

## THE LOST OCCASION.

Some die too late and some too soon,  
At early morning, heat of noon,  
Or the chill evening twilight. Thou,  
Whom the rich heavens did so endow  
With eyes of power and Jove's own brow,  
With all the massive strength that fills  
Thy home horizon's granite hills,  
With rarest gifts of heart and hand  
From manliest stock inherited,  
New England's stateliest type of man,  
In port and speech Olympian;  
Whom no one met, at first, but took  
A second awe and wondering look  
(As turned, perchance, the eyes of Greece  
On Phidias' inviolated piece),  
Whose words, in simplest home-spun clad,  
The Saxon strength of Godson's had,  
With power reserved at need to reach  
The Roman forum's loftiest speech,  
Sweet with persuasion, eloquent

In passion, cool in argument,  
Or, ponderous, falling on thy foes  
As fell the Norse god's hammer blows,  
Crushing as it with Talus' flail  
Thou' Error's logic-woven mail,  
And falling only when they tread  
The adamant of the righteous side—  
Thou, foiled in sin and hope, bereaved  
Of old friends, by the new deceived,  
Too soon for us, too soon for thee,  
Beside thy lonely Northern sea,  
Where long and low the marsh lands spread,  
Laid wearily down thy sky suggest head.

Thou shouldst have lived to feel below  
Thy feet discision's fierce upthrow—  
The late-spring mist that underlaid  
Thy sad and occasional rainy made.  
Thou shouldst have seen from Sumner's wall  
The star-flag of the Union fall,  
And armed rebellion pressing on  
The broken lines of Washington.  
No stronger voice than thine had then  
Called out the utmost might of men,  
To make the union's charter free  
And strengthen law by liberty.  
How had that stern and sternly bent  
To thy gray eye youth's vigor lent,  
Shaming ambition's vulgar prize  
Before thy distinguished eye,  
Breaking the spell about the wound  
Like the green withes that Sampson bound;  
Redeeming, in one effort grand,  
Thyself and thy imperiled land!  
Ah, cruel fate, that closed to thee,  
O sleeper by the Northern sea,  
The gates of opportunity!

God fills the gaps of human needs,  
Each crisis brings its word and deed;  
Wise men and strong we did not lack;  
But still, with memory turning back,  
In the dark hours we thought of thee,  
And thy lone grave beside the sea.  
Alone thou gave the east winds blow,  
And from the marsh lands drifting show  
The sea-wash of a lonely shore,  
And sea-bird's melancholy cry,  
As nature fain would typify  
The sadness of a closing scene,  
The loss of that which should have been.  
But, where thy native mountains bare  
Thy forehead to diviner air,  
Fit emblem of enduring fame,  
One lofty summit keeps thy name  
For thee the cosmic forces did  
The resting of that pyramid,  
The present ages shaping with  
Fire, flood and frost thy monolith.  
Mourner and sunset lay thyrown  
With hands of light, their benison,  
The stars of midnight pause to set  
Their jewels in its coronet.  
And evermore that mountain mass  
Seems climbing from the shadowy pass  
To light, as if to manifest  
Thy nobler self, thy life at best!

—J. G. Whittier.

## REMEMBRANCES OF A MOUNTAIN SCHOOL.

The village of Mabie was in a delightful place, where three canyons met, and the Trinity river flowed past on its way to the Pacific. Mabie was built on a sunny slope, looking south across a black bridge, and over climbing banks alive with busy miners. The single street wandered past bits of orchard, and gaily blooming roses before the trim cottages, until it passed quite out of sight among the bushes of manzanita. In some places it jogged along quietly, but at least twice, and that in the very heart of the town, it frolicked down into a cross gully, wet, cool and full of ferns, and then twisted among the willows till it was nearly lost.

Sometimes this amusing street slipped shyly around the corner of a miner's cabin, built out of line, and sometimes, as if in pure revenge, it crept over whole vacant lots, and quite surrounded solitary and timid shanties.

The school-house stood in a clump of cedars a little above the town. Near it there was a rocky hollow, dotted with immense boulders in pyramidal piles, over which clematis and black-berries tangled in bright profusion, and wild roses of delicate pink clung to the rocks. The vagrant street aimed directly for the door of the school-house, but a rocky slope cooled its ardor, and it wandered off into the hollow, so that only a little footpath went across the bright grass to the drooping cedars, and wound around them until it found the three brown steps and the breezy porch where the sun-bonnets hung in term-time.

School was to begin on Monday, so Saturday afternoon I went to the quiet school-room in order to get acquainted with the surroundings. I stood a moment on the porch, looking over the picturesque village and across the wide river to the smoky heights and the soft, moving clouds. Then my thoughts came back to the school-room, so soon to be filled with childish faces—some sweet and pure, some sad and lonely.

Going in I found a captive lionet who had flown in through a broken pane, and was vainly exploring the ceiling, but perceiving the open door, he whisked out with almost invisible speed. The room was rather out of order, and a little dismal, except for a pleasant ray of sunshine which shone on the teacher's desk.

Now, just as I was standing in this rather dusty place, I heard some one open the gate and come up the walk. A blue-eyed little girl of eight stood by the door and tapped, swinging her sun-bonnet shyly, yet looking up with a cheery confidence that was very winning.

"Well, little lady," I said, with a smile, "so you and I both came to look at our school-house!"

"Yes, sir," the child replied, "I'm Lizzie Baker, and Nellie and I wanted to fix the school-house, so we got Sadie and Maud Willis to help us."

The other three children stood by the gate with mop and bucket. They came in shyly, and we got acquainted. Maud was a dark witch, full of mischief. She stepped on the log first when they crossed the sluice; she jumped from the haymow and dared the others to follow; she threw gravel at Pat Malloy's calves till he almost grew angry, but could not help forgiving her after all. Sadie was a demure, brown-haired child, always neat and fond of make-believe plays. "Old Maid" the sarcastic boys called her, at which she smiled bewitchingly, but said never a word. Nellie was the silent one, dark eyed, timid and thoughtful, and "Nellie Baker says so" was the strongest possible argument among the children of the busy mountain town. Lizzie, the flyaway, was a sunny child, full of comic speeches, and she sang like a lark on a pine tree, in the midst of summer, and looking over leagues of shining and beautiful mountains.

Well, we fixed up the school-room, tacked the loose maps against the wall, cleaned the blackboard, banished an ugly piece of rawhide, swept the floor and put larkspurs and fritillarias on the desk. Then we stood on the porch while the children pointed out the scattered houses of the town and named their owners. But it was late, so they said good-night and walked demurely down the slope, four solemn young ladies. Before they got half way, however, Maud, the irrepressible, caught her scarlet hood and swung it with an airy cry. The merry contagion spread, and they scampered down, pushing, laughing and struggling, with perfect good nature, while I enjoyed the fun from the hill. Really these small maidens were as charming as their own native hills.

School began, and went on with its fun and its earnestness, its troubles and its hard work, just as schools always do, I suppose. Maud came to me in high excitement. One day

"O! O!" she cried, "the Indians are coming."

Now this sounded like an alarming statement, suggestive of scalping and massacres, but I knew it was only an expected dance to be given by several of the northern California tribes. The next noon they entered town in a long array. The men were mounted on spotted cayuse ponies; the women carried bundles and babies. They chose a level place near the river, felled trees and arranged them in a circle, piling bunches on the outside. Then they raised a cluster of eagle feathers to the top of a pole, and sent a fat boy around to announce that they would dance that night, and wanted the white people to come and see them.

The attendance was large, and the scene was strange indeed. A huge fire was in the middle of the ring, lighting the whole sky with its flashes. The town people occupied one side, in a semi-circle close to the bushes. A tall chief stood grave and silent near the fire. Nellie and Lizzie were with me, for their mother was absent, and we were chatting about the funny shadows on the ground, when suddenly the chief began to snap a split willow rod and chant in perfect time. Voice after voice took it up in the distance, coming nearer and nearer, till suddenly 20 warriors in full war paint and feathers, sprang into the ring with a wild and unexpected yell. The chant grew faster; they traced an intricate pattern on the hard ground, stamping wildly, whirling, lifting their shining hatchets, now and then yelling with fierce energy.

So the dance went on for many minutes, and the Indians grew very much excited, till suddenly the strange chant ended, and, facing their visitors, the braves dropped on one knee, silent and still and near. It was a curious thing to see those 20 bronze figures motionless in the flickering light. One knelt just in front of us, a sleek, dark, painted villain, and his eyes fairly glistened. Nellie looked very sober, and Lizzie screamed and clung to me saying: "He looks bad, very bad indeed." The Indian's eyes twinkled, it almost seemed with satisfaction, as if he understood her, and was inwardly amused. Suddenly the chant began once more, and, springing to their feet, they danced out of sight.

The next dance was a feminine affair. Two long rows of women clad in calico, ornamented with beads and shells, stood in the center facing each other, and danced backward and forward, bobbing their heads sidewise, lifting their shoulders and swinging their elbows in a most ludicrous way. Lizzie, reassured, began to laugh. "They look," she said, "as if they wanted to fly, and it hurt when they tried." Each woman had a spot of blue paint an inch in diameter on cheeks, forehead and chin. I asked the children, who thought this painting was dreadful, whether they had ever seen anything like it before. They thought not; but when I smiled, Lizzie spoke up: "Oh yes, me, at the spring," and looked sober for nearly half a minute. For the four little girls had, on the day previous, got several of the primer class and formed a mud-pie society with much hubbub at the spring, and, when I appeared on the scene, the pies being in the sun, they, with nothing of importance on hand, were comfortably streaking their own faces. Whereat I laughed, and the minxes fled with sudden confusion, appearing when the bell rang, with excessively clean faces and much averted glances.

The last dance of all was performed by a chosen few in a costume of hides and horns, accompanied with singing and clapping of hands by all the tribes. Then the usher, with his eagle-tipped rod, waved us out, and then they began those secret dances which no white man ever sees, keeping them up till nearly morning.

Lizzie, Nellie and I crossed the mining ditch on a broken plank which sagged in the middle, and followed the wandering street past the deaf shoemaker's cabin; past Mabie's ruined mill and Robert's store, and the little hotel on the slope and the funny walled-up well in the middle of the street; past the wild grapevine on the oak at the corner, and so down the hill to the black bridge over the rapid Trinity river. Then we sat down on a broken wheelbarrow and talked about the beautiful stars which shone in