Chains broken, prison houses opened, sins pardoned. Go free! Weighed in the balances, and nothing, nothing wanted. Oh! what a glorious hope! Will you accept it this day? Christ making up for what you lack. Christ the atonement for all your sins. Who will accept him? Will not this whole audience say, "I am insufficient, I am a sinner, I am lost by reason of transgressions, but Christ has paid it all. My Lord, and my God, my life, my pardon, my heaven. Lord Jesus, I hail thee!" Oh, if you could only understand the worth of that sacrifice which I have represented to you under a figure if you could understand the worth of that sacrifice, this whole audience would this moment accept Christ and be saved.

We go away off, or back into history, to get some illustration by which we may set forth what Christ has done for us. We need not go so far. I saw a vehicle behind a runaway horse dashing through the street, a mother and her two children in the carriage. The horse dashed along as though to hurl them to death, and a mounted policeman, with a shout clearing the way, and the horse at full run, attempted to seize those runaway horses to save a calamity, when his own horse fell and rolled over him. He was picked up half dead. Why were our sympathies so stirred? Because he was badly hurt, and hurt for others. But I tell you today of how Christ, the Son of God, on the blood-red horse of sacrifice, came for our rescue, and rode down the sky, and rode unto death for our rescue. Are not your hearts touched? That was a sacrifice for you and me. O thou who didst ride on the red horse of sacrifice! come and ride through this world on the white horse of victory!

EATING TO MUSIC.

A Popular Craze in Metropolitan Hotels and Restaurants.

Music at meals is now the thing in the metropolis. The craze is still very young, yet it has spread all over the town, and looks as if it had to stay. Not long since a certain restaurant of the Bohemian class not far from Fourteenth street encouraged a couple of itinerant performers on the guitar and mandolin to come around two or three evenings in the week and help entertain the guests. There were three rooms in the restaurant, and the musicians wandered from one to the other, alternating their instrumental selections with really good vocal numbers. When any of the latter happened to be well-known airs, guests around the tables were not slow to join in the refrain, and as the evening progressed one may well imagine that the musicians, whose pay was mostly gathered from their happy hearers, were not slow to select such pieces as had a singable chorus. There was frequently a number of persons at the tables with good voices, and the audible result by no means to be despised. The large hotels, almost without exception, employ orchestras ranging in number from four to ten men. One of the mose prominent of these places established an afternoon tea service a year or so ago, and the tea drinkers and muffin eaters beguiled an hour listening to the yodeling of a blue and white clad Tyrolean quartet, or the guitars and mandolins of a group of Neapolitans attired in spotless white trousers, with gorgeous and voluminous sashes. Another well-known hotel entertains its after-theater habitues in a palm garden, with seductive music by a hidden harpist. Another place down on the East Side seats its dinner guests at tables in a cellar, on one side of which great casks of wine are ranged, while at the further end of the cob-webbed room a band of gypsies discourses the weird music of the Hungarian composers.

BOOKS OF ADVENTURE.

Mystery and Crime the Favorite Literature of Convicts.

New York World: Criminals, like the people of stageland and of other professions that exact high nervous pressure, have their superstitions. Nothing is better proof of the fact than the library list of Sing Sing prison and a computation of the favorite books of men who have run the gamut of crime from murder to felony. In a two-months' record out of the well-furnished library of upward of 4,000 volumes of science, travel, biography, religion and fiction, the book that heads the list, with a circulation of 463, is Charles Reade's "It Is Never Too Late To Mend." Lever's "Charles O'Malley" is a close second and Lytton's "Paul Clifford" as third shows the standing of the gentlemen highwayman with the men of his calling. Alex Dumas' "Count of Monte Cristo" was out 390 times in those eight weeks, and the Dickens books which contested its run most closely were "Oliver Twist," with its famous history of Bill Sykes, and "A Tale of Two Cities," with its Sydney Carton, who lived a vagabond and died a hero. The Sherlock Holmes stories of Conan Doyle and Wilkie Collins' "Moonstone," "Woman in White" and "The Dead Secret" are in constant demand. Capt. King and Capt. Marryatt both have a strong following, and Stanley Weyman's spirited romances, so replete with incident, stand side by side with Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" in the estimation of the prison readers.

The prosperous man who is too busy to think of God, is as ungodly as the criminal who is too vicious to do so.—Ram's Horn.