

Nebraska Advertiser.

G. W. FAIRBROTHER & CO., Proprietors.

AUBURN, : NEBRASKA.

A PARABLE.

A sturdy stream flowed fast along,
"Twas merry as a mower's song;
Its look was glad, its waves were bright,
And broke in drops of purest light.
Over its surface, all the way,
The blossoms bent in sweet array;
It gave them kisses cool and fleet,
Which left them still more pure and sweet.
The water was so kind and true
That it would do whatever it did.
Though it visited every brook,
It always gave more than it took;
Thus lived a life of gracious giving
And grew each day to greater living.

A pool of water, stagnant still,
Lay listlessly beneath a hill.
It served no purpose save to nurse
The weeds, which made its visage worse;
The water was upon its face,
And beauty sank from all the place.
On Nature's fairer bairns a blot,
A most unwholesome evil spot;
And all because it idle lay,
Contented in itself all day.
Supplied by a few little rills,
It locked them up among the hills,
And always asking, never giving,
It daily died and thought it living.

Thus generous souls live like the first,
But selfish ones die self-accursed.

—C. H. Grandill, in *N. Y. Independent*.

A BURIED TALENT.

Marriage seemed to have entirely extinguished Mrs. Montgomery's musical talent. This lady's ability had seemed unusual, and had been carefully fostered and developed by wise parents and the most accomplished teachers at home and abroad. She had thoroughly mastered the principles of harmony, and had even taken to looking into contrapuntal depths, than which nothing more need be said to show her devotion to her art. She had more than once enjoyed the honor of playing for the most distinguished musical society in the country, and had acquitted herself with the greatest credit. But now, after eight years of married life, this lady was in the habit of declining all invitations to play by the repetition of the hackneyed and exasperating excuse, that she was "entirely out of practice."

Mrs. Montgomery's cares could hardly be responsible for this serious remissness. She was the mother of three healthy, happy children, and the wife of a man whose interests were centered in his family, and with means enough to support it in luxury. Mrs. Montgomery's musical talent had been the first attraction to the gentleman who afterward became her husband. He was not a musician himself, but extremely fond of music, and an excellent critic. Mrs. Montgomery had played occasionally for her husband for the first two or three years, but these treats had become less and less frequent, and had finally ceased altogether. Her husband had coaxed, and reasoned, and sometimes scolded. He had used all the influence he possessed to induce her to keep up her practice, but to no purpose. It seemed to Mr. Montgomery that his wife was totally indifferent to the art she had once worshipped, and, more than that, this she was entirely indifferent to his feelings on the subject.

If Mr. Montgomery told himself sometimes that he had been cheated, it is certainly not to be wondered at.

This gentleman was in the habit now of declining all invitations to *musicales*, and it was only when the old longing for sweet strains became insatiable that he allowed himself to live over the past again at a concert or an oratorio.

One morning an invitation to a musical soiree was brought in to the cozy room where Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery and their children were taking breakfast.

"Well," said the wife, after examining the programme, "you can go if you please."

Her *vis-a-vis* responded, with a ring in his voice which was easy to interpret.

"But I shall decline."

"There is going to be some good music," said Mrs. Montgomery, "and it seems a pity not to go."

"It is a pity," the gentleman responded, with considerable bitterness, "but you are wholly to blame for it."

"Oh, Dick! how unreasonable you are!" was the deprecating answer. "I wish you could put yourself in my place for just once. You have no more conception of my work and responsibilities than little Dick has." And Mrs. Montgomery drew the urchin's high chair a little nearer the table.

"Why, Richard, there is something to do all the time. I try to keep your house nice, dear, and your company well entertained, and your children sweet and presentable. There isn't a servant in the establishment who works as hard and as unremittingly as I do."

"Bertha, I could endure to see the children in calico, and sometimes not quite tidy. I could manage one meal a day very nicely, indeed, and I could live comfortably without visitors, but I shall never become accustomed or reconciled to my wife as a housekeeper and a mother only. I was given the right to expect something more, and while I may be obliged to live my life without it, you may as well understand that I am not and never shall be satisfied."

These were hard words, and Mrs. Montgomery's eyes filled with tears.

"But, Richard," she began again, after a little pause, "every one will tell you that it is impossible for a wife and a mother to keep up her music. No one ever does. If you had more comprehension of woman's work you would see it was out of the question."

"You were given a talent of a very high order, Bertha, and you have deliberately buried it. I seem to be the only sufferer at present, but this will not always be so, I am sure. There must

be a penalty proportionate to that of sense as to others."

That morning after Mr. Montgomery left the house his wife sat down before her grand piano and attempted one of the simplest of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*, but though the old expression was there the once supple fingers were stiff and awkward, and after a half hour of practice she rose, and closed the instrument in disgust.

"Four hours a day for a year might bring back a little of the old power of execution," she told herself. But what would become of the house and the children should she set herself to such a task? Impracticable; impossible.

A day or two after this Mr. Montgomery brought home a friend to dinner. The guest was an old lady whom Richard had not seen since his boyhood. She had lived for a score of years in Colorado, and was now seventy years old. The conversation turned naturally to music. Bertha was too straight-forward and honest to be in the least adroit, but she did use all the tact she possessed to turn the tide of talk into a more agreeable channel. No use. It lingered awhile, and swayed irresolutely hither and thither, but only to return with redoubled force to the old place.

"I felt so happy, my dear," the old lady at last found chance to remark, "when I heard that my boy Richard had married a musician. I can remember when he used to sit in my parlor, and sit, and sit, listening to my playing till I was often obliged to send him home. I used to tell him that he would fatigue a musical giant. It was always 'more, please, more, more.' Is he still as hungry for music as in those old days?"

"I haven't kept up my music," Mrs. Montgomery replied, with burning cheeks, "though I have reason to believe that Dick is just as fond of it as he used to be."

"I think I have heard that you played in public," Mrs. La Force inquired, a slight wonderment apparent only in her fine old eyes.

"Yes, a little."

"Did you enjoy it?"

Bertha's eyes kindled with real pleasure.

"It was the keenest enjoyment I had ever had," she answered. "I expected to be entirely overcome with fright, but I never felt more at home in my life."

"Yes, Bertha played without notes, and with an orchestra," Mr. Montgomery remarked, with considerable pride.

"Well, that was something to attain to," said Mrs. La Force.

After dinner Mr. Montgomery had an hour or two's business to attend to, and the ladies were left alone.

Mrs. La Force examined the numberless pretty things in Mrs. Montgomery's drawing-room, spoke of the pictures with critical appreciation, and at last halted at the music-rack.

"I see you have all my pets," she remarked at last.

Mrs. Montgomery was somewhat astonished. She made a point of purchasing all the new music by the best authors, and one of Mrs. La Force's especial admirations was a difficult and wonderfully weird selection from Lohengrin.

"And has the music of the future found admirers in Colorado?" the hostess inquired.

"Colorado has kept pace with the times in music as in everything else," the old lady replied, putting on her spectacles as she spoke, "and all good music is necessarily the music of the future."

With this she seated herself at the piano.

"I have enjoyed this selection more than I can tell you," and now the wrinkled old hands came down on the keys with a power which made her companion thrill with astonishment. On went the performer with a clearness of touch, a depth of expression, and a facility of execution which would shame many a professional, until Bertha, trembling in every nerve, drew near, to see as well as to hear.

"Oh! dear!" she exclaimed, as the old lady struck the last chord of the bewitching *fines*. "Oh dear me! how beautiful!" and then the usually self-posseid and dignified Bertha Montgomery buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly.

"Why! why!" said the old lady; "what is the matter?"

"Oh! nothing—I don't know!" was the incoherent answer. "Don't mind me. Go on playing, please."

"I think we had better talk a while," said Mrs. La Force, taking a seat by her companion. "If I were nearer your age it might perhaps be safer for our continued friendship if I ignored the real cause of your breakdown. It wasn't Lohengrin, my dear, neither was it my interpretation of the selection. It was a heart-wail over the grave of your lost talent. I feel as if I could weep with you, for to me such a grave is the saddest of all graves."

"But, Mrs. La Force, you must know something of my duties, my responsibilities, as wife, mother and housekeeper, and all the rest of it," Mrs. Montgomery sobbed. "I thought I was doing my best."

"Music was my one talent," Mrs. La Force resumed, "and to that I have clung with all the energy I possessed. Perhaps some of my ideas in this connection may seem strange to you; but, my child, a great share of my work has been done with reference to another state of existence. I don't know that I can give you any reason for this feeling except the faith that is in me, but it is clear to me that the same rules of harmony and musical composition obtain in the sphere to which we are tending as in this one. The musician there must be the musician there. You see, my dear, that I have a very laudable ambition to start right."

"But do you really believe all this?"

Mrs. Montgomery inquired, her eyes bright with wonder and tears.

"From the bottom of my heart. I cannot conceive of a world where knowledge is not obtained by labor. All that I have achieved in music has been by hard, persistent toil, and it is impossible that such labor can be wasted. Some one might answer that the growth of the spirit in patience and the other virtues was compensation enough. It does not appear so to me. If I am given a talent, and I cultivate that talent to the best of my ability, it is mine forever for all it is worth. I am sure of it."

"But, my dear Mrs. La Force," Bertha took one of the old lady's hands in hers and tenderly kissed it, "if you are a musician in Heaven you can not play with these hands. So what will it avail that you have brought them to this state of perfection in execution?"

"My dear, I shall have hands, and they will be all the better for my purpose because of what these have accomplished. This is one of the details that does not disturb me in the least. This is all that concerns me; I was given a talent, and I have done the best I could with it under very difficult circumstances. To my mind the conclusion is logical as it is comforting."

The next day Mrs. Montgomery went to work in earnest; and though there were no confidences between husband and wife in the matter there came to be a better understanding. Mr. Montgomery sometimes heard the piano as he entered the house, but the sound of his steps was sure to put an end to the practicing. After a while Mrs. Montgomery used occasionally to invite her husband to listen to some new piece, or an old favorite, and after a few months diligent practice the longed-for improvisations were resumed. At this crisis Mr. Montgomery's delight was pathetic to witness.

Mrs. Montgomery found less time for embroidery, and there were fewer tucks in the children's clothes, but nothing suffered that needed her care. The dinners were as well appointed, and guests as hospitably entertained as in the days when these duties occupied most of the housekeeper's time.

"Mrs. La Force did it all," Bertha told her husband one evening, after electrifying a parlor full of people, her husband included, "and I want to go to Colorado, and play for her. Her philosophy is a little too much for me, though I don't see why it shouldn't be true, still."

Mr. Montgomery finished the sentence with a kiss.—*Eleanor Kirk, in Christian Union.*

A Swallow Story Hard to Swallow.

The story of the Westerly swallows recalled to the mind of a resident of Providence another story concerning these curious birds. "Nearly sixty years ago," said he, in substance, "when I was living in the town of Litchfield, Me., the occurrence of which I am about to tell you took place. My father's house was on the old post road connecting the towns of Brunswick and Augusta and about half way between those places. Early in the autumn my father noticed large numbers of swallows for several days flying over his farm to the north. Similar flights of the birds had in other years been noticed by residents of the vicinity, and comparison of testimony showed that the swallows were evidently flying to a common center not far away. The flight had continued two or three days, when my father and two or three of his neighbors determined to solve the mystery. Starting about five o'clock one afternoon, they followed the direction taken by the birds, and came to the edge of a grove. Here they were astonished to see hosts of swallows coming in from all directions and disappearing through a hole in the top of the tall and lifeless trunk of a basswood tree. The aperture where the birds entered the tree was about thirty feet from the ground, and was six inches or so in diameter, and was evidently caused by the breaking off of a rotten limb. The farmers, having noticed that none of the birds came out, but were constantly going in, went home more puzzled than ever. A day or two after, when the matter had been talked over among the farmers, several of them returned to the tree, my father among the number, with the intent on cutting it down. They set to work to fell the tree. Only a few birds seemed to be disturbed or frightened away by the action of the farmers, and the tree finally fell to the ground. The farmers were utterly astounded to find nothing but a hollow shell, and filled from bottom to top with dead swallows. The tree was about 2½ feet in diameter and about thirty feet in length from the base to the aperture where the birds had been seen to enter, and it was estimated that the bodies of the swallows found in the hollow trunk would aggregate ten bushels! They were the common white-breasted swallow, mostly, although there were quite a number of marten swallows among them. Why the birds came there is a mystery that was never solved. That the strange affair actually happened I am quite ready to prove; and though, for personal reasons, I prefer to withhold my name from the public prints, I am willing that all persons who desire a verification of the story should be referred to me."

"I think we had better talk a while," said Mrs. La Force, taking a seat by her companion. "If I were nearer your age it might perhaps be safer for our continued friendship if I ignored the real cause of your breakdown. It wasn't Lohengrin, my dear, neither was it my interpretation of the selection. It was a heart-wail over the grave of your lost talent. I feel as if I could weep with you, for to me such a grave is the saddest of all graves."

"But, Mrs. La Force, you must know something of my duties, my responsibilities, as wife, mother and housekeeper, and all the rest of it," Mrs. Montgomery sobbed. "I thought I was doing my best."

"Why! why!" said the old lady; "what is the matter?"

"Oh! nothing—I don't know!" was the incoherent answer. "Don't mind me. Go on playing, please."

"I think we had better talk a while," said Mrs. La Force, taking a seat by her companion. "If I were nearer your age it might perhaps be safer for our continued friendship if I ignored the real cause of your breakdown. It wasn't Lohengrin, my dear, neither was it my interpretation of the selection. It was a heart-wail over the grave of your lost talent. I feel as if I could weep with you, for to me such a grave is the saddest of all graves."

"But, Mrs. La Force, you must know something of my duties, my responsibilities, as wife, mother and housekeeper, and all the rest of it," Mrs. Montgomery sobbed. "I thought I was doing my best."

"Music was my one talent," Mrs. La Force resumed, "and to that I have clung with all the energy I possessed. Perhaps some of my ideas in this connection may seem strange to you; but, my child, a great share of my work has been done with reference to another state of existence. I don't know that I can give you any reason for this feeling except the faith that is in me, but it is clear to me that the same rules of harmony and musical composition obtain in the sphere to which we are tending as in this one. The musician there must be the musician there. You see, my dear, that I have a very laudable ambition to start right."

"But do you really believe all this?"

Youths' Department.

A REALIZED HOPE.

O dear, it's very hard, indeed, to sit here patiently.
And see that heartless little girl eat chicken
for her tea!
She doesn't know how to take a hint, for I have
said "How-wow."
And no one could look hungrier than I am
looking now.

It surely is a drum-stick that she's holding in
her hand.
If I had that I'd be the happiest puppy in the
land!
I wonder if she hears me crying softly through
my nose?
I'd yell out if I dared, but it would never do,
I suppose.

I had some meat like that one day, and I
gnawed it, but since then
She's watched me, and I've never had a single
chance again.

I've eaten it sometimes!—yump,—yump!—
"Twould move a heart of stone.
That I'm too old for bread and milk, and yet
too young for bone.

Perhaps if I should come up near, and play a
little trick,

My mistress would throw down a bite; but no!—

"Tw'll make him sick!"—

That's what she always says, and she laughs at
my big head and feet.

"Twould serve her right if I should go and get
lost in the street.

I look so young, she often says—as if she didn't,
too!—

There comes a bone! I whined so hard, I do believe
she knew.

My, what a noise! With teeth like that, a pug
like me deserves

Something beyond such trashy stuff as pickles
and preserves.

—*Clara Louise Burnham, in St. Nicholas.*

FLOWERS.

"Ah, if I only lived in a great city, or near one, where they have a Flower Mission!" sighed Alice, as she looked into the heart of a white rose and took a long sniff of its perfume. She had been hearing and reading about this beautiful charity and had warmed at the thought of sending light into dark places and happiness to those to whom little but sorrow ever came. She was talking to herself on her way to school.

Mrs. Montgomery found less time for embroidery, and there were fewer tucks in the children's clothes, but nothing suffered that needed her care. The dinners were as well appointed, and guests as hospitably entertained as in the days when these duties occupied most of the housekeeper's time.

"It's such a sweet, beautiful way of doing good—nothing unpleasant or hard about it. I'd have the grandest garden! all pinks and roses and pansies and geraniums. And heliotrope and mimosa, too—yes, there'd have to be something sweet-smelling in every bunch. I'd send basket-fulls every day!"

"Oh-h-h, how pretty!" said a voice very near as she passed. She had gone a little out of her way to leave a message at the tumble-down row of houses in one of which lived the washerwoman. In the window next to hers was a pale, thin little face looking out.

"Did you speak to me?" asked Alice, looking up.

"No—I only thought them was real pretty," said the owner of the