

and more upon your soul. The love you bore to him when he first lisped names—your name and hers—has doubled in strength, now that he asks innocently to be taught of this or that, and promises you, by that quick curiosity that flashes in his eye, a mind full of intelligence.

And some hairbreadth escape by sea or flood that he perhaps may have had—which unstrung your soul to such tears as you pray God may be spared you again—has endeared the little fellow to your heart a thousand-fold.

And now, with his pale sister in the grave, all *that* love has come away from the mound, where worms feast, and centres on the boy.

How you watch the storms lest they harm him! How often you steal to his bed late at night, and lay your hand lightly upon the brow, where the curls cluster thick, rising and falling with the throbbing temples, and watch, for minutes together, the little lips half parted, and listen—your ear close to them—if the breathing be regular and sweet!

But the day comes—the night rather—when you can catch no breathing.

Aye, put your hair away; compose yourself; listen again.

No, there is nothing!

Put your hand now to his brow; damp, indeed, but not with healthful night sleep; it is not your hand; no, do not deceive yourself; it is your loved boy's forehead that is so cold; and your loved boy will never speak to you again—never play again—he is dead!

Oh, the tears—the tears; what blessed things are tears! Never fear now to let them fall on his forehead, or his lip, lest you waken him! Clasp him—clasp him harder; you cannot hurt—you cannot waken him! Lay him down, gently or not, it is the same; he is stiff; he is stark and cold.

But courage is elastic; it is our pride. It recovers itself easier, thought I, than these embers will get into blaze again.

But courage, and patience, and faith, and hope have their limit. Blessed be the man who escapes such trial as will determine limit!

To a lone man it comes not near; for how can trial take hold where there is nothing by which to try?

A funeral? You reason with philosophy. A graveyard? You read Hervey and muse upon the wall. A friend dies? You sigh, you pat your dog; it is over. Losses? You retrench; you light your pipe; it is forgotten. Calumny? You laugh—you sleep.

But with that childless wife clinging to you in love and sorrow—what then?

Can you take down Seneca now and coolly blow the dust from the leaf-tops? Can you crimp your lip with Voltaire? Can you smoke idly, your feet dangling with the ivies, your thoughts all waving fancies upon a churchyard wall—a wall that borders the grave of your boy?

Can you amuse yourself by turning stinging Martial into rhyme? Can you pat your dog, and seeing him wake-

ful and kind say "It is enough"? Can you sneer at calumny and sit by your fire dozing?

Blessed, thought I again, is the man who escapes such trial as will measure the limit of patience and the limit of courage!

But the trial comes: colder and colder were growing the embers.

That wife, over whom your love broods, is fading. Not beauty fading; that, now that your heart is wrapped in her being, would be nothing.

She sees with quick eye your dawning apprehension, and she tries hard to make that step of hers elastic.

Your trials and your loves together have centred your affections. They are not now as when you were a lone man, widespread and superficial. They have caught from domestic attachments a finer tone and touch. They cannot shoot out tendrils into barren world soil and suck up thence strengthening nutriment. They have grown under the forcing-glass of home-roof; they will not now bear exposure.

You do not now look men in the face as if a heart-bond was linking you—as if a community of feeling lay between. There is a heart-bond that absorbs all others; there is a community that monopolizes your feeling. When the heart lay wide open, before it had grown upon and closed around particular objects, it could take strength and cheer from a hundred connections that now seem colder than ice.

And now those particular objects, alas for you! are failing.

What anxiety pursues you! How you struggle to fancy there is no danger; how she struggles to persuade you there is no danger!

How it grates now on your ear—the toil and turmoil of the city! It was music when you were alone; it was pleasant even, when from the din you were elaborating comforts for the cherished objects—when you had such sweet escape as evening drew on.

Now it maddens you to see the world careless while you are steeped in care. They hustle you in the street; they smile at you across the table; they bow carelessly over the way; they do not know what canker is at your heart.

The undertaker comes with his bill for the dead boy's funeral. He knows your grief; he is respectful. You bless him in your soul. You wish the laughing street-goers were all undertakers.

Your eye follows the physician as he leaves your house; is he wise? you ask yourself; is he prudent? is he the best? Did he never fail; is he never forgetful?

And now the hand that touches yours—is it no thinner, no whiter than yesterday? Sunny days come when she revives; color comes back; she breathes freer; she picks flowers; she meets you with a smile; hope lives again.

But the next day of storm she is fallen. She cannot talk even; she presses your hand.

You hurry away from business before your time. What matter for clients; who is to reap the rewards? What matter for fame; whose eye will it brighten? What matter for riches; whose is the inheritance?