

FIRST LOVE.
BY JULIA WARD HOWE.

Whom first we love, you know, we seldom wed;
Time rules us all. And life, indeed, is not
The thing we planned it out, our hope was dead;
And then, we women cannot choose our lot,
Much must be borne which is hard to bear,
Much given away which it were sweet to keep;
God help us all who need indeed His care;
And yet I know the shepherd loves his sheep.

My little boy begins to babble now
Upon my knee his earliest infant prayer;
He has his father's eager eyes, I know,
And, they say too, his mother's sunny hair.

But when he sleeps and smiles upon my knee
And I can feel his light breath come and go,
I think of one—Heaven help and pity me—
Who loved me and whom I loved, long ago!

Who might have been—ah, I dare not think,
We are all changed. God judges for us best;
God help us do our duty, and not shrink,
And trust in Heaven humbly for the rest.

But blame us women not, if some appear
Too cold at times; and some too gay and light;
Some griefs gnaw deep; some woes are hard to bear;
Who knows the past? and who can judge us right?

Ah, were we judged by what we might have been,
And not by what we are, too apt to fall!
My little child—his sleeps and smiles between
Those thoughts and me. In Heaven we shall know all.

CAPTAIN MOLLY.

It was a warm, sultry morning in the month of June. The inhabitants of Monmouth were all astir with the knowledge that the two armies were in their midst, and by their motions sustaining the probability that a general action was about to be hazarded. The British army, now commanded by Sir Henry Clinton, had assumed one of the strongest positions upon the high grounds about Monmouth Court House; they laid their flank on the border of a small wood, the last guarding by a deeper one, and the rear rounded toward a morass.

The Continental army was disposed in such an adjacent position as to harass the enemy in the rear, and to take advantage of their first movement. The other generals, Lafayette, Greene, Wayne, Stewart and Scott, were directed to hold their troops in readiness to support the front.

Early in the morning notice was given that the van of the enemy was in motion. General Lee immediately prepared to make an attack upon them, and he was soon joined by Generals Dickinson and Morgan, with their troops.

In full view of the house of Hollis and Molly, this action commenced. Hollis put on his military suit at once. The spirit that animated every true American was newly aroused at this spectacle, and he was impatient to mingle in the strife.

"Will you go, Hollis?" asked Molly, anxiously.

"Yes, dearest. Can I remain here tamely, and not offer my assistance in defense of my country? I shall be only a private, but there will be work enough for me to do."

"Remember the fate of your father," faltered Molly.

"I thought you were brave, my own wife," said Hollis, with a smile of affectionate pride.

"Battle scenes have not lost their charms for me yet, though I confess to unusual misgivings this morning," replied Molly.

"I shall return at night, darling. It may be with new glory attached to the honorable name which my father transmitted to me. I must fight these red-coats, Molly. God bless you, and good-bye for the present," returned Hollis, bringing her to his heart for a parting caress.

"A blessing go with you husband," said Molly, as Hollis sped rapidly from the door.

The enemy advanced so near Molly's house that she could plainly distinguish their motions.

"O, that I were a man!" she exclaimed: "I would give those British tyrants free doses of death. To think of their approach to our very door! Of their burning the beautiful homes of some of our neighbors, because they would not turn traitors!"

She discovered Hollis engaged in the duty of a cannoner, and she watched his motions with the deepest interest. As the morning deepened into day, the weather became intensely warm; not a leaf of a tree moved, and the sun poured down such volumes of heat, the earth seemed brazen and parched to a painful endurance.

"Hollis will suffer with thirst!" Molly bemoaned herself. "I will go carry him a pitcher of cool water from the spring."

She hastily communicated her intentions to Mrs. Rogers, the house-keeper, and threw on her hat.

"I would advise you," remonstrated Mrs. Rogers, "to keep within the house to-day. The Britishers will kill you, like as any way, if you go out there."

"I shall go," replied Molly. "How good the water will taste to him, when he is struggling so hard in this heat."

Her glance fell upon Hollis again; his hair was thrown back from his forehead, he had cast aside his coat, and was loading and discharging the cannon with an admirable coolness, while the balls of the enemy whizzed about his head. Molly was strongly impressed by the picture; he had never looked so glorious to her before, save when he was about to sacrifice his life at the pine tree, the central object of savage ire. She could not be restrained longer. Skipping away to the cold spring a few rods distant, she filled the pitcher, and remembering Hollis's liking for spearmint, paused a moment to break off a few leaves of the rich bed, fringing the bank at her feet. These she settled in the pitcher as she ran up to Hollis. He received her offering gladly, blessed her for the thought in a low voice, and drank the whole before he resumed his duty.

Molly ran away again, regardless of

the many eyes which had been attracted by the strange sight of her white muslin dress amid the bloody strife. She returned to her post of watching with breathless anxiety, for the battle waged fiercer and closer. Unconsciously she would break into words of encouragement for her favorite generals, as she distinguished their uniforms, or the noble horses which they rode falling dead beneath them.

Once more she ventured to carry water to Hollis, for he nobly and unremittently worked on in the very face of the foe. She had refilled her pitcher, when, turning, she saw Hollis fall to the ground. With a blanched cheek, and a horrible foreboding rushing over her heart, she lost no time in reaching the spot.

"Alas! he was dead! A shot of the enemy had killed him instantly."

"Take the cannon away," said General Wayne to one of the soldiers; "we cannot fill the place by as brave a man as has been killed!"

"No!" returned Molly, "looking up to the General with a face like death, yet calm in his inspiration of bravery, heightened to heroism; "the cannon shall not be removed for want of some one to serve it since my brave husband is no more, for I will use my utmost exertions to avenge his death."

Molly was now fairly aroused. She loaded and discharged the cannon, while officers beheld her with undivided admiration.

"There!" she exclaimed, after the first fire; "take that, ye remorseless Englishmen, and wait for the next."

Again and again she discharged the cannon, dealing death and destruction at every shot.

"Whom have we here?" inquired General Washington, attracted to the spot by the singular spectacle.

"An angel of the host of Michael. The powers of hell would drop before her!" replied General Wayne.

Molly now determined on a *coeur de maîtresse*. Accordingly, she reloaded the cannon with double the ordinary quota, then discharged it. A terrible crash succeeded. Molly was thrown into the air several feet; then she fell to the ground with violence. Three British soldiers were killed, and an officer of high rank was apparently mortally wounded. Many who stood by were thrown down, and general confusion prevailed.

The last discharge had broken the cannon into fragments.

For a few minutes Molly was insensible, but she soon rallied, and rose with a steady eye. The soldiers loudly applauded her, notwithstanding which she immediately withdrew to her home, followed by two soldiers with the body of her husband.

On the following day Molly was surprised by a visit from Generals Washington, Wayne and Lafayette, who had witnessed her brave conduct at the late battle-ground. Molly retained her self-command.

"Our army, madam, being about to leave Monmouth, we take this early opportunity to express to you our entire approval of your action yesterday," said General Washington.

"Sir," said Molly, "I only wished to serve my country; the death of my husband made me almost frantic."

"You merit a coat of arms like our Joan of Arc," observed Lafayette; "hers contained two golden lilies, and a sword pointing upward, bearing a crown."

"I shall have an epaulette for your coat of arms," said General Washington, rising to his accustomed dignity of manner; "I here confer upon you the rank of Captain, as a testimonial of my regard for your services."

The other Generals arose, and crossing their arms upon their breasts beheld the scene with a smile of gratification.

"Many thanks, General," said Molly, the tears rushing to her eyes; "but would that my husband had been spared to receive this honor instead of myself."

"I trust that you will come to a glorious end," remarked Lafayette, "unlike the Maid of Orleans, who was burned at the stake."

"I have come to that already," returned Molly; "at least I have been taken prisoner by the Indians, and confined to a tree, where I should have been burned alive had not he who afterwards was my husband, nobly offered his life for mine."

"Are you, indeed, that young girl who figured so conspicuously at the murder of Miss McCrea?" inquired Gen. Wayne.

Molly bowed.

"Brave madam!" exclaimed Lafayette, "before we leave, permit me to salute you after the custom of my country, when we would honor noble ladies like yourself."

A blush suddenly overspread Molly's cheek as the chivalrous General imprinted a kiss upon her brow. A few calm, earnest words, like a benediction, General Washington added to Molly, and the distinguished visitors took their leave.

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Mrs. Rogers, who had partially witnessed the scene; you are now really a Captain. This is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of in all my life!"

CURIOS VEGETABLE LIFE.

There are many curious facts about vegetable life. We can, for example, graft the apricot on the plum, and the peach on the apricot, and the almond on the peach, and thus we may produce a tree with plum-roots and almond leaves. The wood, however, of the stem will consist of four distinct varieties, though formed from one continuous layer. Below the almond wood and bark we shall have perfect peach wood and bark, then perfect apricot wood and bark, and at the bottom plum wood and bark. In this curious instance we can see the intimate correspondence between the bark and the leaf, for if we should remove the almond branches, we might cause the several sorts of wood to develop buds and leafy twigs each of its own kind. Each section of the compound stem has its seat of life in the cambium layer, and the cambium of each reproduces cells of its own species out of a common nutrient fluid.

Farm and Household. 1856. 1876.

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