

TWO DAYS.

t.

I crossed a daisied field; the skies were fair;
The lusty trees stretched green arms overhead;
The sun shook gold dust thro' the April air,
And a glad brook leaped down its pebbled bed.

The meadow lark flung out such liquid notes, My happy soul stood still and leaned to hear; The wild canaries fixfled their yellow coats, And turned their restless heads in jealous feer.

And, O, my heart was glad, for it was spring;
Blue, blue, the dappled skies that swung above!
But still more glad my sou, remembering
The world was asset to me because of love.

11.

I crossed a lenely field: the skies were gray;
The winds crept in from sea with sullen moans;
Ioe-lonked, ice-bound, the brook grieved night and day,
Above the hollow sound of falling cones.

With drumming wings the motified pheasant flew:
The gheatly trees reached barron arms across:
And, O, my heart was sad—so well I know
The winter world was dull because of loss.

The other day a young friend of mine sat on a low stool, a writing-pad on her knee, and a big pucker on her brow. Presently she lifted two despairing eyes to me, and said helplessly:

"I am writing to a gentleman whom I have never met, but with whom I have had considerable correspondence. He has been very kind to me in a delicate way, and I am writing to thank him. How shall I address him?" My dear sir, sounds so cold, does it not?"

"My dear sir' sounds so cold, does it not?"

"It certainly does," I replied, laughing at her perplexity; "if the gentleman has been kind to you be deserves something a trifle more friendly than that. Why not begin note 'My dear Mr. Blank?""

She dealt me an unmistakable look of consternation. "What!" she exclaimed, in a tone fairly bristling with disapproval and resentment. "Why, he is married!"

"Well," I said, laughing outright, "what if he is married? It is not going to break his marriage vows for you to address him as 'dear Mr. Blank.' It is a mere matter of form, so common, indeed, that it means nothing save that you have a kindly interest in him. It is a beautiful way to begin a letter—warm enough to be friendly, sufficiently brief to be business like, and cool enough to be formal. Put 'my' before the adjective and you increase the formality, just as the close of the letter 'I am yours sincerely ' is more formal than simply 'yours sincerely.'"

"Well," said my young friend, drawing a long breath of relief, "that is perfectly lovely, if you are sure about it. Why, a few months ago I wrote a letter to a gentleman and addressed him as 'dear Mr. So-and-so;' and Aunt Helen saw it, and from the way she looked at me I thought I should die of mortification. 'Is it possible,' said she, and I wish you could have heard the emphasis—it was tragic, 'that a niece of mind has come to this?' To call a man dear!' I tried to explain that I didn't mean anything, but she only moaned and wrung her hands, and said I was on the road to destruction. I felt dreadfully about it, because I thought she ought to know, and to this day I have never written 'dear Mr. Anybody.'"

"But," said I, "consider. Your correspondent is a 'sir' and he is a 'mister;' why should 'dear mister' be more familiar than 'dear sir'!

Again, as 'my dear sir' is considered more courteous and elegant than 'dear sir,' so I think 'my dear Mr. Blank' is preferable to 'dear Mr. Blank'."

The rose lips smiled, and so did the violets above them; and I observed that "my dear Mr. Blank" grew beneath the firmly held pen on the smooth paper; and woe is me if ever Aunt Helen learns that I have raveled her crooked stitches out of the fabric of my young friend's mind.

An English critic is of the opinion that the lives of men and women of genius are exceptional in the sense of not absolutely conforming with the conventional standard of propriety. He cites as proof of this statement the lives of Marlowe, Byron, Burns, Shakespeare, Shelley, George Sand, George Eliot, and many others; but he conveniently forgets how white and true were the lives of Mrs. Browning, Jean Ingelow, Helen Hunt Jackson, the Cary sisters, and a host of others. Did these women, then, have no genius? Further, this critic seems rather to lean to the opinion that genius is exempted from the ordinary law of moral responsibility, and he asks: "Who

can say how many of the most beautiful lyrics of Burns owe their existence to the vice which led to his untimely death? Would George Sand have written 'Consuello' or 'Elle et Lui' had she remained all her life a conventional matron?" Why, it seems to me that this kind of reasoning would soon leave us no such thing as morality. We all know that the world is full of light that never wins an opportunity to shine, of genius that never becomes famous; so why not say at once of every lapse from virtue: "O but it is not immorality in him! It is excusable in him—only a vagary of genius!" In some dark, far forest a bird may sing forever sweeter than ever bird sang before, and it may, too, die of that very passion of melody in its little breast and nobody hear, or know, or care; so a voiceless genius may sing in a lonely breast in some quiet country or in the throbbing heart of the city, and the mad world never hear it or recognize it. If we begin to excuse the breaking of the law of morality by genuises, how would we dare to draw the line, or say who had the soul of the genius? I am afraid we would be meeting them at every turn. Would it not be better to leave genius out, and say with a sublime charity: "The strong-passioned ones enjoy and suffer, and die of that very enjoyment and suffering; and you who have more calmly flowing blood and paler passions, judge them not, for you do not understand. Though their pleasures unto yours are like reddest wine unto water, their sufferings therefore are like the terrible passions of a lion unto the frolics of the lamb, or like the wild lashing of a mighty ocean to the low laughter of a mountain rill." But even then would we not all be crying from the house-tops that our passions were stronger than our nature's strength, and that we had been tempted beyond all endurance? For our every sin, brothers, from the first white lie to the foulest murderhave we not ever our own excuse?

" Auntie," said my little niece one day, " what is a bore?" " A bore," responded I with cheerful alacrity, for I can always answer a question like that with happiness, " a bore, my dear, is a person who talks a great deal about himself and what interests him only; who tells you all about himself and his family and his coat of arms; who spreads his dress out in the street car ("His dress! O, auntie!" from my listener) so no one can sit down; who says when she-I mean he-meets you, 'Why, decrest, how ill you are looking! You are really falling off dreadfully in looks. Is it the wearing of your hair '-with such a smile-' or is it the wearing of the Who tells you that he is your true friend, that he always defends you from your enemies, and that he-h'm-is called upon to do so every day of his life; who tells you that your new gown does very well, indeed, considering that it was not made by a stylish milliner; who comes to dine with you without an invitation, and says he knew he would be welcome at any time; who tells you that she-that is, he-thinks it a shame that people should not like you, and should say such ugly things of you; who-

"Auntie," interrupted my little niece, solemnly, dropping her round chin into the palm of her hand and looking at me with very large eyes, indeed, "what very dreadful people bores are—don't you think so?"

" Very," replied I, briskly, for I was just waxing eloquent and didn't relish interruption; " and a bore is—"

"But, auntie," again interrupted the child, and she edged a little nearer to my knee in the firelight, "might not a person who is always telling about other bores, herself be considered a bo—"

"Well, for the asking of irrelevant and senseless questions," retorted I, rising and pushing my chair back with some vindictiveness, "commend me to a niece!"

Such bores as children are, anyhow.

Brethren, life is, after all, not so much a struggle between the rich and the poor, the prosperous and the unfortunate, the strong and the weak, as it is one long, passionate struggle between the body and that free, wild, deathless thing that we name the soul. The one drags us down, but the other holds fast forever and says, "Come higher." There is nothing like it on earth, save the love of a good woman.

If any one who has eyes to see and a heart to love can read Browning's "Meeting at Night" and "Parting at Morning" and honestly say he does not understand them, it is because those eyes are dull and that heart has never loved. Nothing finer in sentiment and passion was ever written.

That one's head suggests great possibilities means nothing unless it suggests, also, great firmness, great patience, great virtue.

For every little child that dies is there a new flower opens in the spring
--a white flower?

I wonder if the gods know the evil they work when they put a cleft in a chin.