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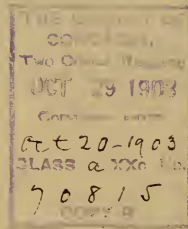
THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF  
MARGARET JUNKIN PRESTON



Margaret J. Preston



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THE LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
MARGARET JUNKIN PRESTON

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CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

WHEN a friend said to Margaret Junkin Preston, some years before her death, that he was keeping her letters for the life of her that would one day be written, she treated the matter as a fantastic joke. So little claim did she consider her literary work to have given her on fame's bead-roll that her executors do not find a scrap of autobiography among her papers.

It was perhaps the acceptance of her own estimate of herself in this connection that kept her family from offering to the public any memorial of her life at the time of her passing into the great beyond. This, and the difficulty that our increasingly busy generation finds in labor that requires what our poet herself called —

“Hours winnowed of care, —  
Days hedged from interruption, and withdrawn  
Inviolate from household exigence.”

But in the years since her death it has been found that the readers of her poetry are also her

lovers, whose sincere affection gives them the right to ask for a more complete acquaintance than her shyness had allowed during her lifetime. And it is in answer to this loyal demand that the following pages have been prepared.

If the challenge is made that what the poet withheld during her life should not now be made public, because death has left the door ajar, it seems a sufficient answer to say that no reader devoured more eagerly every scrap of biography within reach than Mrs. Preston; and none owned more frankly the debt she owed those other lives.

Her turn thus to please and instruct has now come; but the promise is given at the outset that no revelations shall be made which would have offended her womanly modesty, if she had found them upon the pages of Mrs. Browning's biography, for example, or that of one less famous than England's uncrowned poetess-laureate.

A reader of biography naturally wants to know something of the beginnings of the life whose story is to be told; but does not this curiosity too often bring down on our unwary heads an avalanche of genealogy that threatens to overwhelm us?

Mrs. Preston's forbears were for the most part strenuously occupied with life's highest duties, and were not concerned with exploiting themselves. Neither shall we seek to do this; a few lines may, however, be devoted to indicating the strains which were mingled to make up the being of this woman-poet.

Her father has left it on record that he knew

very little of his family, and that heraldry had taken no notice of his ancestors: but this did not leave him without a glow of pride in the fact that "his lineage was of that stalwart, godly, and heroic race, the Covenanters of Scotland; men and women who braved persecution for Christ's crown and covenant; and despite the curses of the Stuarts, and the claymores of Claverhouse, witnessed so long and so steadfastly for God and his truth."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Preston's first American ancestor, on her father's side, was her great-grandfather, Joseph Junkin, who came to Pennsylvania some time in the reign of George the Second, from County Antrim, Ireland. But there was no Irish blood in Joseph Junkin's veins. His ancestors had left Inverness, Scotland, for County Antrim, to escape the cruel persecutions of the Stuarts, and the little Margaret Junkin of this memoir was brought up on tales of heroism for conscience' sake;—tales which fired her heart and her imagination to the end of life. Great-grandmother Junkin, née Elizabeth Wallace, was even more the centre of these family traditions than her husband, for she had been, as a child, in the famous siege of Londonderry.

These great-grandparents of Mrs. Preston were married after coming to this country, took up land in Pennsylvania, and built on it a substantial stone house. In this mansion a second Joseph Junkin was born, who lived to fight as valiantly for political freedom, in the War of Independence,

<sup>1</sup> See *Life of Dr. George Junkin*.

as his ancestors had done for freedom of conscience. Loyalty and courage have not been lacking in the Junkin family from generation to generation.

Joseph the second married in his turn Eleanor Cochrane, another Scotch-Irish lass, of a family noted even among Covenanters for strictness of principle and practice. Mrs. Preston used to tell her children, with a mixture of pride and amusement, of the little Cochranes walking to church on Sundays, over a mountain ridge covered with whortleberries, without daring to pick one ripe berry for fear of the Fourth Commandment! And this is not an idle tale, in view of our present task; we are to find presently this morbid conscientiousness a warring element, even a controlling force, in a nature otherwise composed of the glow and flame and beauty-love and imagination that go to make up the soul of a true artist.

Having thus briefly introduced the grandparents and great-grandparents of Margaret Junkin, it is fitting to paint a little more carefully the portraits of the father and mother whom she loved with a passionate devotion passing the capacity of most hearts; whose rare goodness was ever to her their true greatness, beside which their other somewhat remarkable qualities paled.

George Junkin, the father of Mrs. Preston, was the sixth of fourteen children born to Joseph and Eleanor Junkin, in the stone mansion in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Religion and education were the foundations on which his childhood was built, and religion and education became the

two absorbing passions of the man. One might almost say that from the days of his a-b-c training in the log school-house, to the end of his honored life as preacher and teacher, there was not a day on which one or the other, or both of these high themes did not occupy the first place in his thoughts. The judgment of his contemporaries is unanimous as to his strong and acute intellect; his bold and candid character; his intense convictions; his eagerness as a reformer of what he believed contrary to God's will. It goes without saying that such a man, living in such times, could not do the work he did without arousing animosity; but the very enemies he made were ready to confess that there was not a thread of selfishness or self-seeking or dishonesty of purpose in the man, while those who knew him best could say, as did his old pupil, Dr. Charles Elliot, that he held the lamp of love, divine and human, so high that its radiance shone out on the darkest day.

Mrs. Preston's biographer is tempted to linger over the lofty and successful life of this father whom she loved so deeply; but the world has had that story, enthusiastically told.

To this earnest, combative, toilsome worker, God gave as a life companion one of the sweetest, most radiant souls that ever came from His heart of love. Julia Rush Miller, to whom George Junkin was married in Philadelphia, on the first of June, 1819, was, like himself, of Scotch parentage, being a descendant of the "Fighting Laird of Newton;" but, unlike her lover, she was reared in wealth and

luxury, and she brought to the making of his home not only beauty and grace of person, good family connection, and a considerable fortune, but that tact and fine social discernment which were hers by inheritance and training. The old legend of the halcyon bird building her nest on the stormy waters, and thereby bringing them days of calm, is the best picture one can give of the perfect marriage which made for these two a sweet and central calm on the waves of an otherwise stormy and restless life. The young bridegroom himself records that his love was such as human language was not intended to express! And for thirty-five years this sweet woman, always beautiful, always young, was the strength and happiness of his life.

Mr. Junkin was, at the time of his marriage, a minister in the Associate Reformed (one form of the Presbyterian) Church, and he took his bride to live in the village of Milton, Penn., where the young preacher was serving more than one country church. In this village, on the nineteenth of May, 1820, in a plain little hired house, was born Margaret Junkin, bringing with her into the world the unusual gifts which were to make her name known to many of her fellow countrymen whose hearts respond to the poetic touch.

There is not a person now living to tell the story of Margaret's first ten years; nor a line left to keep the record of this earliest decade. We gather, however, from the memories of much younger people in her generation some impression of what this early life must have been.

Although Mrs. Junkin had brought a generous dowry to her husband, they lived with exceeding plainness and simplicity in the little village home. For money meant to George Junkin, then and always, not ease and comfort and luxury for himself, nor even for his family, but power to do good; especially in bestowing upon worthy young men chances of education, which would fit them to become ministers of the gospel.

With his wife's full consent, Dr. Junkin began then to give with that openhandedness which resulted in his putting into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church enough men to form a whole synod! This also resulted in reducing his possessions to such a degree that his family had to be brought up in rigid economy, feeling at every turn the limitations of a narrow income.

The little Margaret was never sent to school: was this for economy's sake, or because the parents wished to keep in their own hands the early training of their precocious child? We do not know. But the child herself, looking back from her experience as a woman, regretted this loss of the companions and discipline of childish schooling. It, perhaps, fixed, even thus early, a shy and somewhat morbid habit of mind, which never left her.

But her education did not suffer. Rather, one may say, the child's childhood suffered from over-strenuous education. The seriousness, and conscientiousness, and intense realization of solemn truths, which little Margaret necessarily inherited with her covenanting blood, needed much sun-



light and play and frolicsome idleness and *laissez faire* to sweeten life, and keep a wholesome balance in the young nature.

Instead of this curriculum, she was early set to con difficult tasks. Her mother was, of course, her first teacher; and having received in Philadelphia the best education America afforded girls, Mrs. Junkin was well qualified for the undertaking. But Margaret's father was her chief teacher; and from her sixth year, when he taught her the Greek alphabet, until her twenty-first year, when, as she used to say, the door of knowledge was slammed in her face, the father's relentless ambition was matched by the child's, to make her a scholar.

I do not think Margaret knew when her young ambition to be a scholar first began to stir. Look back as far as she would towards that dawn of life, she seemed always to see the little student, pressing forward to whatever goal was set before her; never satisfied; and, as it seemed to her sensitive spirit, never satisfying her eager teacher. Ah, commendation was homœopathic in those days! Sugar-plums and words of praise were alike feared as unwholesome for children.

When our busy little girl was ten years old, her father moved to Germantown, and took charge of the Manual Labor School there. This, of course, brought the city of Philadelphia, and the friends of her mother's girlhood, within reach of an afternoon's call; and these two years, spent within the glamour of city ways, where life was eased somewhat of burden and drudgery, brightened with

opportunities of sight-seeing, and sweetened by ties of kindred and family affection, were the red-letter days in the memory of the child, the maiden, and even of the old woman. She never afterwards lived in a city, until her declining years brought her to Baltimore, and then four walls bounded the world for her.

But the two years in Germantown were chiefly memorable in Margaret's life, not for the half imaginary impression she brought thence of the ease and charm of city life, but for the beginning of that rare blessedness, a life-long friendship.

One of Dr. Junkin's teachers in the Manual Labor School, who followed him to Easton, and gave valuable aid in the founding of Lafayette College, was Charles F. McCay, a young student of Princeton College. Mr. McCay afterwards filled the chair of mathematics in the University of Georgia, and was for a time president of the College of South Carolina. He was the dearest of Margaret Junkin's early friends, and I have seen in the light of her eyes, when she spoke of him fifty years afterwards, the reflection from that great distance of his bright, lovable nature.

Mr. McCay was to the little Margaret an unselfish elder brother. He was ten years her senior, but seems to have found nothing more to his taste than the companionship of the two little girls, Margaret and her sister Eleanor, whose studies he fostered and encouraged, whose sedate little games he enlivened with boyish spirits, and whose dear comrade he was in a thousand helpful ways. We

shall see, by and by, how this golden thread of true friendship was to reappear and brighten our poet's last days.

Before speaking of Dr. Junkin's removal from Germantown, it is time to count up the little tribe of brothers and sisters who followed Margaret into this love-crowned home. There were four sons and another daughter born during the ten years of Dr. Junkin's life as pastor in Milton. Next to Margaret was John, who became a physician, a scientist, and something of an inventor; Joseph, a brilliant young scholar, who died soon after graduation; Eleanor, afterwards the wife of "Stone-wall" Jackson; George, a prominent and successful lawyer of Philadelphia, an elder in the Presbyterian Church; and Ebenezer, who spent a useful life as a minister of the gospel. Another son, William, who was born after the removal to Germantown, was in many respects the most attractive member of the family, inheriting, as he did, his mother's beauty of person and grace of manner, as well as her fine mental gifts; his life, devoted to the gospel ministry, has ended since this task was undertaken, and the sense of a great loss fills many hearts.

"There were thus six children younger than Margaret," her brother George says, "at the time of our removal to Easton. To all of us 'Maggie,' as we always called her, was a little mother. She ever had the most watchful care of us all, doing what she could to relieve her parents, as to our physical well being, and especially with regard to

our education. My first recollection of Maggie is at the time of my youngest sister's birth, in Easton, when she had the care and entertainment of the little brood, mothering us with great success." The little sister, to whose birth Mr. Junkin refers, was Julia Miller, the youngest of the eight children who lived to maturity. She was afterwards the wife of the late Professor Junius M. Fishburn, of Washington College, Virginia.

And so, peering eagerly into the mists of seventy years ago, we catch a glimpse of this ten-year old Margaret; slight, fair, with abundant auburn curls and blue eyes; quick of mind and movement; sensitive, shy, conscientious; exercising a commanding influence over the younger children, in spite of her tiny stature; tender-hearted; always busy; obedient and loyal to her grave father; passionately devoted to her beautiful and charming mother; a little house-mother herself from her earliest years; yet even then tingling with poetry and romance, and with the ambition to be a scholar—such is the dainty figure thrown upon the warmly colored background of a home rich in mental and spiritual culture.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DAYS OF HER YOUTH

THE removal of Dr. Junkin from Germantown to Easton was in the interest of an educational enthusiasm which was then paramount with him. He had left his country churches in 1829, to take the presidency of Pennsylvania's Manual Labor School, at Germantown, "convinced," he says himself, "that I might be useful in bringing into the ministry men of the right stamp, and thus do more than I could in my pastoral position." For this Manual Labor School was not intended primarily to make artisans, mechanics, or artists of any sort, but "had been inaugurated by philanthropic gentlemen of the Presbyterian Church, in and around Philadelphia, with a view to facilitate the education of young men for the Christian ministry."

After carrying on this Germantown enterprise for two years, filling the school with students, and doing conspicuously good work in organizing new and improved methods, Dr. Junkin found that his board of trustees were minded to leave to him not only the management, but the financial responsibility of the school. As a matter of fact, many of the pecuniary claims of those two years were met out of his private fortune.

And so ready was this man to spend and be spent for his fellow men that it seems likely he would have gone on supplying this deficit as long as he had a dollar left, if another factor had not entered into the question; one which was three times to uproot his plans and his home. This was his unfaltering and outspoken loyalty to conviction.

It is not necessary to enter here upon those dissensions in the Presbyterian Church which resulted in its division into the "Old" and the "New" schools; suffice it to say that this line, falling between Dr. Junkin and his trustees at Germantown, made him willing to entertain the proposal to remove to Easton, Penn., where an embryo college offered a fine opportunity for realizing the enthusiast's dreams of education which should be at once theoretical and practical.

To this new home the Junkins moved when Margaret was twelve years old; and here, with an interval spent — as we shall see later — in Ohio, the child grew into womanhood, and lived sixteen eager, busy, ambitious years. Here, of course, her education went on under the most favorable circumstances; favorable, that is to say, for the mental culture *per se*. One still doubts whether a judicious mixture of the frivolous, a little more of the companionship of nonsense, would not have been more wholesome for a highly romantic soul, much given to introspection. But that might have spoiled the poet. Who can say?

At Easton, as elsewhere, but perhaps especially

at Easton, her father's intense and absorbing purpose, which resulted in the establishment of Lafayette College, was the chief factor in the girl's education. How full of splendid moral tonic must have been the atmosphere of that home, where personal interests were not first, an end to which work and salary were only means ; but where *the work* was first, and the family a noble fellowship, whose highest aims were to further the work — for God and man ! What were Greek and Latin and French and history, compared to this school of life, in which her father, and no less her unselfish, high-souled mother, were her lesson-books !

And yet the Greek and Latin and literature were much, and at Easton Margaret's home studies were widened by private lessons from the nascent college's professors and tutors. Her application was intense. And as she was not relieved from domestic duties during these years of hard study, but on the contrary assumed conscientiously (as the eldest daughter) a large part of them, the strain must have been very great. In after years her husband would playfully tell her — towering above her small stature — that it was the weight of these studies in early life that had stunted her growth, and made her, as Browning says, "the smallest lady alive."

There was, however, another tradition in the family as to the cause of Margaret's small size, for she had been tossed on the horns of a cow, as a little toddler, a year or two old ; and everybody knows the Scotch superstition which attributes to

this mishap the power to dwarf a little child's growth!

Mrs. Preston often spoke of the difference between the avocations of her young life and the so much lighter tasks of girls at the end of the century: "We made everything we wore, when I was a young lady, my dear," she often said, "from our hand-embroidered collars and cuffs, and the worked edging on our underclothes, our corsets, and our hemstitched handkerchiefs, to our gaiter-tops, which we stitched, and then had soled at the shoemaker's, not to speak of stitching linen shirts by the dozen (with collars and cuffs attached) for our father and brothers. All this, remember, was done by hand."

"How did you ever find time to read or write?" her listener would exclaim; and thus put on her mettle, the older woman would count up the classic authors in history, fiction, and poetry which she and her sisters read under their mother's guidance in those early, busy days. "We would have been ashamed to confess ignorance of these writers," she would insist; "all educated women in my youth were expected to have at least so much knowledge."

But the circle of girls whose May-time was in the sixties and seventies, instead of the thirties and forties of the century, shook their heads (heads often innocent of Gibbon and Hume, of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth), and doubted whether the poetess was not judging her contemporaries by herself. Perhaps their suspicions were right.



Another reminiscence of Margaret Junkin's student days took the form of a keen regret in later years ; for it was connected with that loss of good eyesight which so early set a limit to the girl's otherwise unbounded ambition. "The only time," she said, "that I had to prepare my Greek lessons was after the family bedtime; the only time my busy father could hear me recite was before our early breakfast; so that study and recitation were both done by the inefficient light of our primitive candles. I am sure the close sight thus required by the Greek text put a strain upon my eyes which was the beginning of my trouble."

"Many a time," her children remember hearing her say, "when we would kiss our mother good-night, she would say to sister Ellie, 'Be sure you put out Maggie's candle when you go to bed;' but when Ellie would offer to discharge her mission, I would raise my finger in half-serious threat, and say, 'Touch it if you dare!' It was the only respect in which I disobeyed my mother's wishes, and as my father encouraged my undertaking more than I could possibly do in the daytime, I felt justified. But in this, as in everything else, my mother was far wiser than I."

Some years before Mrs. Preston's death, when an admirer spoke of her scholarship, she answered with an almost angry disclaimer, "How can you speak of one as a scholar whose studies were cut short at twenty-one, never to be resumed!" And if one limits the word "study" to systematic lessons, this was true.

For at that age Margaret's eyes were in such a condition that loss of sight was feared, and for about seven years she was hardly allowed any reading, much less study; for part of that time she lived in a darkened room, often suffering acute pain, and during the whole time her impatient spirit was chafed and fretted by thwarted ambition. She took entire charge of the house-keeping during those years, walked and visited, and helped on the education of the younger children as far as her "ball and chain" would permit.

Before this period of semi-blindness, and afterwards, the education of her brothers and sisters was the most strenuous purpose of her life, and they bear record to-day to her unwearied efforts to interest them in good reading and in memorizing poetry, besides helping them in daily and less enlivening tasks.

One of the pleasures which this failure of eyesight denied the young student was the use of pencil and brush. She had very decided artistic talent, and although want of thorough instruction and this early embargo upon the use of her eyes threw her out of the race for any prize in this respect, she always said it was the work she loved best, and that if she had been free to choose, she would willingly have thrown away her pen for crayon or palette.

It must have been soon after going to Easton that Margaret began to write. No record can be found — how interesting such would be! — of her first attempt at verse-making. Her kindred now

living cannot remember a time when she did not write verses and rhyming letters ; so that it is left to our imagination to picture the little girl, her small fair face flushed with eagerness, her hands trembling, her pulses galloping, as she feels the first breath of that *divine afflatus* which was later to take possession of her spirit, making her a priestess of no mean order in this cult.

As we cannot find, in that dim past, the beginning of her intellectual life, neither is there any record of the beginning of the deeper life which we call religion. Did she grow into that sweet inheritance of faith, which is the happy privilege of children of the covenant, hardly knowing when she made the great decision, stepping over the boundary between natural and revealed religion so early that it was an invisible line? We cannot remember to have heard her tell the story of her conversion ; but the impression her after Christian life made was that of one who had had deep conviction of sin, anxious fears, more or less struggle, as if the way had proved straight and narrow to her young soul.

There came dark days in her life afterwards when she questioned the reality of her conversion ; but she was the only one who could doubt the sincerity of a faith and devotion that for threescore years "constrained" her ; holding her to convictions of duty, prompting daily loving-kindnesses, calling forth constant acknowledgment of God's greatness and praise of His goodness, even when unable to feel assured of her own acceptance with him.

The tone of Calvinistic religion seventy years ago was sternly distant from our Lord's tender words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." One reminiscence of Mrs. Preston's childhood will serve to show how cruelly unwise and unlike their Master some of those very good Christians were in this respect. Mrs. Preston used to tell us, with a shiver at the recollection (and her little hearers shivered with her), of a certain Sabbath afternoon when the child, playing out in God's sunshine and sweet air, was caught by a solemn-faced theological student, a comparative stranger, and carried off to a darkened room, to be questioned about the safety of her soul! The little one was hardly old enough to know that she had a soul, and certainly its interests could have been safely left with her Heavenly Father; but the pious young prig, not getting satisfactory answers, told her that he was very much afraid her soul was going to be lost! Let us hope that conscience tormented the saintly idiot properly, in after days, for putting this cruel and wicked thought into the heart of a little child of the covenant, whose blessed privilege it ought to have been at that age to know only the love of God in Christ Jesus.

One must not, of course, set down to a creed the faults of its fanatics. Those lofty views of God's holiness, of his all-wise and powerful control, which men call Calvinism, were the foundation stones of Mrs. Preston's character; but we are at liberty to rejoice, as she did afterwards, that

God's infinite loving-kindness has had its proper emphasis in the teaching of this generation.

There was another incident, associated in the minds of Mrs. Preston's children with this last, which also had a most unhappy effect upon her childhood ; its evil spell was never quite exorcised. This, too, had for its background a happy little child and a bright autumn day in which the young heart was rejoicing. This time she was taken, without knowing where she was going, into a house of mourning, where people sat in solemn rows (waiting no doubt for a funeral service), and wearing looks of woe. The child was terrified at the awful silence and gloom, and when she was lifted for a sight of the white face in its coffin, and her warm little hand was taken in an older hand and laid on the dead brow, the terrible unknown chill sent a shock to her sensitive nature from which it was never to recover. As long as she lived, Mrs. Preston could never again bring herself to look upon the face of the dead, not even her best beloved ; and no faith, no hope, no promise, was able to banish from her life the haunting, nameless dread of its inevitable end.

There are found only a few letters belonging to this period of Margaret Junkin's life, most of them written to the friend of her childhood, Professor McCay, then living at Athens, Ga. They are old-fashioned sheets, folded so as to be mailed without envelopes (which were not known then), and marked "25 cents" for postage. One is inclined to regret the large part rhyme and senti-

ment play in these letters. The poet's philosophies were later on put into so much better verse that one would gladly exchange three pages of this dainty rhyme for half a page of facts about her life at that time. But we must remember, on the other hand, that it was for their poetical value they were kept! These graceful, unextraordinary verses served as an antiseptic, preserving for us pages which would otherwise have gone the way of the whole century's epistles.

The first of these letters is dated "Mount Lafayette, Easton, Nov. 13, 1840," and is entirely in rhyme, being an epithalamium, written to Mr. McCay immediately after his marriage. There are several pages of wedding-song, and then comes this bit of retrospection, which I am allowed to quote, with a smile at the word "remember" from a girl of twenty!

"I well remember all your care (would I had prized it more!),  
To open to my wayward mind the gems of Roman lore;  
When with you I o'ertraced the paths the pious Trojan roved,  
And sighed to think how fruitlessly the Tyrian Dido loved.  
And when I read the story now, beside me still you seem,  
And childhood's thoughts float o'er my heart, as mist floats o'er  
a stream."

Commonplace enough these lines are, but interesting to Margaret Junkin's biographer, as being the first word from herself about her childhood. Another verse pleases, from the evidence it gives of youthful happiness, in spite of its sentimental and poetic tinge of melancholy.

"Why do the birds seem now to pour less thrilling strains along,  
Than when our childish hearts were wont to echo to their song?"

Ah, Memory hath a wizard power her halo light to cast,  
 On all the cherished images that throng the peopled past!  
 E'en where the pall of grief is thrown across our early years,  
 When Memory gazes back 't is through the rainbow of her tears!  
 But these are musings strange for one whose brow hath felt no  
 care;

For sorrow's finger leaveth not a trace of anguish there.  
 Thanks to the higher Power above! My path as yet discloses  
 Few lurking thorns concealed amid life's many scattered roses!"

This artless and care-free sentimentality is very becoming in "Sweet-and-twenty," while the perfect rhythm and spirited fancy give — even this early — promise of the poet's riper powers. But in our ignorance concerning the details of her girlhood, we can but sigh over the postscript, which confesses there is much to say that had to be left out, —

"Not that I had not room or time,  
 But just because *they would not rhyme!*"

The next letter from Easton which Mr. McCay kept was also treasured, doubtless because of verses which the young poet had written on the last page for her friend's wife, then sorrowing over the death of a child. We catch in the first pages a glimpse of Margaret's life in Easton: —

November 14, 1845.

. . . Just now we, that is the ladies of Easton, are very busily engaged in preparing for a Bazaar, after the model of the recent one held by the Philadelphia ladies. Its object is to liquidate a debt which remains upon the College, and if its results are at all commensurate with the zeal and energy displayed by our ladies, we will realize something handsome. It is to be held during

Christmas week, and the affair is to be terminated by a tea-party, to which all the town people are to be invited. So you see that at present I have employment for all my faculties.

This "Bazaar" was not without a sad and far-reaching effect on Margaret's life, as we gather from mention made by a member of her family. Speaking of the breaking down of Margaret's eyesight, her sister says: "She did her share of the family sewing, — no machines in those days, — read everything she could lay her hands on, studied, practiced music [she never became a good musician]; did a good deal of pencil-drawing and water-color painting; . . . rising often at five o'clock, and studying until after midnight. All this laid the foundation for that suffering with her eyes which handicapped the later years of her life. When she was about twenty-five she had a severe attack of rheumatic fever, which continued for some months. Before she was sufficiently recovered from this, she became interested in a Bazaar, which was held in Easton for Lafayette College, and did for it some fine painting, which caused the first absolute breakdown with her eyes, and from which they never really recovered." (This picture, a copy in sepia of the pathetic head of Beatrice Cenci, was afterwards recovered by the family, and now hangs on her son's wall.)

To a less resolute character, the persistent infirmity of eyesight, which was henceforth to hamper the student to the end of life, would have



proved a mountain of difficulty; but Margaret Junkin refused to be daunted. Ah, that old Covenanting blood was "game"!

This handful of old letters (from which a few more extracts will be given) and the dates written on certain stories and poems show that during those years Margaret was an eager reader, with her own or borrowed eyes; a busy writer of poems, stories, and letters, with her own hand or the round, childish writing of a little amanuensis; and that she had already appeared in print as a paid contributor.

The Rev. Dr. T. C. Porter, of Easton, confirms this statement. He writes:—

I am sorry to say that I can give you no recollections of Mrs. Preston *as a little girl*; our acquaintance only began when, in the autumn of 1836, I entered Lafayette College as a fourteen year old Freshman. She was two years my senior. A taste for literary pursuits soon drew us together, and a warm friendship sprang up, which continued unbroken till the day of her death. Her remarkable poetical talent had even then won the admiration of her associates, and to have been admitted into the charmed circle of which she was the centre, where literature and literary work were discussed, admired, and appreciated, I have ever counted a high privilege. Two incidents, out of many which might be given, will serve to illustrate how her presence and example wrought.

One happened during a visit in company with a class-mate, Dr. J. M. Lowrie. Miss Margaret, who had just been reading Stevenson's "Travels in Greece," called our attention to this passage in the book: "A young

Sciote, who had returned to his native isle for the first time after the Turkish invasion, in 1822, entered his father's gateway, and found the dwelling of his childhood a desolate ruin. He wandered to the garden, and strayed through its orange and lemon groves in silence, until passing a large vase in which a beautiful plant was wildly growing, he murmured indistinctly, '*Le même vase!*'" She then proposed that each of us should fashion independently a poem which would interpret the cause and meaning of that sad exclamation. The three poems were written and critically compared.

The other incident shaped itself thus: Seated one evening on the porch, our talk began to flow in the usual channel. After a while, her sister Eleanor, whose love for poetry was not so intense, put in a remonstrance, with a "*toujours perdrix,*" and said in a vein of railery that it was impossible for us two to be together ten minutes without discoursing about the riders of Pegasus. She pronounced a forfeit upon the one who should first offend in this way again; a forfeit of fifty lines of verse on — glancing gayly over the garden-fence — "on a head of cabbage!" It was the young collegian who lost the wager and wrote the poem to a head of cabbage!

There are a few letters belonging to Margaret Junkin's life at Easton, written to her brother George just after he had left home to begin life for himself. But they are too entirely the letters an absent member of a family likes to receive, to be of interest to posterity. They are taken up with detailed accounts of events which have lost their interest: this one's health; that one's love affair; the other's illness and death; a great fire and her father's skill and masterfulness in coping

with it; sharp differences with college trustees; church meetings and interests; one friend's loss of mind; another's loss of fortune; the vicissitudes of her brothers' experiments in teaching, and in practicing medicine; the progress of the younger children in their studies.

But through them all, three chief interests shine: religion, family affection, and a repressed enthusiasm for what Margaret must by this time have felt to be her special vocation, *writing*. Along with expressions of religious devotion and loving interest in each member of her family, these letters all contain hints of poems and stories offered in various directions; sometimes accepted, sometimes refused, but always regarded by the writer herself with that mixture of confidence in her own powers, and shy distrust of the worth of her work to any outside public, which characterized her as long as she lived.

It is time now to speak of the two years' absence of the Junkins from Easton and their return to it. Indeed this episode antedates any letter that exists of Margaret Junkin's, except the one in rhyme already quoted; an uninteresting child letter; and one other from which we shall presently quote, written during that absence.

In 1841, after giving eight years of toil and sacrifice to Lafayette College, pouring out upon its interests the deepest affection of his heart, Dr. Junkin came to a time of great discouragement. It grew out of a case of discipline, in which the

president upheld his faculty, while the trustees of the college, men entirely devoid of experience in such matters, took the part of the refractory student.

It was like tearing out his heart to abandon his "lovely Lafayette," as President Junkin fondly called the college of his own making; but he had no gift for compromise, and while his most unscrupulous enemy could not suspect him of any self-seeking or dishonesty of purpose, he did not always inspire his best friends with confidence in his judgment. Many of his opinions were ahead of his time, and have since been justified; but with all his great qualities, he lacked that serene equipoise of temper and speech, necessary to a successful leader of men.

At this crisis in the affairs of Lafayette College, Dr. Junkin was elected to the presidency of Miami University, at Oxford, Ohio, and with keen regret decided to resign to other hands the Easton enterprise, so dear to his heart and so successful under his management. It must have been grateful to this sore heart to receive, on leaving Easton, an impromptu tribute of love from almost the entire population; a great crowd of citizens, young and old, lining the river-bank in a pouring rain, as the Junkins set out by boat to Philadelphia.

Of those years in Ohio Mrs. Preston was rarely heard to speak, so far as we, who knew her later, can remember. The family made friends there, as they did wherever they set up their household gods; but Dr. Junkin had taken the helm of this

State College in a time of great agitation, and from first to last he was buffeted by storm and stress. Another man, even as honest a man as George Junkin, might have soothed the agitation and disarmed hostility; but the new president of Miami had no such gifts. His Calvinism, his anti-abolition views, and his prompt punishment of unworthy conduct among students accustomed to lax discipline, kept several bands of enemies on the warpath, and the years he devoted to Miami were tempestuous times for himself and his family.

Only one letter remains, bearing the Oxford, Ohio, postmark. It is to Margaret's favorite cousin, Miss Helen Dickey, of Oxford, Penn. As one unfolds the large sheet, as large as a dinner napkin, and finds four closely written pages, crossed in several places by the delicate, beautiful handwriting already characteristic of our poet, one expects a full chapter of life experiences at that time. It is, on the contrary, a girlish effusion, full of sentimentality, which, however natural at her age, the writer of the letter never intended for the public.

The tone of this letter is distinctly buoyant, in spite of the various trials chronicled in it. Financial difficulties, disappointment in her brothers' plans, her mother's frail health, the uncongenial climate, and especially the persecution her father was undergoing—all these things are told in words which show Margaret's keen sympathy and share in them all. But the "vernal flush" of which she wrote almost enviously later in life,—

“With all its clear auroral glory  
Enrobed her like a fairy queen,  
Within a realm of fairy story,” —

and the very breath of morning exhales from these yellow, faded, old pages.

The story of her father's trials, which were in a few months to end by a return to Easton, is told in this letter, but need not be given here. Margaret writes to her girl cousin in girl fashion: “As to coming East this summer (though I wish it — oh, how much!), I might as well talk of a voyage to Cochin China. I give it up with a sigh. Ellie — dear Ellie — ‘longs to go somewhere,’ but since she cannot, is going to be contented at home. When she gets letters from her young friends, and they tell of parties, fine dresses, company, and ‘loads of beaux,’ she cannot help but wish herself where she might share such things. But, good humor prevails, and she soon grows contented again.”

On another page of this letter, the young writer says, “We have much cause for gratitude. What I have said may seem like complaint, but dearest, it is not. When there is so much sorrow in the world, I would not dare to murmur if we too are called to bear a small share of the burden; for small are all our troubles, compared with many that we constantly hear of.”

The trials of the family at Miami University were almost over when this was written. In October, 1844, Dr. Junkin was recalled to Easton and to the presidency of his beloved college by

a unanimous vote of Lafayette's trustees and the flattering urgency of Easton's citizens. His salary was now assured to him, and the financial responsibility of the college assumed by the proper authorities.

For four successful years Dr. Junkin continued at the head of this college, which was all the while growing in numbers and reputation. "Our college," Margaret writes to Mr. McCay in 1845, "is in very successful operation at present. The number of students on the ground is over one hundred; the community take an interest in it which they never so thoroughly took before, and there is reason to think that hereafter there will be smooth sailing."

But in a few years the skies were again dark with clouds of hostility. This time the trouble began with animosity in the Easton Presbyterian Church, because of Dr. Junkin's connection with a plan for organizing a second and in his opinion a much-needed church. It did not seem to lie in this vehement soul to live peaceably with those who opposed what he thought right. Several of his trustees were officers and members of the old church, and their ill will soon involved the college in a contention with its president.

One would hardly expect a man in the prime of such vigor and firmness as Dr. Junkin possessed to give up successful work on account of discouragements like these; but another trial was overshadowing him, one from God's hand, not man's, and it seemed to point to a removal from

Easton. This was the failing health of Joseph Junkin, the second son, who had developed signs of pulmonary trouble, and whose condition demanded a milder climate.

The call to Washington College, Virginia, came at this time of perplexity as to public duties and anxiety in the hitherto happy home circle; and in spite of a tremendous demonstration of good will on the part of the students and citizens of Easton, Dr. Junkin accepted the presidency of Washington College, and with his family removed to Lexington, Va., in the fall of 1848.

This second farewell to Easton sharply divides Margaret Junkin's life, and fixes her earthly destiny. Henceforth her lot is cast with the Southern people, who eagerly claim her as their poet, and boast of her work as the product of Southern talent. But Mrs. Preston herself never forswore allegiance to her native State, even in the dark days of war, when prejudice was most bitter. While her sympathy was with the cause of her adopted people, and her prayer was for their success, she believed in the honesty and patriotism of the North, and bravely risked the friendship of those she loved, and upon whose good will her happiness depended, rather than acquiesce in the universal denunciation of "the enemy," which prevailed both North and South.

Since the next chapter opens a new era in Margaret Junkin's life, we may now pause, and looking back over the sixteen years at Easton, credit them with the formation of her religious



character and the development and expansion and quickening of her intellectual life.

The influence of her family life, elevating and yet demanding self-denial and even drudgery, has already been shown. The association with cultivated and refined people is taken for granted in a college president's family; but there was one element in her Easton training which her brother George points out as having perhaps a good deal to do with forming her poetic and artistic tastes. This was the beautiful and highly romantic scenery of Easton, by which she was surrounded from childhood. One who has looked upon the wooded hills, the fertile fields, the shining waters of this locality, can readily picture the young dreamer and artist and poet, framed in the rosy dawns and glowing sunsets, the white wintry beauty, and smiling summer fairness of such a landscape.

A single poem of those days, when Margaret was about sixteen, may be given as a fair sample of the sweet versifying accomplished during her immature years. There are several volumes of such verses extant, which she only preserved as mementos of her youth, not counting them of any value nor giving them any place in her published volumes; but their inferiority to her later work only serves to mark the steady advance of her powers. Even in these early poems, however, one finds unusual music of rhythm and delicacy of fancy, qualities for which she was afterwards held to be conspicuous.

## TWILIGHT THOUGHTS

The scene is sweetly soothing now,  
The moon is shining fair ;  
Its shadows dance upon my brow,  
And tremble in my hair :  
Its astral beams so brightly fall,  
They ought to make me gay,  
And from my moistened lashes call  
The starting tear away.

'T is not a night on which to weep ;  
And yet this silent sky  
Has wakened thoughts and feelings deep,  
And summoned to my eye  
A drop that dims my reaching sight,  
And all my vision mars  
With such distortion, that the night  
Hath thousands more of stars.

If from amidst those worlds that blaze  
Majestically fair,  
The hand that lit them should erase  
The faintest trembler there, —  
We would not miss one lessened ray —  
One scintillation gone, —  
While yet within Heaven's radiant way  
Such myriads sparkled on !

I walk this earth with countless forms  
Repassing at my side,  
In each of which a spirit warms  
A temple deified, —  
Where dwells a life whose mystic light  
Was kindled at the shrine  
Of God himself, — an effluence bright  
That stamps the source divine.

Though I have part and portion too  
In gifts so strangely high, —  
'T will lightly matter, but to few,  
How, when, or where I die :

The vision that would fail to mark  
 Stars, lost from Heaven's broad scroll —  
 Would fail, as well, to miss the spark  
 That twinkled from a soul!

I must content myself to pass  
 As a receding wave,  
 Or one among the blades of grass,  
 That fade upon my grave;  
 To die as summer blossoms die,  
 Beneath the frost-breath hoar, —  
 Yet *they* shall come again, — but I,  
 I can return no more!

No more — no more — to bid them wake  
 Old memories fond and deep,  
 Nor of my spirit-presence make  
 Them conscious — save in sleep:  
*Could* I be in their midst again,  
 And their sweet brows have kissed —  
 'T would be a sense akin to pain  
 To find — I was not missed!

To learn that in the heart whose love  
 Was once my proudest store,  
 The place I held all else above,  
 Was held for *me* — no more:  
 To see some other idol's place  
 On what was once *my* throne, —  
 While not a single memory strays  
 To her beneath the stone.

With sadden'd musings such as these,  
 I've dimmed the moonlit hour, —  
 How vainly! Spirit-mysteries  
 Are heedless of the power  
 Of earth-bound ties: if Heaven will give  
 A trust serene and high, —  
 'T will matter not, if thus I live,  
 How, when, or where I die!

## CHAPTER III

### LEXINGTON

THE late Dr. John Hall, of New York City, some years before his death was invited to preach the baccalaureate sermon to the students of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Va. When he rose before the large audience that filled the University Chapel, gathered from the town and county, the people were almost startled by the expression of affectionate greeting on his face: "My friends," he said, "I am not a stranger among you, though I have never looked into your eyes until now; for the faces that I see before me are the faces of my Scotch-Irish people whom I left behind in the north of Ireland; my kinsmen — I greet you!"

So the Junkins might have said, when, after a weary, roundabout journey, by steamboat from Baltimore to Fredericksburg, by rail to Gordonsville, and thence by stage-coach, they reached the village of Lexington, late in the fall of 1848. The people with whom their lot was now cast were descendants of that bold stream of immigrants which rolled down through Pennsylvania, into the Valley of Virginia, and on through North Carolina into South Carolina and Georgia, — those

pioneers who had been fitted by their God-fearing love of liberty, their enduring of hardships, their overcoming of difficulties, to found a race and establish a government.

Their descendants were, they are still, a quiet, undemonstrative race; more careful of truth than of pretty politeness of speech; dignified rather than graceful; earnestly religious, but not very tolerant of any other than the simple form of Presbyterian worship and church government; intensely proud of their Scotch-Irish race; good lovers; good haters; unfaltering in courage; immovable in their convictions; rather dull, perhaps, as pleasure-seekers; but with active and alert minds, addressing themselves to the upholding of their country, to the advancement of public welfare, and especially to the education of their children.

Religion — Education — and Political Honesty! What triumvirate could have been more exactly suited to George Junkin, preacher, teacher, and reformer?

Dr. Junkin's wife and children had followed him with willing loyalty from Milton to Germantown, to Easton, to Ohio, and everywhere had made friends; everywhere had found happiness, even in the midst of difficulties. But Lexington claims to have furnished for them the most congenial and peaceful home of their lives.

Dr. Junkin did not find as many students at Washington College as he thought such an institution had a right to expect; but he found, his

biographer says, the morale of the student body so high, the discipline so good, the harmony between trustees and faculty so cordial, that the new president was free for almost the first time in his life to devote himself without friction, and without the jars of reorganization, to administering the duties of his office, to advancing the standard of education, and to the influencing of young lives. Those of us who remember him, and those who study the record of his life, see that the energies thus relieved of uncongenial tasks, rose up straightway in many high endeavors for the good of mankind. But the writer needs to be reminded that these pages are intended as a memorial of the daughter; that daughter's own enthusiasm seems to creep into the pen, so willingly does it run to portray the father.

The Junkins were received in Lexington with something nearer akin to enthusiasm than these sonsie Scotch-Irish often exhibited, and the gifted eldest daughter was especially admired and sought after. I quote from one who was a mere child at the time the strangers came to Lexington, whose life afterward came into close and intimate relationship with the poet; one who is — alas! no longer here to enrich these pages with further reminiscences: —

“Miss Maggie — as we always called her, was the object of my secret, enthusiastic worship. She was not exactly pretty, but her slight figure, fair complexion, and beautiful auburn curls furnished a piquant setting for her refined, intelligent coun-

tenance, which made up for the lack of mere beauty. I used to thrill with admiration as I watched her riding at a swift gallop, a little black velvet cap showing off her fairness, the long curls blowing about her face.

“Her manner to us younger girls was delightful; never patronizing nor supercilious, but most sweet and engaging. We wondered that a person who could write poetry, which seemed to our limited experience a sort of miraculous gift, should condescend to talk to us about our studies and games as if she were one of us. She never talked about herself — we wished that she would — she did not betray the slightest sense of superiority, except in the matter of wider privileges, such as acquaintance with libraries, pictures, etc., and these experiences she seemed eager to share, constantly lending us books and magazines, repeating poetry to us (other people’s poetry), and talking in a way that charmed us about pictures, artists, and authors.”

This testimony to Mrs. Preston’s modesty follows the record of her long life. On one of her last visits to Philadelphia, some time in the eighties, a magazine editor sought her acquaintance, with flattering eagerness, to ask for contributions for his pages. She was gratified at the request, and quite willing to give him the poems he asked for, but it was all her friends could do to induce her to see this gentleman himself! She declared that she had never submitted to literary interviews, and she never would! However, when

dragged almost by force into the library, she enjoyed the interview exceedingly, and charmed the stranger by her unaffected cordiality, not less than by her appreciation of all literary matters touched upon.

Miss Rebecca Glasgow, who was then a young lady in Lexington society, and who became one of Margaret's dearest friends, remembers how much admiration was expressed by the gentlemen of the town for the interesting and vivacious conversation of the young stranger, especially when the excitement of an evening party gave a sparkle and charm to her otherwise rather shy manner.

The youngest daughter of the Junkin family, who was a child at the time of this removal to Virginia, says:—

“My first memory of Lexington is of arriving at midnight, in a December snowstorm, after a twelve hours' ride from Staunton, in an old stage-coach. This was before there was a turnpike or plank-road, and the ups and downs we had that night made an impression on our bodies as well as our minds! Father, mother, and brother Joe had gone a few days earlier. We were received with the greatest kindness by the Lexington people, and soon made many very pleasant friends. The kindness of everybody in our sorrow, which came soon after, we never forgot. I do not know anywhere of people more sympathetic, and kinder in trouble of any sort.

“We soon began to feel at home, and to fall into the Lexington ways of living, and I think we



were all very happy. For those of us who made it our home, it was afterwards the scene of our greatest happiness and greatest sorrow; and as nothing tests the love and kindness of friends like emergencies, we proved that of the Lexington people.

“As I was only a child, I do not remember as much about society as an older person would; but I remember this, — that almost always after coming home, Maggie would report to mother, who was deaf, and on that account went out very little, the delightful conversations she had had with some of the many cultivated men connected with the literary institutions. This habit of telling everything to our mother I remember most pleasantly. We never went out, even on the most trivial errand, that we did not sit down and tell her everything we had seen and done and heard, so that she did not feel so cut off from the world around her as many deaf people do.

“From the time we went to Lexington, we all used to take delightful long rambles, rather to the surprise of Lexington people, who were not quite so energetic. We found the earliest spring flowers on the ‘Cliffs,’ and ‘Cave Spring’ was a favorite spot to walk to (several miles from town), stopping always for a rest at the picturesque ruins of old ‘Liberty Hall.’”

There are two or three letters before me, written during these first years in Virginia, which enable us to see life through the eyes of Margaret herself. The following extracts from one of them paint the picture of her new home in bright colors;

and if the colors are a little brighter than nature's, was not the artist poet as well as painter?

Sept. 9, 1852, LEXINGTON, VA.

You have been pitying me, dear J., this summer, have n't you? Tied down as you know I have been to my quiet country home, while you have had the pleasure of strolling it at Newport, and Sharon, and Saratoga, and how many more places of fashionable resort your next letter has yet to tell me. Well, if such has been the case, I have only to say that your commiseration is very superfluous; for I question if your migratory life has had as many of the elements of happiness centering in it as my stationary one.

. . . Why did you not accept our invitation to come down and breathe the sweet pure air of our Virginia mountains, instead of whirling off to those everlasting "Springs," where life seems to *my* rustic taste the most artificial thing in the world? . . . You should have risen while the birds were at their first overture — for you cannot imagine what a peal of vocalization ushers in our day — such, I promise you, as all the Parodis and Linds and Albonis in the world could never equal. Uncle Felix should have had horses saddled for us, as he has had for E. and myself all summer, at half-past five o'clock; and what a gallop we should have enjoyed, over misty hills, down into little green shaded glens, under overhanging branches, all sparkling with silvery dew. And what views — "beautiful exceedingly" — I should have delighted to point out to you! They would have appealed to your admiring gaze with such power as to "haunt you like a passion," seen under the brightness and breezy freshness of "one of those heavenly days that cannot die." \*

And then, as the ascending sun rose higher over the mountains, and the full orchestra of bird music began to settle into a subdued murmur that seemed fading away into the forests, and the canter of four or five miles through the bracing atmosphere whetted our appetites, we would turn our horses' heads and scamper away at the same brisk pace homewards. Then you should have changed your riding gear — not for any such elaborate toilette as the belle of the Springs is expected to appear in, but for the simplest of white morning dresses, and with glowing cheeks and brightened eyes, and a sense of invigoration which nothing short of such a gallop can impart, you should have sat down to an old Virginia breakfast.

As to occupation for the forenoon, why here is the "Knickerbocker" and "Harper" and the "Eclectic" and such free access as you might fancy to my last package of new books. Then we could put our two heads together, and get up a pretty bit of criticism about some of the literary débutantes of the day. We might pitch upon Alice Cary's "Clovernook," for example, and you would agree with me, I know, in thinking it much overpraised.

[There follows a comparison of Miss Cary with Miss Mitford].

Or, while E. and I finished up the sketches taken in our last walk, you should read aloud to us "Uncle Tom's Cabin," till the blood flashed indignantly up to your cheek, and you felt disposed to spurn Virginia soil beneath your feet. I, in the mean time, would grow half angry at the one-sided book, and we should well-nigh quarrel about the mooted subject, when the sight of *Homer's* happy, care-free, black face and sleek, well-

conditioned person, set becomingly off in white pants and apron, as he comes to announce dinner, should clinch *my* argument, and bring you over to a more correct way of thinking, before you had got through with your soup.

After dinner you might have a long pleasant nap (*siesta* is the word in vogue now) with grasshoppers and katydids to sing your lullaby. The little rockaway should be at the door at six, if you chose to take a drive; or we might walk to "The Cliffs" to see the sun go down behind yon wavy horizon of mountains, if its setting promised to be fine, and saunter back in the gloaming, just in time to have coffee handed in the free and easy, social, Virginia style in the library. . . . Yet mingled pleasantly up with our country rambles and rides, we have an occasional taste of society that is extremely agreeable. Dining the other day at the house of a friend, I found that not less than four of the company had been abroad; and so we had racy descriptions of men and things in other lands, and spicy anecdotes of celebrities whom we all know *upon paper*. I was much interested in the relation of a conversation which a lady near me had had with Baron von Humboldt, when in Berlin. She could scarcely be persuaded of the fact that he was over eighty years of age, so fresh and vigorous is the appearance of the wonderful old man.

[We have here more reminiscences of her dinner companion on Humboldt's appearance and habits.]

While the servants were carrying around *les entremets*, a gentleman beside me described the kind of breakfasts he used to take with the Count de Survilliers, when he resided in this country, and I learned, what I

did not know before, that *la salade* was as indispensable at a French déjeuner as coffee. But I am not going to tire you with all that was said during dinner, how reed-birds and rails and woodcocks were discussed with true Apician relish, and how as the delightful fruits melted away before us, &c., &c.

As this little volume claims to be history, it is perhaps necessary to say that our poet could never be trusted to tell an unvarnished tale! True, she used only facts in her narrations; but the poor bare facts would have found it hard to recognize themselves when she was done with them! It was neither history nor romance, but the romance of history. Thirty years later than this letter to J——, Mrs. Preston spent a summer in Maryland, in the home of her step-daughter; on one occasion she read aloud to the family a letter she had just written to the daughter of Canon Kingsley, giving a description of her surroundings. "What place is Grandma writing about?" asked a little listener, to the great amusement of the rest.

One whose memory goes back to a time only eight or ten years later than the date of the letter just quoted testifies that dinings, at which guests gave personal reminiscences of distinguished foreigners, were not of every-day occurrence in the village of Lexington!

Thus, the relations to new work and to new society were formed under bright auspices; but the hearts of the family were burdened with anxiety during that first winter in Lexington. For

the dear brother, whose ill health they had fondly hoped the Virginia climate would help, failed so rapidly after their arrival in Lexington that it was evident he could not live through the winter in its mountain climate. Dr. John Junkin was summoned from Trenton, N. J., and the two brothers hastened to Marianna, Fla., where they established themselves for the winter. Meantime, the tender hearts in the new home at Lexington lived upon letters from the South, now hopeful, now discouraging. As spring came on, hope was abandoned, and the stricken father wrote to his oldest son to bring the invalid home to die. Mail communication was slow and indirect in those days; there was no telegraph; and the home circle had had no tidings for some time before the day set for return. The stage-coach reached Lexington before dark, and drove first to the one village inn. There the father awaited his sons, and grasped John's hand as he sprang out; then turned — poor father! to greet the other boy. Alas! That other's grave had been made in the sands of Florida!

This was the first of the many partings Margaret Junkin was called to bear; and never did a heart feel grief and anguish more keenly. Other mourners learn to submit to the inevitable; some are lifted by faith to such a realization of the happiness of the departed that grief is softened; with some, old age dulls the keen edge of suffering; and here and there hearts are seen to rise above grief, and assert their natural buoyancy.

It was never so with this sensitive, passionate, intense soul. She suffered inexpressibly as the shadow of approaching trial fell upon her; she quailed under the blow itself; and she looked back upon sorrow with a poignancy of regret that time seemed powerless to soothe.

Sometimes we thought her unreasonable; she herself confessed that such sorrow was unchristian, and beyond question it was most unusual. But perhaps it was the price the woman-nature had to pay for her poetic gift: when the harp-strings were so finely attuned as to respond to every slightest breath of feeling and fancy, how could the rude storms of life fail to make havoc with such a delicate instrument? Later on, her friends realized that at this great price she obtained a marvelous power of bringing comfort, by her poems, to other sad hearts; and while they pitied her suffering, they envied her high privilege.

The following paragraphs are from a letter to her brother George, written a few weeks after Joseph's death:—

LEXINGTON, VA., May 4th, 1849.

MY BELOVED BROTHER, — I feel an earnest wish to do what I have not done for a long time — to write to you; and with J. as my amanuensis I shall endeavour to accomplish it. Your letter to Father was received a day or two since. You will to-day see John, and learn from him more than we could tell you in half a dozen letters. Father left home the same morning that John did, having been requested by the trustees of the

College to be present at the meetings of some of the Presbyteries, to present before them the subject of scholarships. He went away down the Valley, ninety miles from this, to a rough and wild part of the country ; returned last night, after eight days' absence ; and notwithstanding that he had been preaching all the time he was gone, and had been travelling over rough roads since two o'clock the preceding morning, he was off on horse-back this morning at six, to attend the Lexington Presbytery, more than thirty miles distant. So you see that with increasing age come no lighter labors to him.

Mother has been very much supported. She has not dwelt as much as I have upon the far-off, lonely grave, and the forsaken clay ; but with a Christian's vision she follows the spirit of her darling child into the mansions which Jesus has prepared for those who love Him. I feel as if it would be wrong to go back to life again and find the pleasure in it that we did before this bereavement. It seems like treason to the memory of our departed one. God intended to wean us from the world by this providence.

Smitten friends

Are angels sent on errands full of love ;  
 For *us* they languish, and for *us* they die ;  
 And shall they languish, shall they die in vain ?

One naturally opens the poet's scrap-book, to find some record of this first great sorrow of her life, in that verse which had for ten years and more been her chosen form of expression. And as might have been expected, this cloud furnishes the background, or it may be only a softening shadow here and there, in most of Margaret Jun-



kin's writing at the time. One of these short poems, though still showing the immaturity of a young writer, deserves place here, as an immortelle, springing from that lonely grave in Florida:—

#### THE HALLOWED NAME

I once could speak those simple words  
 With gay and cheerful tone,  
 And hear them fall from other lips  
 As lightly as their own ;  
 But now my voice grows tremulous  
 And low, as if it came  
 Through sobs that choke me, when I breathe  
 The old familiar name.

If suddenly it smites my ear,  
 It wakes a sudden start,  
 That with concentric motion thrills  
 The surface of my heart.  
 All other visions break before  
 That circle's widening sway,  
 Till on the outmost verge of tears,  
 My memories melt away.

Why should these sounds have power to call  
 Such sadness to my brow ?  
 And wherefore has that name become  
 So holy to me now ?  
 Why can I only murmur it  
 With tender reverent breath,  
 As if — the while — I kissed a mouth  
 Made consecrate by death ?

Far off, above a grave that lies  
 Mid other graves unknown,  
 Strange eyes now see it cut upon  
 A monumental stone :  
 They dream not, as the brief sad line  
 They frame with thoughtless air,  
 Through what a gush of tears my eyes  
 Would read it graven there !

Close hid within my brooding heart  
 I keep that sacred word,  
 Which midst the throngs of living men  
 Shall never more be heard :  
*He* could not find on earth again  
 Scope for his spirit's aim :  
 Ah, since an *angel* bears it now,  
 It is a hallowed name !

The following letter, with which this record of the first years in Lexington may close, shows, happily, a returning cheerfulness, natural to the young hearts whom God had smitten, whom He was also healing : —

LEXINGTON, VA., Nov. 25, 1850.

As the season for your city parties and gaieties draws on, dear J., we, who live within the shadow of these Virginia mountains, are compelled to find our sources of enjoyment at our fireside. Not that sociality, which is the atmosphere in which Southern people "live, move, and have their being," is by any means done away with by the approach of winter : that would indeed be out of the question ; for visiting with them amounts to something like a passion. If we wished for some designation that would embrace a prevailing characteristic, such as we use when we speak of the "fox-hunting English," or the "smoking Germans," or the "opium-eating Chinese," no better could be found than the "*visiting* Virginians" ! Dining people, and being dined, is with the real Tuckahoe one of the weighty and important businesses of life ; and the ennui incident upon having to stay at home for a few days, without having company or being company, is considered quite insupportable.

But a great barrier to such enjoyment exists in the

state of our winter roads, which might sometimes almost answer to the caricature which you may remember Dickens gives, in his American Notes, of a ride from Washington to Alexandria. We do not set up any claim to public spirit in the matter of internal improvements, and are shamefully content, I confess, to let all the glory that appertains to them belong to the go-ahead, active Yankees. However, we have such long delightful autumns that our winter does not really set in much before Christmas: but after that — shade of Macadam — what mud we have! We are then obliged to forego our rambles on foot, for, unlike English ladies, I am sorry to say we are not willing to brave all weathers for the sake of air and exercise. Our horseback excursions, too, have to be for the most part abandoned; so that we have only the resource of the carriage left us, with which we are, or ought to be content.

A few days since, E. and I were at "Mount Albyn," where our friends the G.'s live: and as parties, or perhaps weddings, are somewhat in your line just now, let me describe one at which, while there, we happened to "assist," as the French politely say.

A circle of us were sitting around the wide parlor hearth one morning; the young ladies busy with their crocheting and needle-work of various kinds, and I reading aloud to them Hawthorne's new book, "The Blithedale Romance," which I had slipped into the pocket of the carriage to beguile the way with, in case E. might not be in a talkative mood. The volume had not been opened by us on the way; and so it was fresh for us and our friends at "Mount Albyn" to enjoy together.

By the way, since I have spoken of it, don't you think the newspaper critics are a little too lenient in

their judgment of the "Blithedale Romance" when they say that there is no falling off in it as compared with Hawthorne's other works? To me it seemed quite below "The House of Seven Gables" in point of interest, of conception, and of artistic finish. What character, for instance, does it contain that can for a moment compare with "our poor miserable old Hephzibah"? Or what is there in it like the dewy freshness of "little Phebe"? As to the point of the moral, either it is not very distinctly perceptible, or my comprehension is very dull. Of the two horns of the dilemma, of course it is safest for me to take the latter; as it is dangerous to utter a whisper that would not go to swell the breath of popularity on which Mr. Hawthorne is now wafted along. But I did n't mean to give you a critique upon the New England romancer.

We were busy, as I said, over the book, listening to the weird-like chapter of the "Veiled Lady," when Fanny G. interrupted our quiet, by a bustling entrance into the room: "The Veiled Lady!" she repeated, as she caught the words; "Where is she? I must have her veil for to-night; for I have just had such a pressing application from a prospective bride, that I have promised that one *shall* be forthcoming." She then went on to explain to E. and myself, what her sisters already knew, that "Rhinie," their waiting-maid, a pretty and jaunty-looking mulatto girl, who had attracted my attention by her amusing imitation of the air and manner of her young mistress, was that night to be married to a servant from a neighboring plantation.

You must know that the negroes almost invariably prefer to intermarry with strangers, rather than with their own fellow servants, even though by this arrangement they only meet once a fortnight or so; one of the

reasons of this preference seems to be that when the husband comes to pay the weekly or monthly visit, some little present is generally expected, and brought. A few pounds of coffee, or sugar, a little parcel of tea, a pair of fowls, or a new head-handkerchief, are the husband's gift, purchased with the eighteenpence that find their way to the pockets of any of them who choose to perform extra services. The wife, in turn, has a trifle for her "ole man," too; "one of young Marser's" vests, it may be, which she has made look "mighty nice," she tells him, "tho' 't wan't no 'count nohow," when she got it. Or she has a *bonne bouche* for him in the shape of her pet ducks, which she has roasted for the occasion, or a savory pie, or something equally acceptable. A lady speaking on the subject not long ago told me that her mother had a valuable servant woman who seemed to be very strongly attached to her husband; and as she only saw him once in a fortnight, it was proposed, as a reward for her faithfulness, to purchase him, merely for her gratification, as there was no call whatever in the family for his services. "Then please Marm, Miss Sally," she said to Mrs. P. when the latter told her of her intention, "please marm, sell me — I'd rather you did n't own me and Davy both!"

Well, not to run away from my subject again, "Rhinie" was to be married, and she wanted to be dressed as much as possible like "Miss Maria," who had been the object of her most unbounded admiration when she had been married the year before to the young planter "down on James River." Miss Maria had worn a satin dress, it is true, but a white dotted muslin satisfied "Rhinie." Miss Maria had had a veil of costly lace depending from the orange flowers in her hair to her white slippered feet; and "Rhinie" had been teas-

ing her pet Fanny for "something that would *look* like a veil, even though it should be a piece of Miss Sophy's old lace window curtains."

You know the peculiarity that most slaves have of designating their mistress by the name she was accustomed to bear before her marriage. This arises from the fact of a young lady always carrying servants from her father's house when she goes to one of her own, who of course retain the old name, and hand it down to the younger tribe that grow up about them; so that one constantly hears the mistress addressed by her maiden name, even though she be a grandmother.

Fanny had not succeeded in finding anything among her own possessions that would suit the purpose of the bride-elect. Her sister Sue remembered an old-fashioned wrought-tissue veil, such as used to be worn some twenty-five years back by country brides on the first Sunday of their appearance at church, and she good-naturedly went in search of it. So interested did my recent listeners become in the anticipated wedding that, after various ineffectual attempts at reading, I was content to give up the weakly, gentle Priscilla, and the queenly Zenobia, for the nut-brown maid "Rhinie."

An airy summer dining-room, of larger dimensions than the more cozy arrangements for the winter warranted, and which accordingly was not used in cold weather, except on the occasion of a great Christmas dinner, or something similar, had been granted by Mrs. G. for the bridal party. "Miss Sophy's" table-linen and "chiney" had been lent for the nonce; and such a whisking about as there was of turbaned heads! Such a running in and out of the great dining-room. Such an air of importance among the little negroes, who were bringing in irregular bunches of the garden flowers

which the frost had spared — white and red and yellow chrysanthemums, with sprigs of cedar, to the little girls Harriet and Sophy G., who were busy weaving wreaths for the cakes that were to grace the table.

The list of invitations had been despatched the day before, written by Harriet at Rhinie's dictation, and most amusingly imitative of the "white folks." The child had blotted her sheet, and so had to do her work over again, and it was thus I got a sight of the duplicate list. It may amuse you, J., to know that its wording was just what yours would be, were you issuing cards for a party! "Miss Rhinie G.'s compliments: she will be happy," &c. Then followed the names: "Mr. Pompey Randolph and lady; Mr. Milton Peyton and lady; Mr. Sambo Harrison;" and so on; the surnames of course being those of their masters.

Dinner was gotten over considerably earlier than the usual Virginian hour of four, for the convenience of the servants; and we were duly informed that the bride hoped "you alls white ladies would do her the favor to come and see her married." At the hour designated, all the children of the house, whose sympathies were greatly enlisted in the matter, and to whom Rhinie was scarcely less important a personage than one of their sisters, came running to inform us that "Uncle Adam" was come, and they were just going to begin. We followed the eager little girls, and together with the rest of the family, made our way to the dining-room, which was already filled with black faces.

Fanny G., who was about fourteen, had had the ordering of affairs pretty much her own way, and had taken care that there should be no lack of light. The silver candelabras were on the mantel, holding *tallow* candles, it is true, instead of sperm; while the long table, with

its wreathed cakes and rows of light, did credit to the young hands that had arranged it.

As we entered, and the smiling and tittering and grinning groups rose to acknowledge the favor done them, one of the young ladies whispered into my ear a line of Byron, slightly parodied:—

“The lamps shone bright o'er *brown* women and *black* men!”

The little negroes were gyrating about among the larger ones, in clean aprons and trousers, pinching one another's ears, and pulling one another's woolly hair, for very merriment, and receiving in return admonitory cuffs here and there, from some grave, white kerchiefed “Aunty.”

At length “Uncle Adam” gave the signal by stepping out into the floor: he was a venerable looking, grizzly-headed old man, whose dignity of *preacher* gave him great weight among his colored brethren. The dark mass parted, and Rhinie, leaning languidly on the arm of her chosen, glided forward, followed by the train of sable attendants. All were bridally attired, and *the veil* floated most becomingly over the mahogany shoulders of the bride. The hands of all were duly encased in white cotton gloves, with the exception of Rhinie, who sported—through the favoritism of Miss Fanny—a pair of spotless kids. When “Uncle Adam” directed the groom to take his betrothed's hand, there was a deal of tittering from the difficulty of drawing off the tight glove! At last the bridesmaid succeeded in accomplishing it; but not without severing the thumb in her efforts, at which the titter became for a few moments an uproarious peal; but a shake of the preacher's head restored silence, and he went on: “Do you, brother Sampson, take this lady whose hand you've got-



a-hold of, to be your weddin' wife, and do you promise, afore God and these white ladies, that you're a-gwine to be a lovin' husband to her?" "Yas sir," promptly responded brother Sampson, with as decided a bob of the head as the stiffness of his high collar would permit. "And do you, sister Rhinie, promise to take this gent'-man to be your weddin' husband, and not to give 'im up for nobody else, till death you does part?" The veiled head drooped in gentle affirmation.

"Kiss your bride, brother Sampson."

The groom turned to do as he was bidden, but the coquettish Rhinie, forgetful of her position and her new dignity, whirled on her heel to escape the pouting lips that were proffered, and was lost for a little while to our view among the laughing groups that closed around her. The remembrance of our presence soon recalled her, however, and put her upon her good behaviour again; and she came forward to receive the congratulations which we stood ready to offer.

We did not wish to impose the restraint of our presence upon the wedding-party long enough to wait and see the bride's cake cut; so with an assurance from the bride's mother, Mrs. G.'s old cook, that she would send up a waiter of "good eatin's" to the parlor, before she allowed anybody to touch a mouthful, we took our leave.

I wish, J., you could have heard the merry *haw-haws* that reached us in the parlor, as we sat with our coffee-cups in our hands round the well-filled waiter which had been despatched to us. If you had, I do not think your heart would have been disposed to waste much superfluous commiseration upon the so-called "poor unhappy slaves." After the supper was fully over, you should have heard the tum-tum-ing of the banjo, and the echo

of the noisy feet that kept time to it. Indeed, the sound was so contagious, we could hardly keep our own feet still, and felt like whirling one another around the room, from the mere force of sympathy.

When Mrs. G. thought the merriment had been kept up long enough, she sent word to some of the "old folks" to that effect. The noisy guests at once acquiesced, preparations were immediately made for departure, and by half after nine o'clock, all were gone, and the premises at "Mount Albyn" were again reduced to their usual quietude.

Your inference may be that Rhinie would be quite spoiled by all this fuss about her. Not at all, my dear. The next morning we found her at our bedside, very little after the usual hour, dressed in her neat, everyday, linsey "coat" (as the negroes call a dress), quite ready to do our bidding, and looking only a little abashed as we reminded her of her new dignity of wifehood.

But surely, if it *did* spoil our servants a little sometimes, is not this better than the utter and entire want of interest and sympathy that exists between Northern mistresses and their domestics? But enough on this subject: so, dear J., au revoir!

## CHAPTER IV

### LIFE IN LEXINGTON

MARGARET JUNKIN spent nine years in Lexington, before giving up her father's home and her father's name, for a dearer name and home. They were years which wrought more changes in her family than any yet chronicled in these pages, and one expects, therefore, and finds, a rapid maturing of character and powers in our poet.

For a few years after Joseph's death, their mourning dress separated the family from all festivities; but the simple customs of the village did not seclude them from the visits of friends, and even of mere acquaintances, so that the intimacy already begun with congenial neighbors was fostered rather than delayed by the withdrawing of Mrs. Junkin and her daughters from social gatherings. And in a few years, urged no doubt by their cheerful and brave-spirited mother, the girls laid aside their mourning, and once more took their places in Lexington's innocent and provincial gayety.

During those nine years, in spite of almost constant trouble with her eyes, in spite of uncertain health, in spite of the incessant practical demands of economical housekeeping and the claims of her

needle, Margaret made long steps forward in mental culture and in the quality of her work. Her indefatigable industry of body and mind was a natural gift; but conscience applied the whip and ambition the spur, and between them the little lady knew no rest.

At this time she had a strong inclination towards writing prose, and several stories of hers took prizes in newspapers and magazines. They would not take prizes now! Their style was dainty and graceful, and there was always a highly moral and religious tone in these rather demure tales; but she had no gift for story-telling. In later years Mrs. Preston was ready enough to acknowledge this limitation, and to take good naturedly our playful gibes at her prim heroes and paste-board heroines.

The stories, however, laid golden eggs, and we readily forgive the desire for such results when we find in these old letters that the writer coveted ducats mainly that she might make gifts, right and left. The brother living in Philadelphia seems to have been her banker: the fifty, sixty, and one hundred dollar prizes were put in his hands, and a constant stream of pleasure-giving presents, sometimes shrouded in Christmas or birthday secrecy, flowed down into Virginia. There is one pretty picture in these letters, of the little sister Julia having her ears pierced, upon the promise of a pair of ear-rings if a certain story took the prize! While we gaze at the little maid, on tiptoe between hope and fear, the faith-

ful scrap-book relieves our minds by recording that the story in question took a sixty-dollar prize in the Baltimore "Weekly Sun."

In August, 1853, came the first change in the family circle since the death of Joseph; this was the marriage of the second daughter. Eleanor was only a few years younger than Margaret, and the two sisters had been devoted and inseparable friends; dressing alike, walking and riding together, sharing the same room, the same duties, the same recreations. Eleanor was less shy than Margaret, and was generally thought to be the elder; she also had more pretension to beauty, and was of a merrier, more social disposition. The very fact that she lacked Margaret's poetic gifts made her perhaps less sensitive and less introspective. Her religious faith, having the simplicity of a trustful child, undisturbed by the questionings of an over-active brain, made her one of the sunniest, happiest of beings. This brightness of temper, and a calm, clear judgment, Eleanor inherited from her lovely mother; and these gracious qualities made Margaret the more dependent upon her sister.

Eleanor had had lovers before coming to Lexington; but her girl's heart had been untouched until she met Major T. J. Jackson, the young and seemingly unremarkable professor of mathematics in the Virginia Military Institute, Virginia's "West Point Academy," which was also situated at Lexington, a stone's throw from Washington College. Eleanor's family, while honoring

Major Jackson for his dignified and substantial character, were perhaps just a little surprised that such a grave and ungraceful person should captivate her heart. But they soon learned to love Major Jackson, and to hold the girl's choice a wise and fortunate one. The world now knows that Eleanor's rather unattractive lover was a hero, — one who was only waiting, with the unassuming modesty of a true hero, the opportunity to prove himself a great and renowned captain.

Eleanor Junkin had more to do with the extraordinary piety which was afterwards so conspicuous in "Stonewall Jackson," than has ever been told. You read in his earlier biography that his tendency was worldly and pleasure-loving, and that even after his conversion there was nothing at first of the devotee about him. He goes to Lexington; and the biographies leave you somewhat vaguely to gather that the earnest Presbyterianism of its Scotch-Irish people there laid hold of him, and wrought him into the uncompromising Puritan he was so soon to show himself, when the great war theatre displayed him to a world's gaze.

But it was a stronger power than the mere influence of a godly community. Love, the mighty magician, had a hand in this high endeavor. Major Jackson found in Eleanor Junkin not only the sweetest woman he had ever known, and the most charming and engaging companion, but the highest type of Christian, as well. Hers was the stanch, conscientious, God-fearing faith of the old Covenanters, sweetened and sunned and

blossom-covered by a dainty and altogether lovely womanliness. No wonder the young soldier-professor, tossed hither and thither as he had been since boyhood, found in this noble and loving woman the rest and joy of a satisfied heart; no wonder he adored her purity, revered her strength of conviction, and gave himself up to her guidance in spiritual matters, in which he recognized her as his superior.

A little instance of this belongs to the story of the Jacksons' wedding journey. Margaret, who was traveling with the bride and groom, wrote, years afterwards, of a certain Sunday in Montreal, when "it was a matter of surprise to the rest of us to find Jackson going out on Sunday afternoon to witness the drill of a Highland regiment. When the matter was reverted to by some of our party, he defended himself stoutly for having done so, giving as a reason the principle on which he had hitherto acted; namely, that if anything was right and good in itself, and circumstances were such that he could not avail himself of it any time but Sunday, it was not wrong for him to do so, inasmuch as it then became a matter of necessity."<sup>1</sup>

The young wife quietly but firmly differed from Jackson, insisting that this "was a very sophistical way of secularizing sacred time," and gave

<sup>1</sup> This and certain other anecdotes of Jackson quoted in these pages are from an article written by Mrs. Preston for *The Century Magazine*, which the publishers have kindly given me permission to use.  
E. P. A.

instances showing to what inconsistencies such a line of argument might lead. There was no stubbornness in Jackson's nature; it was one surprisingly open to conviction; and he said on this occasion, "It is possible that my premises are wrong; when I get home I will go carefully over all this ground, and decide the matter for myself." Yet, as he had not reached his conclusion then, he had no hesitation in spending all Sunday afternoon in hilarious conversation with some old army friends, whom he accidentally encountered.

"When Jackson returned home, he took up this Sunday question, gave it a most thorough investigation, and laid down a law for himself of the utmost severity, from which he never afterwards swerved."

Mrs. Preston illustrates this change in Jackson's Sabbath-keeping views, by giving numerous instances of his scrupulousness in the matter of not posting or receiving or even reading letters on Sunday, and adds an anecdote of this nature, from her husband's experience as Jackson's staff officer: —

In the winter of 1861-2, while Jackson's forces were at Winchester, he sent a brigade to destroy the canal leading to Washington. The expedition proved a failure, and he attributed it in some measure to the fact that Sunday had been needlessly trespassed upon. So, when a second expedition was planned, he determined there should be no Sabbath breaking connected with it that he could prevent. The advance was to be made early Monday morning. On Saturday he ordered



my husband (Colonel Preston, at that time on his staff) to see that the necessary powder was in readiness. The quartermaster could not find a sufficient quantity in Winchester on Saturday, but during Sunday it was procured. On Sunday evening this fact got to Jackson's ears. At a very early hour on Monday he despatched an officer to Shepherdstown for other powder, and summoning Colonel Preston, he said very decisively, "Colonel, I desire that you will see that the powder which is used for this expedition *is not the powder that was procured on Sunday!*"

This moulding influence, exerted over the Stonewall Jackson of the future, was, her sister says, "a fitting crown to Eleanor's short and beautiful life." For a little more than a year the Jacksons lived in Dr. Junkin's home, and then the lovely young wife was caught away, to that fuller life, —

" where her forehead was starred

With the beauty that dwelt in her soul ;  
Where the light of her loveliness could not be marred,  
Nor her spirit flung back from its goal."

But before that time came, another and a heavier blow had fallen on the happy household in Lexington. On the 23d of February of that year of 1854, the light of the household went out, in the sudden death of the beloved mother. This was the crowning sorrow of Margaret's life. Her father's death twenty years afterwards, her husband's, and her brother's were to come so much later in life, and attended with such mitigating circumstances, that, although they brought their own heavy burden of grief, they could not be to

this passionate, sensitive nature what the mother's death had been. For the mother had been Margaret's daily happiness, her strength in weakness, her comfort in sorrow, her reward for labor, the sweetener and sharer of all joy. Was this "inordinate affection," from which one must pray to be delivered? When the heavy blow fell, Margaret's easily aroused conscience accused her of bringing this anguish upon herself, by loving her mother too much, and her very life seemed threatened by the grief which overwhelmed her.

And yet Margaret's letters show that she was striving to do her duty to her family and friends, and that she acknowledged God's goodness and mercy in these dispensations of His providence. But she was like some stricken thing, going about with the arrow in her heart's centre. And when Mrs. Jackson, too, the beloved "sister Ellie," was laid beside her mother in the Lexington churchyard, the pall lay heavy above Margaret's head, stifling for the time all hope of cheerfulness.

The only letter to be found, giving her own feelings at this time, was written to the dear friend of her childhood, Professor McCay, and is dated June, 1854, four months after her mother's death, and about four months before her sister's.

You say that you cannot imagine the greatness of our loss. Ah, you cannot indeed! Not even if the beloved one at your side were under the sod, and the children at your knee were sobbing for the mother who could come to them no more. For the ties that bound us to *our* beloved have been the growth of so many more

years, that the rending of them asunder must be proportionately more agonizing. You knew what she was to my father in his younger and busier years, and to us when we were children ; but you cannot know the *absolute necessity*, a necessity which seemed strong as life, which she became to him and to us afterwards. It was beautiful to see how the world appeared to touch Father only through her : how the mellowness of his westering sun caught continually such a genial sparkle from her radiant face : how he leaned with such tenderness upon her for his purest, best joy this side heaven ! And for us — *for us* to live without that dearest, sweetest sympathy, that wonderful untiring love that never in our pleasures or our sorrows for one instant failed us — it was bitter — it *is* bitter indeed !

But *the inevitable* — how inexorable it is ! God's will may not be resisted ; or if it is, we only sink down at last to a lower depth of grief, baffled and weakened by our poor vain struggles against it. I think we, one and all, have been enabled to say, even amidst the fierce waves that have gone over us, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt !" At first, the suddenness of the summons distracted us more than it did dear Mother. We had been nursing her all winter, but had no reason to apprehend any danger, until a short period before her death. The morning of the day she left us, our fears were greatly excited, but the physicians allayed them afterwards, and our darling sufferer herself had, I believe, not even a distinct thought of danger. About two hours before her death, a startling change occurred, and then for the first time we knew that we must lose her — she knew that she must go. But there was no alarm — no fear — no cloud — no doubt — no lingering. Her dear lips spoke only words of cheer *for the left behind*, and an unwaver-

ing trust and hope for herself. Her bright eyes were loving and brilliant even to her latest breath.

Father repeated the old version of the 23d Psalm, "Yea, though I walk, &c.;" she continued the last two lines of the verse; he took up the next verse, she finishing it, and so on, till the last.

"Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me" —

She repeated, "And in God's house" — but strength failed her, and what her mortal lips could not frame into words, her immortal spirit the next moment, by its glad parting, realized — "forevermore my dwelling place shall be!"

My dear friend, I never imagined before how easy a thing it is to die. Why, I could have lain down beside my precious one, and gone too, without fear, had God so permitted. In the intensity of my anguish it seemed a far harder thing *to live*. And now that the most beloved object to which my heart ever clung has "passed over to the other side," it will be easier for me to go too, when my time comes. I never feared to do what my mother did, or go where my mother went, and I trust I shall not shrink here. God grant us, and you, my friend, such grace to live and die by, as *she* had. None of my brothers were here at the time. Eben is with us now, and George and Willie come next week; George bringing with him his bride. Father is calm and cheerful, and says life will grow brighter to him every year, as he will be drawing continually nearer to Heaven and Mother.

The letter ends with expressions of love for the little daughter in her friend's home, who had been given the name of this dear mother, Julia Junkin,

in memory of Professor McCay's early friendship. "I hope," the letter says, "that the darling may have as many to love her while living, as many to mourn her when she dies, as the one whose name she bears."

How little the letter-writer dreamed that in the distant future, and in a city far from Lexington or Georgia, that "little namesake" was to become her ministering angel!

This chapter might have had for its caption that line of the old song, —

"Some to the bridal and some to the tomb!"

for we turn from these grievous afflictions to chronicle Nature's compensations for such inevitable losses. The household in Lexington now consisted of the father, Margaret, Julia, and Major Jackson, who continued for some years to be a member of the family; but three fortunate marriages brought back the sunshine of happiness to these bereaved hearts, before the oldest daughter left her father's roof.

The letter last quoted, written in the summer of 1854, speaks of the Philadelphia brother as bringing his bride to see them: George Junkin was married that year to Jeanie DeForest of Saratoga County, New York, a descendant of the Jesse DeForest whose letter to the English king, written while the Huguenot was a refugee in Holland, asking help for his exiled brethren, is to be seen to-day in the British Museum.

It was a sad time for the young girl to come

into her lover's family, when such heavy griefs lay upon them, but along with her dark eyes and extraordinary beauty, this daughter of an exiled race had inherited courage, forbearance, and a great heart. She brought a blessing with her, and became especially dear to Margaret.

The next year, the youngest son, William, then installed as pastor of Falling Spring (Presbyterian) Church, nine miles from Lexington, married Miss Anna Aylett Anderson, of an old, aristocratic Virginia family, a young lady whose beauty and charm held many lovers in thrall, from the Blue Ridge to tide water.

A letter from Margaret to the friend Rebecca Glasgow, spoken of in the last chapter, may be quoted here, to show how these joyful occurrences were helping the sister's life to recover its normal tone, in spite of the grief that was still so poignant. The letter was written immediately after her brother William's marriage.

I was greatly disappointed that you and your sisters did not come with the wedding party on Wednesday. They did not get here till 7 P. M.; and the little company who had been asked to meet them, had been awaiting them some time. At half after seven we sat down to dinner. "Uncle Young" (an old negro servant) protested against a regular dinner at such an hour: "Leave off de *soup*, anyhow, Miss Maggie!" But no, we went through it all, and it was after nine before coffee was handed in the parlor. I must tell you how elegantly my plum pudding turned out: the only one I ever made. I wish I could have sent you a slice, for,

ornamented as it was with strips of orange peel and citron, it was *pretty* as well as good; as good as that black cake you praised.

Anna looked very sparkling, and the fawn silk which she wore was elegant, and vastly becoming. Next morning at eleven they left in high spirits. I have heard three times from them since. The weather has been against them, but a note from Anna, from Philadelphia, says that nothing has marred their pleasure!

Dearest R., you cannot think how my heart ached while I smiled on them on Wednesday night. Mother and Ellie were constantly before me, *and their graves*. Only by saying over and over to myself, "They are happier than we are!" could I keep down my tears, till I laid my head on my pillow, and let my grief have way. But God be praised! I have only to be *patient*, and after a little while I shall be with my heart's best beloved again.

I had a very pleasant letter from Mr. Fishburn this week. He thinks Berlin a wicked place; no Sabbath there. He gave me an account of a visit to Potsdam, and Sans Souci, Frederick the Great's favorite haunts: but I'll show you the letter when you come in. Now I must go to my daily Spanish lesson with the Major (Jackson). Love to each and all, your devoted — M. J.

The foreign correspondent alluded to in this letter was Junius M. Fishburn, professor of Latin in Washington College, a young man of brains and character, highly educated and accomplished, and a Christian of unusual influence for one so young. Dr. Junkin's youngest daughter, Julia, was engaged to Professor Fishburn at this time, and the young people were married the following year, 1856.

The record of these years goes to show that literary pursuits and aspirations in no degree dulled womanly instincts and craving for affection in Margaret Junkin's heart, for she did not look to her muse for solace in these days of sorrow and change, and the breaking up of the family circle. Except for her story "Silverwood" and a few poems, she seems to have written less during the five or six years that followed her mother's death than at any other period of her life. Next to her home duties and church privileges, it was to her friends that Margaret turned for comfort in the loneliness and desolation that followed the breaking of these precious ties.

Of such friendly consolers, her brother-in-law, Major Jackson, was easily first. His place, as a son of the household, was as near to Margaret's heart as that of her own brothers, and his constant presence encouraged an intimacy which was not possible in the case of the absent brothers. And then these two shared in a peculiar way the latest grief that had come to the family, for they were the two dearest beings on earth to Eleanor, the beloved wife and sister, whose sudden death had been so unexpected and so pathetic.

Mrs. Preston frankly claimed that Jackson never revealed his inmost thoughts and feelings to any human being as he did to her during the four years of his widowhood. The lonely reserve of his former life had been broken up by that brief year of sweet companionship with Eleanor; he felt, as he had never felt before, the need of



sympathy, and where would he find it so surely as in the friendship of this sister, whose grief was his grief, whose loss was his loss?

Two letters from Major Jackson, written at this time to Margaret and her brother, show how entirely he felt himself to be a member of their family.

LEXINGTON, VA., Feb. 6th, 1855.

MY DEAR BROTHER, — Though I have necessarily been prevented from writing to you, yet I have not neglected to think of you, to speak of you, and to pray for you. How could it be otherwise? Whatever else of earth may pass away, I hope that every kindness shown to me in my sore bereavement may remain indelibly stamped on my memory and on my heart: and I have certainly received much sympathy and kindness. I have seen Father, Julia, and Will, each silently and quietly doing what would contribute to my comfort. I appreciate it all: they are all kind and affectionate; and though I have been much attached to Eb. since our first acquaintance, yet I have never so fully appreciated his noble worth, as since the hand of our Heavenly Father was laid upon me. And dear Maggie! How can I ever make an adequate return for her deep solicitude? My heart yearns to see her; and yet it may be best for her that we should not so soon meet;<sup>1</sup> for my tears have not ceased to flow, my heart to bleed. I cannot realize that Ellie is gone; that my wife will no more cheer the rugged and dark way of life. The thought rushes in upon me that it is insupportable — insupportable! But one upward glance of the eye of faith, gives a

<sup>1</sup> Margaret had been taken to Philadelphia, immediately after her sister's death.

return that all is well, and that I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. Are not his promises wide enough? The height and the length, the breadth and the depth thereof, no mortal man can fully measure or take in. The greater his trials, the more full and ample will they be; and always coextensive — yea, exceeding his wants; and at every step he shall be able to say, Though I pass through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Give much love to Jeanie and Maggie, in which the others join me. I have long been wanting to write to Maggie, and hope to do so in a few days.

Father hurt his knee yesterday, by the giving away of the stile as he was mounting; the injury was a sprain, though not so bad as to lay him up in bed, and he went to his duties in College to-day.

LEXINGTON, VA., Feb. 14th, 1855.

MY DEAR SISTER MAGGIE, — Your kind and affectionate letters have remained too long unanswered. Often have I wished to reply to them, but you well know the reason why I have not done so. And even now, I shall not pretend to answer them: this would require a much longer letter than I could well write, in the present state of my eyes. If dear Ellie was here, she would answer them in her beautiful manner; and how her pure heart would overflow, at the thought of your being so affectionately kind to me. You and I were certainly the dearest objects which she left on earth. And if her emancipated Spirit comes back to earth, and sees how we are bound together, and how we have a mutual bond of strong affection for *her*, do you not suppose that it thrills her with delight? I know

that such would have been the case when here, and I believe that her capability of enjoyment is increased in Heaven. When I stood by her grave, and that of Mother, last Saturday, they were both covered with snow, and though their bodies rested beneath the cold covering, was it not in color emblematic of their spiritual robes of white? I can hardly yet take in the thought that she is forever beyond the limit of my temporal vision; that it is impossible that I should ever behold her again in this world. When I think of her tender love, and the many joys of which she was the source, and then think of my desolate present contrast, which forces itself upon me, the burden is too much; I am forced to seek relief; but is not that always accessible, and always adequate, in the blessed promises of Him that changeth not? I have always found it so, and I have the assurance that it always will be so. For He has said, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." My dear Sister, from my heart I thank God that (though He has left me to mourn in human desolation) He has taken dear Ellie to Himself. I am well assured that He left her with us to the latest moment consistent with His glory, hers, yours, and my happiness. For no good thing will He withhold from His children.

Dear Maggie, I did not intend to say so much about myself; it looks so selfish that I wish I had time to write another letter; it would be very different.

Though I have not said much about you here, yet I have thought of you much, and prayed for you much, and your best interests are at my heart. I am very anxious to see you well and at home, and have looked with much interest to your improving health. But anxious as I am to see you, I do not want to see you

at home, so long as your physician thinks it necessary for you to remain in Philadelphia. I did not write in reference to securing a place for John in the army, because I felt a delicacy in doing so without Father's approbation, and he thought it would be best to do nothing until he heard from a person to whom he had written in reference to John. But if you think that John would be willing to stand an examination before the Board of Surgeons, I will write on for a warrant for him and if the Board is constituted as it has been for a number of years back, I will be able to give him a letter to its president, who is a very worthy gentleman, that I feel sure will be serviceable to him. Should he go before the Board, he will find the examination a very searching one: but in the event of his passing, he will have an independent position. His duties would be light. His association would be with gentlemen, and he would receive a salary of about \$1000, which would increase with time. He would find disadvantages growing out of irreligious influences, and being ordered from place to place, so as to interfere with domestic comfort.

Give my love to Jeanie and George, and to John and his wife, if they are with you. And do write to me soon; you do not know how much pleasure your letters give me. . . .

Your very affectionate brother,

THOMAS.

"Under any circumstances," Mrs. Preston afterwards wrote of Jackson, "he was a man *sui generis*: no one who came into close enough contact with him to see into his inner nature, was willing to own that he had ever known just such another man. . . . Knowing him as I did, and having the

opportunity of witnessing his daily life in my father's home, I held a key to his character, possessed, I verily believe, by none about him; because I was close enough to be allowed unguarded insight into the very pulse of the machine; and I recall the incredulity with which my declaration that Jackson was the very stuff out of which to make a stirring hero, was received, before any sword was lifted in the contest.

“His habits of study were very peculiar; but then what was there that was not peculiar about this exceptional type of humanity? Nothing but absolute illness ever caused him to relax his rigid system of rules: he would rise in the midst of the most animated conversation, like the very slave of the clock, as soon as his hour had struck, and go to his study. He would, during the day, run superficially over large portions of French mathematical works, and then at night, with his green silk shade over his eyes, and standing at his upright desk, on which a light always burned, with neither book nor paper before him, he would spend hours in digesting mentally what he had taken in during the afternoon in a mere mechanical way. His power of concentration was so great that he was able wholly to abstract himself from whatever was extraneous to the subject in hand.

“ . . . After the death of my sister, it became the established custom that at nine o'clock, unless otherwise occupied, I should go to his study for an hour or two of relaxation and chat. But if I knocked before the clock had struck, I would find

him standing before his shaded light, as silent and as dumb as the Sphinx. Not one moment before the ninth stroke had died away, would he fling aside his shade, wheel round his easy chair, and give himself up to such delightful nonchalance that one questioned whether this could be the same man that a moment before seemed to have neither motion, sight, nor hearing.

“In such intercourse I came to know the man as never before. His early life, his lonely orphanage, his struggle with disease, his West Point life, his campaigning in Mexico (which was to him so full of delight), his service among the everglades of Florida, his life at various posts, up to the time of his coming to reside among us — all these furnished material for endless reminiscence. The blow of his wife’s death was a terrible one to him, and when I would hear him say, as I sometimes did, ‘ Ah, if it might only please God to let me go now!’ I marveled at the depth of his grief. And yet his resignation was very perfect, and to wear the aspect of cheerfulness became a fixed principle.

“And indeed, his nature had a side that was decidedly sportive and rollicking. He would tell amusing stories, and be so carried away with them himself, as almost to roll from his chair in laughter. More contagious and hearty laughter I have never heard. He used to tell of hungry raids upon Mexican gardens, where he and his brother officers would make their supper on raw quinces; of his ascent of Orizaba, going so high that the

rarefied atmosphere forced the blood from his ears and nostrils; of his gay delightful life in the City of Mexico, where, after all hostilities were over, the American officers were received into the homes of the old *noblesse*, who boasted of their pure Castilian blood, with entire oblivion of them as their conquerors. He was very fond of dancing at this time, and he had no hesitation in being present at Sunday-night balls. When surprise would be expressed at this, he would say, 'Remember, I lived then up to all the light I had, and therefore I did not then, nor do I now reproach myself.'

"He was quartered in the old palace of the Montezumas, and it was very evident that the charms of society never had so strong a hold upon him as when he was mingling freely with those beautiful Mexican women. To make intercourse at all easy, it was necessary to speak Spanish. He resolved to do so; but not a grammar of the language could be found in the city, save Latin ones. But this in no way deterred him; in an incredibly short time, he mastered Spanish so thoroughly that he spoke it as long as he lived, more volubly and gracefully than his vernacular. Indeed, between himself and his wife this language became the main vehicle of communication. With some families of note in Mexico, Jackson formed warm friendships, which he maintained to the end of his life. And the silver stilettos and knives and memorials of various kinds, with which they loaded him on his departure, were always regarded as among his treasures.

“The name of fanatic will probably stick to Jackson; and he will continue to be classed with such men as Peter the Hermit and Loyola and Cromwell to the end of the chapter. But a fanatic, a visionary, an enthusiast, he was not, in any such sense as were those men. His fanaticism consisted in the intensity of his own religious convictions, which, contrary to the wont of all fanatics, he never thrust upon others. The fact is, he maintained a degree of reticence in the matter of alluding to personal religious faith, that many Christian men might find fault with; and it was only by dint of urgency that the inmost springs of action were often discovered. In all the intimacy of our close home life, I do not recall that he ever volunteered any expression of what is called ‘religious experience.’ But the habit so often noticed by his soldiers, of momentarily raising his hand as if in prayer, seems perfectly natural to one who knew how he construed Scripture commands.

“It was on the long journey to Canada of which I have spoken that the military enthusiasm of Jackson’s character first revealed itself to me. My sister and myself stood with him, one magnificent August evening, on the Plains of Abraham, at the foot of the monument erected to General Wolfe. As he approached the monument, he took off his cap, as if he were in the presence of some sacred shrine. I never shall forget the dilating enthusiasm that seemed to take possession of the whole man; he stood a-tiptoe, his tall figure



appearing much taller than usual, under the overpowering feeling of the moment; his clear blue eye flashing with such a fiery light as it used to wear on many an after battlefield; his thin, sensitive nostrils quivering with emotion, and his lips parting with a rush of excited utterance, as he turned his face toward the setting sun, swept his arm with a passionate movement around the plain, and exclaimed, quoting Wolfe's dying words, '*I die content!*' 'To die as *he* died, who would not die content!'

"What a revelation it would have been, could he have known, then and there, that in a very few more years, moved by as pure a patriotism, on a broader field of fame, and with a world-wide glory, before which Wolfe's pales into insignificance, he *should* 'die content'!

"And yet, though it is often urged that Jackson was possessed with boundless military ambition, this is not the impression he made upon those who knew him in the privacy of domestic life. He had some odd ambitions; military glory was not one of them. At the period of life of which I write, not long before the opening of the war, he used to express aversion to some of the aspects of a soldier's career: its nomadic character, its want of domesticity, its stagnation in times of peace, and its interference with the ordered routine of a religious life. He dissuaded a brother-in-law from entering upon it for these given reasons. One of the curious ambitions alluded to was the desire to prepare some college text-books of a

mathematical kind, that should be better than those he could command. He certainly had no special fitness for this kind of work, and many were the arguments used to dissuade him from the attempt."

Writing of Jackson further on, Mrs. Preston says: "That excellent man, Mr. John B. Lyle, an elder in the Presbyterian church in Lexington, Va., once put into Jackson's hands a little volume illustrative of the power of prayer. Major Jackson was suffering at the time with his eyes, and asked me to read it to him. It was the recorded experience of an humble English soldier, most of whose life had been passed in the army, and who, on retiring from service, devoted himself to the establishment of Sunday schools among the neglected purlieus of London, which in time grew up into Christian churches. This man's experience of the power of prayer was of the most remarkable character, very similar to that of Franké, the originator of the famous Halle Orphan Schools. I allude to this book because of the peculiar manner in which it arrested Jackson's mind; for so frequently did he afterwards revert to it, that it was evident its influence was far-reaching and lasting. Thus the simple act of the devout elder may have had a traceable bearing upon the brilliant successes and achievements of the Christian hero!"

Speaking of Major Jackson's efforts for the teaching of the negro at this time, Mrs. Preston says:—

“It was pleasant to walk about the town with him, and see the veneration with which the negroes saluted him, and his unflinching courtesy towards them. To the old gray-headed negro who bowed before him he would lift his cap as courteously as to his commander-in-chief.

“There was nothing too minute to be subjected to Jackson’s unchangeable criterion of duty. The following illustration may seem too trifling to be mentioned, but it is so characteristic that I cannot forbear mentioning it: his long continued sufferings from dyspepsia had induced a predisposition to drowsiness, which he was very apt to yield to when sitting for a length of time quiet or unoccupied. Especially in church would this infirmity beset him, though most strenuously and conscientiously resisted. Still he could not be persuaded to relax his military habit of sitting in a perfectly erect posture, thus rendering the unwilling *nod* all the more apparent. When playfully pleaded with to lean back in the pew, for the reason that he would be less conspicuous, and the cadets opposite him in the gallery would be in less danger of being injured by his example, or at least that he would cease to be a source of amusement to them, his constant reply to our badinage was, ‘I will do nothing to superinduce sleep by putting myself at ease, or making myself more comfortable: if, however, in spite of my resistance I yield to my infirmity, then I deserve to be laughed at, and accept as punishment the mortification I feel.’

“No harsh judgments or criminations were ever heard from his lips. Though most discriminating in his estimates of men, he was reticent to the last degree in passing judgments upon them. ‘Judge not that ye be not judged,’ he understood to be as positive a command as ‘thou shalt not steal.’ Yet he would say, ‘It is quite contrary to my nature to keep silence where I cannot but disapprove. Indeed I may as well confess that it would often give me *real satisfaction* to express just what I feel, but this would be to disobey the divine precept, and I dare not do it.’”

To the generation who knew Jackson as the stern military man, the genius of fiery battlefields, it will be surprising to learn from this intimate associate that “Jackson’s organism was of a singularly sensitive character, and he had by nature an incredible impatience of and shrinking from pain. His revulsions at scenes of horror, or even descriptions of them, was almost inconsistent in one who had lived the life of a soldier. He has told me that his first sight of a mangled and swollen corpse on a Mexican battlefield, as he rode over it the morning after the conflict, filled him with as much sickening dismay as if he had been a woman. He was once suffering with neuralgia of no remarkable severity, as it seemed to a looker-on, but he turned with a look of agonizing impatience and said vehemently, ‘I could easier die than bear this for three days!’

“Only in the innermost circle of home did any one come to know what Jackson really was. His

natural temperament was extremely buoyant, and his cheerfulness and *abandon* were beautiful to see, provided there were only one or two people to see it. He was exceedingly fond of little children, and would roll with them over the carpet, play them all manner of tricks, and amuse them endlessly with his Spanish baby-talk."

But enough has here been quoted to show that Margaret Junkin's companionship with this singular and interesting and altogether lovable brother-in-law was her greatest solace during those grievous years.

Of other friends there was no lack in Lexington. The two high-class institutions of learning brought to the little town an unusual number of refined and educated people from the outside, who found already established there, as the home of several generations, the pick of those Scotch-Irish settlers already mentioned in these pages.

The Presbyterian Church had at that time for its pastor the Rev. William S. White, D. D., a man like Daniel of old, "greatly beloved," and a warm sympathizer with the newcomers in all their sorrows and joys. The nearest neighbors of the Junkins on College Hill were Major Hill (afterwards General D. H. Hill, C. S. A.) and his wife, and Professor and Mrs. Dabney, and these interesting people became close friends. At Col-Alto, Governor McDowell's fine old mansion just out of town, there was a family of charming daughters, who, having mingled in the best society of Washington and Richmond at the time

of their father's public life in the two capitals, were unusually interesting companions. The Ann-Smith Academy for girls was at that time in charge of the Misses Nottingham, English people of a specially intellectual turn, while all the children of the village — we did not need public schools in those days — began their mental training in the care of four unmarried daughters of the Rev. George Baxter, the former president of Washington College and pastor of the Presbyterian Church.

But I find it impossible to continue this list, so many names present themselves of friends whose affection for Margaret Junkin ended only with their lives or hers. She outlived most of them, but one of the last of these intimate friends, Mrs. John L. Campbell, whose husband succeeded Professor Dabney in the chair of chemistry in Washington College, used to bring her sweet presence, radiant with love and trust, to the invalid's chair during Mrs. Preston's last years in Lexington, and more than any other had the gift to soothe and cheer.

One of the little faded notes to Miss Rebecca Glasgow, undated, but written without doubt in 1856, says: "I send you a book to read which I hope will interest you, inasmuch as the *author* is well known to you. I wrote it to embalm the characters of dear mother, Ellie, and brother Joe. You will recognize the characters, and many of the scenes are from life. Don't let anybody know the authorship; it is a secret. But tell me can-

didly how *you* like my book, when you have read it." This was "Silverwood," the only attempt at a novel that our poet ever made. It is a sweet story, old-fashioned now in its style, but graceful and wholesome. If it had been written twenty years earlier it might have attracted more attention; if the writer, who was already known as a poet, had put her name upon the titlepage, it would certainly have been more noticed; and this the publisher contended for, offering two hundred dollars more for the manuscript if he might use the author's name. But Mrs. Preston always said that she was satisfied with the verdict of the unprejudiced public. "If it had deserved immortality, it would not have died," she would say, adding half playfully, half mournfully, "it was a very *gentle* death!"

There was one page of "Silverwood" which survived its obsequies, — the beautiful verses which form its "Proem." Ah, this was wrought with the poet's own tools, fitted to her skillful art; the rest of the book came out of an unfamiliar and borrowed workshop: —

#### PROEM TO SILVERWOOD.

Turning tearfully the pages

Which the past has written o'er,  
With the thousand precious records  
Of the changeful heretofore, —

Records luminous, where brightly

Joy the sunbeam glows and shines,  
Records with a throb of heart-break  
Trembling all along the lines, —

I have gathered of the gladness,  
And the grief that fill the book ;  
Here some grace's shadowy outline —  
There some tender tone or look.

Transcripts, oh ! how faint, beloved !  
Dim suggestions of the rare  
Inner realms the world around you  
Did not dream were hidden there.

Like the spies of old, I've entered,  
Searching all the richest parts,  
Bringing back these grapes of Eschol  
From the Canaan of your hearts !

For I need the wine of solace,  
Which this cluster sweet supplies,  
Since ye pluck the food of angels  
'Midst the hills of Paradise.

Or as Ruth among the reapers,  
Memory like a gleaner strives  
Thus to gather up a handful  
From the harvest of your lives,

Like an exile in her sorrow,  
Seeking, 'midst the cast off leaves,  
Golden grains of thought and feeling,  
Dropped from out the garnered sheaves.

If she has not filled her bosom  
With the full and ripened ears,  
'T was because her eyes were clouded,  
And she could not see for tears !

But the poem which is the truest utterance of those years, and which reaches at a bound what some readers consider the high-water mark of Mrs. Preston's work, was written in 1855, a year after her mother's death, and published in the



“Southern Presbyterian.” It is included in “Old Song and New,” but the version given there was altered, more than ten years after it was first written. Let us read it here as it stands in the old scrapbook of forty-five years ago.

#### A YEAR IN HEAVEN.

A year uncalendered ; for what  
 Hast *thou* to do with mortal time ?  
 Its dole of moments entereth not  
 That circle, mystic and sublime,  
 Whose unreached centre is the throne  
 Of him before whose awful brow  
 Meeting eternities are known  
 As but an everlasting *now* !  
 The thought removes thee far away —  
 Too far beyond my love and tears ;  
 Ah ! let me hold thee as I may,  
 And count thy time by earthly years.

A year of blessedness — wherein  
 Not one dim cloud hath crossed thy soul ;  
 No sigh of grief, no touch of sin,  
 No frail mortality's control ;  
 Nor once hath disappointment stung,  
 Nor care, world-weary made thee pine ;  
 But rapture, such as human tongue  
 Hath found no language for, is thine.  
 Made perfect at thy passing — who  
 Can sum thy added glory now ?  
 As on and onward, upward through  
 The angel ranks that lowly bow,  
 Ascending still from height to height,  
 Unfaltering where rapt seraphs trod,  
 Nor pausing 'mid their circles bright,  
 Thou tendest inward unto God !

A year of progress in the lore  
 That 's only learned in Heaven ; thy mind

Unclogged of clay, and free to soar,  
 Hath left the realms of doubt behind.  
 And wondrous things which finite thought  
 In vain essayed to solve, appear  
 To thy untasked inquiries fraught  
 With explanation strangely clear.  
 Thy reason owns no forced control,  
 As held it here in needful thrall ;  
 God's secrets court thy questioning soul  
 And thou mayst search and know them all.

A year of love ; thy yearning heart  
 Was always tender, even to tears,  
 With sympathies whose sacred art  
 Made holy all thy cherished years.  
 But love, whose speechless ecstasy  
 Had overborne the finite, now  
 Throbs through thy being pure and free,  
 And burns upon thy radiant brow ;  
 For thou those hands' dear clasp hast felt,  
 Where still the nail prints are displayed ;  
 And thou before that face hast knelt,  
 Which wears the scars the thorns have made !

A year without thee ! I had thought  
 My orphaned heart would break and die,  
 Ere time had meek quiescence brought,  
 Or soothed the tears it could not dry.  
 And yet I live, to faint and quail  
 Before the human grief I bear ;  
 To miss thee so ! Then drown the wail  
 That trembles on my lips in prayer.  
 Thou praising while I weakly pine !  
 Thou glorying while I vainly thrill !  
 And thus between thy heart and mine,  
 The distance ever widening still !

A year of tears to me : to thee,  
 The end of thy probation's strife,  
 The archway to eternity,  
 The portal to immortal life.

To me, the pall, the bier, the sod ;  
To thee — the palm of glory given ;  
Enough my heart — thank God — thank God !  
That thou hast been a *year in Heaven !*

In 1863, this poem, bearing another name as its author, was cut out of a newspaper, and handed to a member of Mrs. Preston's family, on the anniversary of a brother's being slain in battle. It was received with the exclamation, "Why, this is *mamma's* poem!" Such incredulity was expressed, that the matter had to be referred to the poet herself. She showed neither surprise nor vexation: it was not the first nor the last time that her poems were publicly accredited to others.

## CHAPTER V

### LOVE AND MARRIAGE

MARGARET JUNKIN had now passed the days of her youth, without making any plans for matrimony. It goes without saying that lovers had not been wanting to one so gifted and attractive. Why was she deaf to all wooing? Mrs. Preston admitted in later years that an unfortunate episode in very early life had closed her heart, during all those years of young womanhood, to any thought of love or marriage. "So God saved me for the happiness He had in store for me," the wife said later. This early romance was built up of extremely slight material: a proposal of marriage from some one whose name not even her nearest kindred to-day know; a confession on her part of love reciprocated; the disapproval of her parents; the dismissal of her lover; some years of persistence on the unknown's side; and a long cherished sense of "hopeless attachment" in Margaret's romantic and tender soul. *Voilà tout!*

It is rather strange that one finds so few traces of this romance in the poet's verses. But as you have read on another page, a time of intense feeling was not, for her, prolific in verse-making. Nevertheless, her confession having given you the

key, you do find evidence of this experience, here and there, in her poems. There are certain farewell verses, published without her name, but carefully preserved in a private collection of her own writing, both in manuscript and print, which betray by their date connection with this elusive love story of more than sixty years ago. Here, for instance, is —

A FAREWELL.

Forget me ? Ah, I ask it not !  
 I could not bear that thou shouldst blot  
*My* name from out the record fair  
 That memory's volume treasures ; there  
 I fain would have thee keep it yet,  
 Untarnished by the word *forget*.

I would not that my name should be  
 A word of magic sound to thee ;  
 Nor yet that it should strangely start  
 A chilliness about thy heart ;  
 Link fancies with it if you will,  
 But ah, let them be pleasant still.

Our paths diverge, to meet again  
 Perhaps no more. I ask thee then,  
 With thine affections fixed above,  
 On that sweet home of peace and love,  
 Where undecaying friendships dwell,  
 To meet me *there* : farewell — farewell!

The sentiment here is certainly very mild, and the value of these verses lies only in the interest attaching to a poet's first love affair. In truth the love of the woman was merely stirred, as a bird is sometimes roused to cheep and twitter

faintly before dawn: when the sun rises, the bird's whole heart is heard in glad song.

The sunrise came somewhat later than usual to this singer, but her music had ever after a new and richer note.

"If I ever marry a widower, and especially a widower with children," Margaret Junkin's family had more than once heard her declare, "you may put me in a straight jacket; for I will never do such a thing while I keep my mind!" She might have said, "While I keep my *heart*," for when the time came for her to love a man, she was to do — joyfully — this very thing!

About four years after her mother's death, Margaret was asked to become the wife of Major J. T. L. Preston, professor of Latin in the Virginia Military Institute, a widower with seven children, — the oldest son twenty-two years of age and the youngest five.

Major Preston was perhaps the most attractive man Margaret had ever known. Although nine years her senior, he was still in the prime of a splendidly vigorous, active manhood. He was a typical Virginian in appearance and manner, six feet in height, well proportioned, graceful, courteous, dignified, cordial, quick-witted, fluent, masterful. He had received at Washington College, at the University of Virginia, and at Yale the best education this country afforded in his day, and his natural gifts were of no mean order. His taste for intellectual pursuits had been fostered by his profession and by foreign travel, as well

as by constant study and reading of books old and new. He was a grandson of Edmund Randolph, Washington's secretary of state, and the Cavalier blood of the Nicholases, Peytons, and others mingled in his veins with the sturdier and not less renowned strain of the Scotch-Irish Prestons.

His fortune was ample, for that time and place, and the home which he offered Dr. Junkin's daughter was one of comfort and abundance. But the thing which most drew Margaret's heart to her lover was his earnest, lofty Christian character. Not only was he a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, but even from his youngest manhood he had "walked with God," in a spiritual communion that was as simple and sincere and unfaltering as a child's intercourse with a loving earthly father. He was early in life made a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, and the interests of Christ's kingdom were always first in his heart.

Major Preston's first wife, *née* Sarah Lyle Caruthers, had been a warm friend and admirer of the gifted young stranger from the North, and had more than once said, half playfully and yet earnestly, that if she were called from earth she would like to have Miss Maggie Junkin for her children's stepmother.

And yet notwithstanding all these *pros* in the question, there were enough *cons* to appall such a timid and shrinking nature as Margaret Junkin's. Loyal and loving and true as was this man who asked her hand, he was without question imperious in his temper, and where wills crossed he

brooked nothing less than unquestioning obedience. *That won*, there never was a more indulgent, unselfish, generous husband and father. Few were the occasions when wife or child tried conclusions with him; but it is due to his revered memory to say that few were the temptations to do so, since the law of his life was kindness.

But a more serious outlook for the stepmother was a houseful of children, half of them grown, and peculiarly devoted to the memory of a mother whose lovely character and life had been the joy of her husband's heart and the light of his home for twenty-three years.

That Margaret Junkin did hesitate long and anxiously she has owned frankly, but love laughs at anxieties and difficulties, and it is not hard to believe that her woman's heart, full to the brim of fresh, unspoiled romance, was captivated by such a lover. A letter written in rhyme, to her *fiancé*, during an absence in Philadelphia, will show as much of Margaret's heart, at this time of her new blossomed happiness, as we may venture to look upon.

PHILADELPHIA, No. 6 DeLancy Place (1857).

My journey is over all safe and all well —  
No accident happened — no evil befell —  
We "made the connections" — no project was crossed —  
Not even an item of baggage was lost:  
Soon moored in my haven, without a delay,  
To my brother's I quickly was whirling away,  
Where Jeanie, right sweet in her sisterly charms,  
Stood waiting to welcome me into her arms.  
And so, while I render the thanks that are due,  
It will please me to think that you join in them too.



Now what shall I call you ? What word shall I choose ?  
 What term of endearment or tenderness use ?  
 How find just the syllable fittingly fraught ?  
 The body of speech for the soul of my thought ?  
 — Beloved — would anything else I could say  
 Be sweeter than *that* ? — The disciple who lay  
 On the bosom of Jesus at supper, has poured  
 A charm full of sacredness over the word.  
 I linger the musical accents upon,  
 That breathe of the beautiful spirit of John.  
 I remember the melody too, of the line —  
 “ I *am* my Beloved’s — my Beloved is mine ” —  
 So this be the keynote to which I shall set  
 The anthem of life that is left to me yet.  
 — *Beloved* — my heart its accordance hath found,  
 And it empties its harmony out on the sound !

Will you think this is sentiment — sentiment all ?  
 Will you quarrel with rhythm and cadence and fall ?  
 Will you say you ’ve no faith in poetical shows,  
 And feel there is truthfulness only in prose ?  
 Go into your orchard — look out on its blooms,  
 Let your sense revel deep in its luscious perfumes ;  
 Let your eye bathe in rapturous beauty — your ear  
 Be thrilled with the exquisite music you hear —  
 Is this “ all unreal ” ? — The fragrance you find  
 Is just the poetical breath of the wind :  
 The blossoms that garnish the trees and the sod  
 Are *poems* writ out by the finger of God !  
 The carols the sylvan musicians outpour  
 Are the *rhythmical* language of Nature — no more.  
 Now tell me in frankness and truth, if you please,  
 Do you think there is any deception in these ?  
 If you do — then conclude that the thoughts I rehearse  
 Are *not* wholly real, because they ’re in verse.  
 — Oh no ! — when I want to be gentle and true —  
 (What I would be always and only to you !)  
 When I write the most lovingly — dipping my pen  
 In my heart that is tearful with tenderness — then,  
 Escaping the wiry restraints of prose,  
 My nature mounts eagerly upward, and throws  
 Its full-breasted strength out, as only it dare  
 In poesy’s regions of rarefied air.

— How strangely, while weaving out rhyme after rhyme,  
 The process has carried me back to the time  
 When here, in this very same city — as sad  
 As tho' from thenceforth I could never be glad,  
 I poured on the heart of your "darling" the moan  
 Too bitter — too big to be shut in my own!  
 How startling the contrast! I'm writing again,  
 But not for the reader that welcomed me then:  
 That home is no scene now of innocent mirth;  
 The sacred Penates are gone from the hearth;  
 And the eyes that then only with happiness shone,  
 Are dim, as they ponder my letter alone.

Beloved! I crave you no pardon. I know  
 How your thoughts, ere I'm bidding them, hauntingly go  
 To the past, with its torturing visions of bliss;  
 Till the present grows dreary in contrast with this.  
 When your arm is about me — and touching my cheek  
 Are the beautiful lips that so yearningly speak  
 Of the dimness that seems for you spread over earth;  
 Of the love-lighted fire all quenched on your hearth;  
 Of the shock that o'erthrew with convulsion so strong  
 The temple in which you had worshiped so long;  
 The work, left unfinished — the energies stilled —  
 Ere half of the canvass of life had been filled —  
 My heart faints within me, and oft with a moan,  
 Sinks scarcely less hopeless and sick than your own!  
 — I doubtfully question my spirit — have I  
 Strength to summon the sunshine all back to his sky?  
 Can I think to rekindle the warmth, or restore  
 To his hearthstone the blaze of its home light once more?  
 Can I hope to rebuild so the temple that falls,  
 That *no traces of ruins will cling to its walls?*  
 Have I skill for the tasks which her hands left undone?  
 Dare I finish the picture that she had begun?  
 — Dear Father in Heaven! Thou knowest alone  
 How void is thy creature of strength of her own!  
 Let me feel that thy Providence surely has set  
 Me the work, and I'll trust to accomplish it yet;  
 And then when called upward, what joy to say, "Here  
 Lord, am I, and the children thou gavest me to rear!"

— Am I cowardly-hearted ? — Then more is the need  
 For the wisdom that comes from above me to plead —  
 Since *with* it I 'm strong, let whatever befall,  
 And *without* it, my strength can do nothing at all !

The city is looking its comeliest — Spring  
 Has put fashion's butterflies all on the wing ;  
 And the blending of delicate colors they wear,  
 Make the streets look as gay as a garden parterre.  
 But there 's something half sad in the sight — for I know,  
 As I thread the thronged pavements, how vain is the show ;  
 And I whisper unconsciously, oft and again,  
 " They all are disquieted surely in vain ! "

Yet this is one-sided : we look at the glare  
 Of a city, and think it a " Vanity Fair : "  
 We feel not humanity's pulses that beat  
 Far stronger than in our secluded retreat :  
 We see not the thousand sweet charities strewn —  
 The thousand hands stretched to the needy and lone.  
 But yet there are countless more charms to my eye  
 In the purple our mountains pile up to the sky —  
 And the town, with its hurry so feverish, yields  
 No quiet so sweet as broods over our fields.

Now a loose rein to fancy ! Once more do I rest  
 Where my cheek feels the steady warm throb of your breast :  
 I see your dear fingers in tenderness lay  
 All smoothly the curls from my forehead away :  
 And the mouth that I praise so — the flexible mouth,  
 Full-lipped with the ardor that tells of the South,  
 Is breathing, " God bless you, my Maggie ! " and I  
 As trustingly echo the prayer in reply —  
 God bless my Beloved ! 'T is thus I begun,  
 'T is thus I would finish — So now I am done !

The marriage took place on the 3d of August, 1857, at her father's house, Dr. Junkin himself performing the ceremony. The wedding party left Lexington the next day for "Oakland," the beautiful James River home of Major Preston's

only sister, Mrs. William Armstead Cocke. Willy Preston, the third son of the family (who had come up from Oakland to be present at the wedding), and an old family servant from the Preston establishment accompanied the wedding party to Oakland.

“I had never had a waiting maid in my life,” Mrs. Preston used to tell us, “and stood in secret awe and dread of Anakie! But Anakie was a small part of the ordeal: think what it was to be presented on the Oakland threshold, not only to my husband’s entire family, and to his sister’s family, but to his old cousin, William C. Preston of South Carolina, and to a half a dozen other strangers summering there !”

It was indeed a trying ordeal. Especially as life in those James River homesteads kept much of the stately ceremoniousness of Colonial days, and must have seemed alarmingly formal to one born out of Virginia. The ten o’clock breakfast at Oakland was an informal meal, as was the light luncheon at one, which was often served on a table formed of a single granite slab, built under the magnificent oaks. But from the time of the dinner “dressing bell,” which was rung at four o’clock, the household stiffened into a formality which was second nature in those to the manner born, but was calculated to embarrass a novice. Full dress was the invariable rule. The dinner was lengthened into five or six courses; and everybody was expected to contribute to the general entertainment, by joining in the table talk. This

was oftenest on politics, though other topics were discussed, and those old-time folks read and talked of better literature than their children and grandchildren devour — *me judice*.

Troops of slaves circled around every function of the day. You were expected (if you were a lady guest) to have your hair brushed, your shoes and stockings put on, every hook and eye fastened, every pin put in place, and your handkerchief and fan handed to you by a maid who held herself as your especial chattel during your stay at Oakland. She met you at the carriage, when you got back from your drive, took your hat and wrap, brushed and dusted you into a perfect state of nicety, and then hung around, hankering after something more to do for you!

The new wife bore herself in this great household with shrinking diffidence but with no awkwardness. I recall distinctly her appearance and manner at that time. She was so slight and fair and girlish-looking, in her low-cut blue silk gown (sky-blue it was called) and wedding pearls, that she might easily have passed for twenty-five, instead of thirty-seven; and her low voice and shy manner increased this impression of youthfulness. But when called upon to take her part in conversation, she was easily the most interesting woman in the company. She never introduced topics, nor led in conversation, as literary women were supposed to do, and she was at the farthest remove from a pedant; but no matter what her companions were talking of, they presently found that

Mrs. Preston knew more about it than themselves, and would, with a little encouragement, meet them on their own ground, and carry off the palm.

The old statesman and orator from South Carolina, Colonel William C. Preston, made her acquaintance with all his prejudices on the alert. He shared the disapproval then felt throughout the South of women who appeared in print, and spoke with disfavor of "the little red-headed Yankee's want of style and presence." But the old gentleman entirely lost his heart to his new kinswoman in a short time, and amused himself by drawing her out, making her talk on literary subjects with entire unconsciousness on her part that she was showing much more knowledge than most women possessed of authors classic and modern. "She is an encyclopædia in small print!" he declared enthusiastically; and his old-fashioned gallantry found ways of showing sympathy, most grateful to the new wife, placed in such a trying position.

But next to her husband's presence, the greatest comfort in that *premier pas* which cost so much was the tender welcome Mrs. Preston received from her husband's sister, a woman of great sweetness and strength of character. Mrs. Cocke combined a masculine will and intelligence with the most feminine wealth of sentiment and emotion, while her manner had the frank simplicity of a noble child. The friendship begun when the tall and stately mistress of Oakland opened her arms and took the little stranger to her warm

heart, never knew cloud nor chill while the sisters lived. One likes to think how it must be now, "on the heavenward side of the river of death."

Oakland was not by any means among the handsomest of those old Virginia homes, but in one respect it surpassed them all. I remember on one occasion driving back to the house from service at the country church, with Bishop Whittle, when a member of the family said to him, "Bishop, this is not your first visit to Oakland; you were here, sir, twenty years ago, when you were just 'Mr.' Whittle." It was evident that the bishop did not recall the visit, and the conversation was deftly changed to save him embarrassment. But when the open carriage swept around the edge of the woods, and brought the great twelve-acre lawn to view, with its eighty or more trees, fifty of them primeval oaks, measuring several feet in diameter, and spreading out into vast sanctuaries of shade, the bishop stood up in the carriage and took off his hat. "You are mistaken, Captain Cocke," he said. "I might have been graceless enough to forget the kindest hosts, but not those monarchs! I have never seen Oakland before." Alas, beautiful Oakland! It is now only a memory. Since the first page of this chapter was written, it has perished in the flames of a midnight fire, with its wealth of portraits and relics, its parchment grant signed by George III., its rare old furniture and china, and its far richer belongings of hallowed memories and associations. Surely there must be a spiritual immortality for such a home!

Perhaps this is the place to say a few words of what Mrs. Preston was as a stepmother. Of the large family of her husband's children, to whom her care was given, only one is left to-day to rise up and bless her memory; but her life did a great deal to banish from a wide circle of friends and acquaintances and in-laws the senseless old prejudice against stepmothers. No critic could find anything to complain of in her self-denying devotion to the welfare of her husband's family; and those who knew her best knew that she spent herself in efforts to make them happy and comfortable. Whatever mistakes she made, and it is not claimed that she was infallible, were the mistakes of a romantic soul, who regulated her conduct on a rather imaginary basis, and sometimes found it an unsubstantial foundation.

Her husband's only complaint of her as long as she lived, was that she wore herself out in attempting things that nobody demanded of her, and that were at times pathetically unnecessary. Her ardor for the impossible was not always to be repressed. But who shall say that heights were not won and kept, in these charges that looked like defeats?

The first Mrs. Preston had belonged to a family of twelve sons and daughters, all of whom married and had children, and these nieces and nephews, as well as a large circle of more distant kin, had grown up to feel that the Preston establishment was home for them all. With the freedom of those generous old days, they had been in the habit of



coming to the house when they pleased, and staying as long as they pleased, and they had always found a cordial welcome.

Surely it proves a most unusual quality in this stepmother that no change was made in this hospitality, and that no coolness was felt by these young relations of the first wife. They all called her "Aunt Maggie," counted on her sympathy and cordiality, and were treated by her with the same sympathy and consideration shown to her husband's nephews or her own.

Her three-story house was often full from top to bottom, and more than once she moved out of her spacious chamber and filled it with guests, while she slept on a sofa or improvised cot. And this, not because she was naturally fond of company, for her tastes would have led her to prefer a secluded life, but from the dictates of a warm heart and a generous nature.

To the two little children of the family, "mamma," as they called her from the first, talked often of their own mother; and no one in the house was so careful as she to see that the dear saint's wishes were carried out.

Long afterwards I heard her tell how hard it had been to control her naturally quick temper when the old family servants would say, "Miss Sally never did so," or when some meddlesome outsider undertook to compare her reign with her predecessor's. But no one ever heard her resent these impertinences by angry retorts; "They meant it kindly," she said.

Twenty years after Margaret Junkin became a stepmother, her old friend Mr. McCay said to an acquaintance, "I have something to tell you, the like of which you never heard before: the stepdaughter of my friend Mrs. Preston has called her first child 'Margaret,' in honor of her stepmother." "You are mistaken in thinking that unique," was the answer. "I know a similar instance." A year later Mr. McCay accosted this lady again. "Now," said he, "I have something to tell you the like of which I am sure you never heard: Mrs. Preston has dedicated a volume of poems to her stepdaughter." "Now, indeed," the lady cried, "you have outstripped me! I never heard the like of that!" Perhaps this little story sets *Mrs. Preston as a stepmother* in a clearer light than anything I could say.

For the first four years of married life, the poet was lost in the wife, the mother, and the busy house-mistress. Mrs. Preston was a notable housekeeper. First of all, she recreated her home. The place, when she came to it, was delightful as to spacious grounds, fine shade trees, extensive orchard and garden and meadow. Mrs. Preston altered and added to the house, and made and kept it beautiful, tasteful, comfortable, and even elegant. We used to say of her that with an inexpensive engraving, an ornament or two, a hammer and a box of tacks, she could furnish a room artistically. She knew where to put things with reference to one another, and how to give to the whole an indescribable air of fitness,

that no expenditure of money could reproduce in those who lacked her gift.

I remember hearing the Rev. Dr. Murkland of Baltimore, whose days were spent going in and out of far handsomer houses, exclaim, as he entered Mrs. Preston's library for the first time, "What an ideal place! A fit home for a poet!"

Nor did she neglect the humbler offices of a housewife. In fact the only vanity I ever saw in her was in connection with her mince pies, jellies, and crullers. She seasoned the winter supply of sausage with her own hand, flavored the autumn apple butter, and the most flattering guest that ever called at her door could not entice her from the preserving kettle till the fruit was ready to be put into the jars.

For several years after her marriage, indeed until the end of the war, Mrs. Preston considered it her duty — she sadly owned her mistake afterwards — to do an immense amount of sewing, and her skill as a needlewoman was as great as if she had never written a sonnet.

Was all this domesticity answerable for the dumbness of her muse during the years that immediately followed marriage? No, for ten years later she was hardly less busy, and yet at that time she was beginning the lustrum of her greatest mental activity and output. Perhaps her new life and new loving ambitions had something to do with the blank page one finds in the poet's notebook, just here. But there was another reason, a reason which she gave, many years later, in her

husband's presence, only to be promptly contradicted by him and playfully ordered to utter no more such foolish words.

"I almost quit writing, after I was married," she said, "because my husband did not in his heart of hearts approve of his wife's giving any part of herself to the public, even in verse!"

"Nonsense! Nonsense!" cried the husband. "When did I ever fail to enjoy and praise your poetry?"

"Yes, you praised my work," was the answer, "but there was an expression in the lift of your eyebrows that suggested *surprise*."

At the time that Mrs. Preston made this accusation, it had ceased to be true that her husband was lukewarm about her gift; in fact he was then the greatest incentive to her writing, besides being himself her teacher and guide, walking certain paths of literature with a firmer tread than her own. Nevertheless it was known to others than the poet herself *that the charge was true*. Major Preston's ideal woman had not a pen in her fingers! And he certainly had to overcome a strong, inborn reluctance to having his wife's name in print.

Before passing on to the next chapter, which is to be lighted by the lurid war-torch, there are certain family chronicles to be written down, — some of them sweet and bright with hope, others sad and full of anguish.

Mrs. Preston's marriage, in 1857, left but one member of the Junkin family unmarried; this was

Ebenezer, a young minister of the Presbyterian Church, just ordained to preach the Gospel in North Carolina. The following summer, 1858, Ebenezer won as his bride a lovely young daughter of a Presbyterian manse in the old North State; "Agnes Penick" became a model pastor's wife, and raised up sons to preach the Gospel at home and on the foreign field. Her praise is in more than one church in our Southern land.

Mrs. Preston's sister Julia had married, in 1855, Professor Junius M. Fishburn of Washington College, and with her husband and her beautiful child remained in her father's home as his house-mistress and caretaker. Alas! Before Margaret had been a year married, this girl-wife had lost husband and child, and again Dr. Junkin's home was under the shadow of unspeakable grief.

Mrs. Preston's heart always clung with intense devotion to her own people, and this fresh grief was deeply felt by her. But there was now a strong heart for hers to rest on, and for the first time in her life she was able to resist the despair of grief, and to bear up with something of the resignation which she almost worshiped in her brave sister.

The years immediately following these events brought Mrs. Preston the crowning experience of womanhood, in the birth of two fine sons. Her hands were already so full of care for those other children, whose mothering she had assumed, that she was somewhat inclined to grudge herself the

joys of real motherhood. "That was one of my mistakes," she said afterwards. "I ought to have taken more time to enjoy my babies." Her listener could not deny the truth of her self-reproach, for just here lay one of the weaknesses in a character for the most part strong, — Mrs. Preston seems to have failed more than once to see her duties in the right perspective. She would sometimes throw herself with passionate abandon into what afterwards she realized to be comparatively unimportant drudgery, and then weep bitter tears over what she and her dear ones had missed of peace and home delight, while she had been careful and troubled about minor matters.

Many years later, when the birds had all flown from her nest, Mrs. Preston was visiting in the home of a younger wife; and seeing her suddenly drop some housework, to answer a call from husband or child for a drive or walk, she said chidingly, "My dear, have you time to go?" "When my husband wants me," answered the young hostess, "I have time for nothing else." "Yes, yes, you are right," she said a little mournfully; "I wish I had always been as wise." But it is easy to see, as we spread the records of her life before us, that its over-anxiety about trifles was a natural consequence of the fear which her tender conscience felt lest she should follow her own inclination for literary pursuits, to the detriment of homelier duties.

## CHAPTER VI

### A JOURNAL OF WAR TIMES

MRS. PRESTON had been married less than four years, when the political clouds which had been long gathering burst over the land in the horrors of civil war. The story of that time does not belong to these pages: it has been told, and is still being told, from the two standpoints, by writers who show an increasing desire for accuracy and fairness, and we may hope that the truth of history will finally remain.

But the life whose days these pages seek to record was intensely moved and influenced by the war, and so far as the stirring events touched her, they must have a place here. Fortunately, Mrs. Preston kept a journal during the last three years of the war, from April '62 to April '65, and from this journal enough extracts will be made to give the reader a glimpse of her life under its altered circumstances. How one regrets that the journal was not begun a year earlier, that we might look through her eyes upon the commotion and upheaval of 1861!

Before opening this journal, it may be interesting to read a letter written by Mrs. Preston's husband from Charlestown, Va., at the time of

the hanging of John Brown. Major Preston was on duty there with the corps of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute, ordered out by the governor of Virginia, as military guard on that occasion. The letter was written without any thought of publication.

CHARLESTOWN, December 2, 1859.

. . . The execution is over. We have just returned from the field, and I sit down to give you some account of it. The weather was very favorable: the sky was a little overcast, with a little haze in the atmosphere that softened without obscuring the magnificent prospect afforded here. Between eight and nine o'clock the troops began to put themselves in motion to occupy the positions assigned to them on the field, as designated on the plan I send you. To Colonel Smith had been assigned the superintendence of the execution, and he and his staff were the only mounted officers on the ground, until the major-general and his staff appeared. By ten o'clock all was arrayed. The general effect was most imposing, and at the same time picturesque. The Cadets were immediately in rear of the gallows, with a howitzer on the right and left, a little behind, so as to sweep the field. They were uniformed in red flannel shirts, which gave them a gay, dashing, Zouave look, exceedingly becoming, especially at the Battery. They were flanked obliquely by two corps, the Richmond Greys and Company F, which, if inferior in appearance to the Cadets, were superior to any other company I ever saw outside the regular army. Other companies were distributed over the field, amounting in all to perhaps 800 men. The military force was about 1500.

The whole enclosure was lined by cavalry troops,



posted as sentinels, with their officers — one on a peerless black horse, and another on a remarkable looking white horse — continually dashing around the enclosure. Outside this enclosure were other companies acting as rangers and scouts. The jail was guarded by several companies of infantry, and pieces of artillery were put in position for defense.

Shortly before eleven o'clock, the prisoner was taken from the jail and the funeral cortège was put in motion. First came three companies — then the criminal's wagon, drawn by two large white horses. John Brown was seated on his coffin, accompanied by the sheriff and two other persons. The wagon drove to the foot of the gallows, and Brown descended with alacrity, and without assistance, and ascended the steep steps to the platform. His demeanor was intrepid, without being braggart. He made no speech: whether he desired to make one or not I do not know. Had he desired it, it would not have been permitted. Any speech of his must of necessity have been unlawful, as being directed against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth, and, as such, could not be allowed by those who were then engaged in the most solemn and extreme vindication of Law. His manner was free from trepidation, but his countenance was not without concern, and it seemed to me to have a little cast of wildness. He stood upon the scaffold but a short time, giving brief adieus to those about him, when he was properly pinioned, the white cap drawn over his face, the noose adjusted and attached to the hook above, and he was moved blindfold a few steps forward. It was curious to note how the instincts of nature operated to make him careful in putting out his feet, as if afraid he would walk off the scaffold. The man who stood unblenched on the

brink of eternity was afraid of falling a few feet to the ground!

He was now all ready. The sheriff asked him if he should give him a private signal, before the fatal moment. He replied in a voice that sounded to me unnaturally natural — so composed was its tone and so distinct its articulation — that “it did not matter to him, if only they would not keep him too long waiting.” He *was* kept waiting, however. The troops that had formed his escort had to be put in their proper position, and while this was going on, he stood for ten or fifteen minutes blindfold, the rope around his neck, and his feet on the treacherous platform, expecting instantly the fatal act. But he stood for this comparatively long time upright as a soldier in position, and motionless. I was close to him, and watched him narrowly, to see if I could perceive any signs of shrinking or trembling in his person. Once I thought I saw his knees tremble, but it was only the wind blowing his loose trousers. His firmness was subjected to still further trial by hearing Colonel Smith announce to the sheriff, “We are all ready, Mr. Campbell.” The sheriff did not hear, or did not comprehend, and in a louder tone the announcement was made. But the culprit still stood steady, until the sheriff, descending the flight of steps, with a well-directed blow of a sharp hatchet, severed the rope that held up the trap-door, which instantly sank sheer beneath him, and he fell about three feet. And the man of strong and bloody hand, of fierce passions, of iron will, of wonderful vicissitudes, — the terrible partisan of Kansas — the capturer of the United States Arsenal at Harper’s Ferry — the would-be Catiline of the South — the demigod of the Abolitionists — the man execrated and lauded — damned and prayed for — the man who in his mo-

tives, his means, his plans, and his successes must ever be a wonder, a puzzle, and a mystery — John Brown was hanging between heaven and earth.

There was profoundest stillness during the time his struggles continued, growing feebler and feebler at each abortive attempt to breathe. His knees were scarcely bent, his arms were drawn up to a right angle at the elbow, with the hands clinched; but there was no writhing of the body, no violent heaving of the chest. At each feebler effort at respiration, the arms sank lower, and his legs hung more relaxed, until at last, straight and lank he dangled, swayed slightly to and fro by the wind.

It was a moment of deep solemnity, and suggestive of thoughts that make the bosom swell. The field of execution was a rising ground that commanded the outstretching valley from mountain to mountain, and their still grandeur gave sublimity to the outline, while it so chanced that white clouds resting upon them gave them the appearance that reminded more than one of us of the snow peaks of the Alps. Before us was the greatest array of disciplined forces ever seen in Virginia, infantry, cavalry, and artillery combined, composed of the old Commonwealth's choicest sons, and commanded by her best officers, and the great canopy of the sky, overarching all, came to add its sublimity — ever present, but only realized when great things are occurring beneath it.

But the moral of the scene was the great point. A sovereign State had been assailed, and she had uttered but a hint, and her sons had hastened to show that they were ready to defend her. Law had been violated by actual murder and attempted treason, and that gibbet was erected by Law, and to uphold Law was this mili-

tary force assembled. But greater still, God's holy law and righteous will was vindicated. "Thou shalt not kill." "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And here the gray-haired man of violence meets his fate, after he has seen his two sons cut down before him earlier in the same career of violence into which he had introduced them. So perish all such enemies of Virginia! all such enemies of the Union! all such foes of the human race! So I felt, and so I said, without a shade of animosity, as I turned to break the silence, to those around me. Yet the mystery was awful—to see the human form thus treated by men—to see life suddenly stopped in its current, and to ask one's self the question without answer, "And what then?"

In all that array there was not, I suppose, one throb of sympathy for the offender. All felt in the depths of their hearts that it was right. On the other hand there was not one word of exultation or insult. From the beginning to the end, all was marked by the most absolute decorum and solemnity. There was no military music, no saluting of troops as they passed one another, nor anything done for show. The criminal hung upon the gallows for nearly forty minutes, and after being examined by a whole staff of surgeons, was deposited in a neat coffin, to be delivered to his friends, and transported to Harper's Ferry, where his wife awaited it. She came in company with two persons to see her husband last night, and returned to Harper's Ferry this morning. She is described by those who saw her as a very large masculine woman, of absolute composure of manner. The officers who witnessed their meeting in the jail, said they met as if nothing unusual had taken place, and had a comfortable supper together.

Brown would not have the assistance of any minister in the jail, during his last days, nor their presence with him on the scaffold. In going from prison to the place of execution, he said very little, only assuring those who were with him that he had no fear, nor had he at any time of his life known what fear was. When he entered the gate of the enclosure, he expressed his admiration of the beauty of the surrounding country, and pointing to different residences, asked who were the owners of them.

There was a very small crowd to witness the execution. Governor Wise and General Taliaferro both issued proclamations exhorting the citizens to remain at home and guard their property, and warning them of possible danger. The train on the Winchester railroad had been stopped from carrying passengers; and even passengers on the Baltimore railroad were subjected to examination and detention. An arrangement was made to divide the expected crowd into recognized citizens and those not recognized; to require the former to go to the right, and the latter to the left. Of the latter there was *not a single one*. It was told that last night there were not in Charlestown ten persons besides citizens and military.

There is but one opinion as to the completeness of the arrangements made on the occasion, and the absolute success with which they were carried out. I have said something of the striking effect of the pageant, as a pageant; but the excellence of it is that everything was arranged solely with a view to efficiency, and not for the effect upon the eye. Had it been intended for a mere spectacle, it could not have been more imposing: had actual need occurred, it was the best possible arrangement.

You may be inclined to ask, Was all this necessary? I have not time to enter upon that question now. Gov-

ernor Wise thought it necessary, and he said he had reliable information. The responsibility of calling out the force rests with him. It only remained for those under him to dispose the force in the best manner. That this was done is unquestionable, and whatever credit is due for it may be fairly claimed by those who accomplished it.

Another letter in this musty pile was written more than forty years ago, when the country was on the verge of civil war, but had not quite toppled over the precipice. It bears no date of time or place, but its contents show it to have been from Richmond, in the spring of '61, just before Jackson was ordered to Harper's Ferry.

DEAR, PRECIOUS WIFE, — I got here very safely. As I anticipated, the colonel wanted to consult me with regard to matters connected with the Institute, and the organization of the military forces of the region round about. Colonel Smith is occupying here a very important and laborious position and is acquiring a very enviable reputation for the value of his services. The general idea of the movements is, I think, based upon the purpose of avoiding civil war, but to be prepared thoroughly for every emergency. Jackson, with the rank of colonel, goes to supersede General Harper at Harper's Ferry. It is most flattering to him. Say to his wife that it is the command of all others which he would most prefer. He is a noble fellow, and I rejoice in his success. . . .

It is almost midnight, and I am writing in Governor Letcher's office. I will be at home in a few days. God bless you all.

YOUR HUSBAND.

Then follows the first letter from the seat of war, — the first of hundreds which lie before me, like the flotsam and jetsam thrown up by that terrible tide of war. Only a half dozen or so can have place here.

HARPER'S FERRY, May 12 (1861).

PRECIOUS WIFE, — As far as I know, I am in for the war, and cannot say when I will see you again. It would surprise you to see with what flexibility I adapt myself to my new circumstances. I did not know before how well I could get through work which is new to me, nor did I know how much technical acquaintance with military matters I had *absorbed* (for I never paid the least attention to them) by my life-long connection with the Institute. At all events, I have been for a week, since Massie's absence, acting as chief aid, settling all manner of questions for colonels, majors, and captains, and sometimes when Jackson was absent looking after his fortifications, acting as commander-in-chief. (Don't repeat such things to anybody.) We have regular and earnest war, in all but the battle, that has not come yet. The preparatory arrangements for war are more difficult and responsible than the battle itself, and the indirect evils are more to be deplored than the positive loss of life. Don't I long for my dear wife and children? Indeed I do. Tell George I have got my big sword sharpened up now, and ride a nice horse. . . . I have not heard a single word from you, but I know you do not forget to think of and pray for me. God bless us all.

YOUR HUSBAND.

The second war letter is a fragment. It is also from Harper's Ferry, a week later in date than the first.

DIVISION HEADQUARTERS,  
HARPER'S FERRY, May 9, 1861.

Do you think I have forgotten my little wife? I would write to you daily, if I had time and postage stamps. These latter relics and mementos of things gone by are not to be had, though much sought for in all the camp. Strange! that we should feel the want of stamps when we have declared that we have no need of the government that issued them! I had a stock of them in my trunk, but my trunk is in Staunton.

But the want of stamps is nothing to the want of time. Massie has gone to Richmond with dispatches; Jackson said that I ought to go, but I interceded for Massie, that he might have a few days off duty. While he is gone, I take as much of Jackson's responsibility as I choose. Colonels, captains, and officials of all ranks come to me for orders, for leave of absence, for directions, for privileges, for information. It is precisely, so far as I am concerned, like the superintendency of the Institute, and it is my practice in that sort of work that gives me here more efficiency than men of more ability and more experience. It is astonishing to see how the Institute tells just now. Every man from the oldest to the youngest, who has been connected with it, is looked to for extra service. When Massie is here I do some of the same sort of thing, but mainly I write letters for Jackson, and advise with him as far as I am able. Don't read this letter out of the family, or it would sound egotistic. Of course this takes up my time from morning till night, and sometimes from night almost till morning. I am writing now, in the morning, while everybody but the sentinels and the servants are still in bed. But it is worth while to rise early to see the sunrise here. Busy as I am, I stop the current of other thoughts often during



the day, especially at morning and evening, to take a hasty, deep draught of the exceeding beauty around me. I have been with Jackson reconnoitering on the three positions of command, the Virginia Heights, the Maryland Heights, and the ridge behind the little town of Bolivar. We were examining with an eye to defense, but my eye *will* gaze on beauty wherever it is to be seen. Here beauty is in rich fresco on all the walls of our encinture. One thought often occurs — [The rest of the letter is lost, and we will never know what that thought was that often occurred to the soldier-professor! ]

Soon after the date of this last letter, Colonel Preston received the commission of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Confederate army, and was sent with General F. H. Smith to Craney Island. This was considered an important post in the defense of Norfolk and the approach to Richmond; but as it turned out, there was no active service at Craney Island, and the continuous stream of beautiful letters that passed between this poetic pair during the long summer of comparative idleness on the part of the soldier husband cannot show any excuse of "general interest" which would make it admissible to publish them here. One feels almost like a vandal in committing to the flames so much poetry and romance, so much merry wit and sparkle of gay words, so much sweet philosophy and heartfelt piety; but these things are inextricably interwoven with the love-making that should be, and must be held sacred. So there they lie, in ashes, on my hearth! while I glean for my pages only a handful which have

some interest as depicting the war, stripping even those of whatever I know the dead lovers would themselves have withheld.

In the fall of '61, General Jackson asked Colonel Preston to accept the post of Adjutant-General on his staff, and we find the following letters dated from the Valley General's headquarters: —

WINCHESTER, Dec. 1st, 1861.

Sunday Night.

DEAR WIFE, — I have been to church twice to-day, the General and I, so you see business has been slack; though we started a section of artillery this morning, and made arrangements for receiving a regiment of militia, sent out to arrest a suspected man, released a number of prisoners from the guard-house, and received and attended to several couriers with dispatches. But papers that could stand until another day, we laid over, and so went to church, as I have said, once in the morning, and once at night. We heard a most excellent Gospel sermon, preached with sincerity and fervor, from Mr. Graham of the Old School; and have just returned from hearing an elaborate effort by Dr. S. of the New School. The N. S. have preserved their distinctive revival type, characterizing their preaching, and especially their prayers, in a way not agreeable to me. Dr. S. is counted very able, and he is in fact striking, but I did not relish his discourse, which was one of his noted ones, preached by request; subject, the last Judgment. I was not profited. The house was crowded to suffocation, and the air was impure, so I fell into a drowsy intellectual inanition that was painful. We went at half past six, and got back at half past nine, so you see I suffered a good deal. By the way, since I have

been here, I have been troubled with drowsiness that I never felt at Craney Island. Surely it was a blessed isle! I feel as if I had been laid up in lavender there all summer. Perfume is scarce in this service, I assure you. A crane would hold up his neck high, and step along in dainty disgust at our doings here. And yet we are in clover at Headquarters.

If the services of church did not profit me much, the singing charmed me. Nothing makes me realize home more than sweet female voices at church. Tell Betty I thought often of her. . . . Winter quarters will hardly come during my stay. We will not give up the expectation, at least, of active service, as soon as that.

HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY DISTRICT,  
WINCHESTER, Dec. 5th, 1861.

(This is the regular heading to all documents that we send out.)

Two letter in one day! This is getting worse instead of better. I do not think that while I was a crane, musing, crabbing, and spreading the pinions of fancy, I ever perpetrated more than one epistle in 24 hours. . . . But now that Jim Lewis is going home on furlough, I cannot refrain from scribbling again. White people here have no chance of getting a furlough; it is only our colored friends who can escape for a time the evils of war. I had but time to gobble up your letter this morning before I wrote, but to-night I have enjoyed it as an epicure ought to eat and be thankful for a dainty. Speaking of dainties, we had for supper to-night two pheasants and some partridges; that will do pretty well, I should say! In fact we live very well. Our mess is: the General and myself; Alfred Jackson, Sandy Pendleton, and George Junkin; very

smart fellows all of them (Sandy most uncommonly so), and as nice as can be, and full of gayety. We have a merry table; I as much a boy as any of them, and Jackson grave as a signpost, till something chances to overcome him, and then he breaks out into a laugh so awkward that it is manifest he has never laughed enough to learn how. He is a most simple-hearted man. He said to me the other day, "Do you know that the thing which has most interested and pleased me to-day, is to learn by a letter from Mr. Samuel Campbell that my lot is well set in grass." This would make Clark laugh, that any one should think so much of such a rocky bit of land! Don't repeat this; it would seem as if I were laughing at the General. Jackson said to me last night, that he would much rather be at the Institute than in the army, and seemed to think fortunate those of us who are to go back. I sleep in the same room with the young men. Jackson invited me to share his room, . . . but I know that privacy would be more agreeable to him. Besides, I have a notion that he goes to his room many times a day for special prayer. As to myself, you know anything will do for me and . . . any place to sleep will answer very well. I sleep on what they call a stretcher, a military cot, with my overcoat and cape under my head for a pillow. I sleep soundly and get up early. . . . Well, I have written you an objective letter, and I enclose you a sort of diary that I keep on my business table, to help my indifferent memory. I do so many and such various things that I jot them down to prevent my forgetting. This is the diary of one day, and gives you a sample of my occupations; you must allow that it would take up a good deal of time to fill up these outlines! Hardly room left to say — I love you!

YOUR HUSBAND.

The next letter is more sentimental than warlike, but may be admitted as giving a picture of the writer's great captain putting aside his pressing duties, as far as possible, in order to attend church, and then going with a member of his military family for a quiet hour of meditation among the silent homes of the dead.

WINCHESTER,

Sunday Night, Dec. 8th, 1861.

DEAR WIFE, — I feel a little sadness to-night. I expected a letter from you and it did not come. I was disturbed in my sleep last night, and am heavy. Frank's company went out on an expedition two days ago, and I have not heard the result.

After church this morning, the General and I walked to the cemetery of the town, and spent some time among the chambers of the Silent House, where grief that is tranquil now perhaps, has made enduring in marble its first fervor of anguish. "Lovely and Beloved Daughter — Just Eighteen!" That was an arrow through two hearts, but if they truly loved one another, as the wound closed, the two hearts were knit the closer in the healing.

A son cut off in his promise: a mother erects the stone; perhaps she sorrows for him yet. A broken column: I looked, and the husband was forty-nine years old; the broken column shows that the wife thought that he was still young, and that the abrupt end of his career was untimely. . . . Many men seem to have died between fifty and sixty, and many women between forty and fifty. We will apply our hearts to wisdom, dear wife. One pair had lived beyond sixty, and died — the husband in January, the wife in February; that

was sweet, was it not? I seldom meet with epitaphs that strike me, but I enclose one that I copied from the stone over the grave of a young wife. I think you will join with me in thinking it a sweet piece of dying joyousness; a little too tripping, perhaps, to be unexceptionable, but with such a holy gladness that it disarms criticism. . . . Dear Wife, let us kneel down and thank God for his goodness to his unworthy servants, and pray for Jesus' sake that he would keep us and ours, and save us all at last.

YOUR HUSBAND.

P. S. General Richard Garnett has been assigned as brigadier of the Stonewall Brigade. He is a son of Colonel Garnett, and I should say a good soldier and a pleasant man. It was my office to take him out and introduce him to the brigade which is encamped five miles from town. Nevertheless the brigade ought to be commanded by one of its own colonels; they have made their own glory, and a stranger should not have been made to share it. Colonel Taliaferro reported to-day with four regiments from the command on the Monterey (?) line.

Here is the epitaph referred to in the letter:—

“Plant ye a rose that may bloom o'er my bed,  
When I am gone — when I am gone!  
Breathe out a sigh o'er the blest early dead,  
When I am gone — when I am gone!  
Praise ye the Lord that I'm freed from all care,  
Serve ye the Lord, that my bliss ye may share,  
Look up on high, and believe I am there,  
When I am gone — when I am gone!”

The young soldier commended by General Jackson in the following letter from Colonel Preston

was from one of the poorest and plainest families in Lexington.

MONDAY NIGHT, December 23d, 1861.

Your dear letter came just in the midst of the business mail, and it had to lie unopened for an hour or so. It looked pretty and piteous, like a young maiden asking to be kissed. How often I looked at it and longed for it! How I hurried the business along—and how I swallowed its sweetness when I broke it open! Would that I may be able to wield my sword when in battle, as you wield your pen! Have you ever thought of the conquests you have made by your pen? . . . The many verses you have written have given you the easy palm among your sex, wherever you have been. It makes Phebe acknowledge you as her superior, and Elizabeth and the boys look up to you as a wonder. And Sister — with what delight I see her tender admiration for you! . . . But better than all — is it not — wife of my heart? your husband finds a perpetual feast in the refined, intellectual culture his nature fits him to appreciate and enjoy.

It made me sorry to think of your disappointment in not getting any letters last week; and your next letter will sing the same wail of Philomela. But before this time, you will have received my few lines of Saturday, and to-morrow you will get my Sunday letter, and so the love stream runs free again, with its babbling through the flowery green sward. If I get my leave from the Board of Visitors to remain two or three weeks after the first of January, I will write you letters enough to make up for all you have missed. I wonder how many letters I have sent you since last July? I am sure I have no idea. And then my profuse journal-

izing was for you. . . . I wish you would go and see old Mrs. P. Tell her that General Jackson was very much moved when he heard that her son was killed, and said that there was no better soldier in the army. I walked through the woods at midnight, that I might see his face for the last time, and as they raised the covering, that I might look upon him, I said to those around, "I knew him from a boy; he was a good soldier, and what is better, a good Christian. He served his country and his God, and has gone where war is no more." It will comfort her. And you may need some one to comfort you soon. God keep us all.

YOUR HUSBAND.

P. S. Tuesday morning. Bitter cold. I am to start for Richmond to-night.

It does not appear in the next letter what was the nature of the commission on which General Jackson had sent the writer to Richmond; but readers of Stonewall Jackson's life will remember that this was the crisis in his military history, when the Confederate Government was inclined to criticise and hamper the rashness of Jackson's daring plans. A few months later there was no one in the Confederacy so ignorant as not to do honor to the rashness now known to be genius.

GOVERNOR LETCHER'S OFFICE,  
FRIDAY, Dec. 27th.

DEAR MAGGIE,—I expect to leave to-morrow for Winchester. I have got through my business, and must hurry back to save Sunday travel. Jackson sent me down on a forlorn hope, and I have nothing to blame myself for, that I did not accomplish what could



not be done. I am sure that I did all that mortal man could do in the premises. The Secretary of War received me very kindly, and so did President Davis. The latter said, when I was introduced to him, that he had expected to see a Colonel Preston that he had met before, but, said he, so many of your name have entered the service, that it is no wonder I was mistaken. So much for your name, Mrs. Preston!

Well, I can't come home at New Year. I got leave of absence from the Secretary of War [from service at the V. M. I.], and will remain with Jackson if he makes the movement he contemplates. If he should be obliged to go into winter quarters, I will hurry home. You believe me, dearest, this does not answer the demands of my heart. There is nothing in any mode of life that compensates me for the loss of your society and the delights of home. But I am glad to believe that my services are of value to my country in this her hour of need, and if in the Providence of God, my life is to be laid upon her altar, most freely the offering shall be made.

But I know what I am best suited for; it is to make your happiness in securing mine. I claim not to be equal to many men for military talents — I find and acknowledge many superiors in business, in oratory, in scholarship and in many other things, but that man who knows better than I do how to appreciate and return the love of a noble woman, I never expect to see! . . . But you would not love me if I could forget duty.

I am writing this in the governor's office, so surrounded with men in whose conversation I am compelled to take part, that I cannot fix my thoughts long enough to say many things that I proposed. . . .

YOUR HUSBAND.

Two letters from Stonewall Jackson may piece out this year of the journal's silence; their very trivialities being of interest to us, as showing the great soldier's thoughts occupied with the comfort of his servants, the condition of his little farm, and the family affairs of his friends at the very time that he was planning campaigns and winning brilliant victories that have made his name famous all over the world.

CENTREVILLE, Oct. 23d, 1861.

My DEAR MAGGIE, — I am much obliged for your kind letter of the 19th, and for the arrangement respecting Amy and Emma [slaves owned by Jackson]. Please have the kindness to go to Winny Buck's occasionally, and see that Amy is well cared for, and that not only she, but also Emma, is well clothed. I am under special obligations for the religious instruction that you have given Amy, and hope that it may be in your power to continue it. Remember me to her very kindly, on the first opportunity, and say that I hope she has rich heavenly consolation. This evening I expect our own pastor and Dr. McFarland. I will send some money by Dr. White for you to use as occasion may require for Amy and Emma, and I will so manage as to keep a supply in the Rockbridge Bank, or elsewhere, subject to your order.

I have this day received a letter from your dear husband at Craney Island. The letter has reference to his coming here, and I am anxiously expecting him, though am apprehensive that he will not reach here for a week or so yet.

I heard from A. a few days since; she was at her

father's, and doing well. Give my kindest regards to Mrs. Cocke.

My oft-repeated prayer is for a speedy termination of the war, by an honorable and lasting peace. God has given us another glorious victory near Leesburg.

My prayer for you is that your path may be that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Who would not be a Christian!

Your affectionate friend,

T. J. JACKSON.

WINCHESTER, VA., Nov. 16th, 1861.

My DEAR MAGGIE, — More than once your kind and touching letter respecting the sainted Amy brought tears to my eyes. For several months before leaving home, I was impressed with her great devotion to the cause of our beloved Redeemer. She was evidently ripening rapidly for a better world, where I hope that we, and the ransomed of the Lord, may be privileged to join her.

I am very grateful to you for your Christian kindness to her. If the money I sent by Dr. White is not enough to meet the little demands connected with her funeral, please let me know how much more is required, and I will promptly attend to having it forwarded. I am much gratified to know that you gave her a decent burial, and that so many followed her remains to the grave. Though such numbers cannot affect the dead, yet such demonstrations of regard are gratifying to the living.

Remember me very kindly to Mrs. Cocke, and the different members of your family. I sent your letter to A. Your dear husband has gone to Richmond for a few days. I received a letter from him since he left, in which he expressed the desire of spending one day with

you, but his services are so valuable to me that I regret to say he cannot be spared.

Very affectionately yours,

T. J. JACKSON.

By these letters the biographer has sought to introduce the great events which crowded Mrs. Preston's mind and heart for the next four years, though nothing can make up to the reader for what he has missed in having no picture from the diary itself of that first year of the war.

For the winter of 1860-61—as this writer recalls those days of forty years ago, seen then from the standpoint of a child twelve years old—was full of tumult in Lexington. Almost without exception the older and more influential citizens of the town, and indeed of the whole Valley of Virginia, were earnest in their desire to keep peace and preserve the Union. But the young men were beginning to stir with the excitement of coming changes. The presence in the Virginia Military Institute and at Washington College of students from the seceded States kept up red-hot discussions; and in youthful society these “Rebels,” as we then called them, wearing their blue secession badges, uttering proud sentiments of independence and valorous resolves to die rather than suffer coercion, were secretly the objects of intense interest and admiration among us young folks.

Mrs. Preston's feelings were torn that winter by a difference of opinion between her father and

husband. Major Preston was loyal to the government, but held that he owed allegiance first to his sovereign State, Virginia; and with calm resolution announced his intention of abiding by Virginia's choice, whether it was for the Union, which he desired, or for secession, which he deplored. When Virginia *did* secede, Major Preston heartily agreed with her legislators that she had been forced to the act by President Lincoln's call for troops. If he had considered secession unwise, he yet held that coercion was tyranny; and while he never ceased to deplore the war, he was convinced that Virginia's part in it was the only part that consisted with honor and true loyalty.

As the winter drew to a close Mrs. Preston was pained by the surging of these angry waves of discussion into her own home; and when war was finally declared, and her father and sister broke up their home in Lexington and went back to the North, her heart was sore indeed. But she unhesitatingly adopted her husband's views, and his people became her people. His influence over her was made the more sure by his reasonable calmness and entire lack of bitterness toward the North. No one ever heard a harsh utterance on this subject from his lips. Angry he often was at outrages committed during the war, and especially at the indignities suffered in Reconstruction days; but while some ministers of the Gospel and good people on both sides of the line allowed themselves to revile their enemies, Major — now Colonel — Preston followed the noble example of Lee and Jackson,

of Lincoln and Grant, in giving the enemy credit for honesty of purpose, and for patriotism as they interpreted it.

With this preface, Mrs. Preston's journal may be allowed to take up the story of her life. It is not the journal of one who writes with a distant public in her eye. Records of weather, of health and ill health in her family and among her neighbors, garden and farm matters, and many other things whose interest has evaporated with time, must be cut out of her pages. But when this is done, there still remains more than this volume can find place for, of matters interesting to the readers of her biography.

At the time of the first entry in the journal, April, 1862, Mrs. Preston's husband and his two eldest sons had been in the army for almost twelve months. Colonel Preston, however, who was more than ten years over conscript age, had been recalled to the Military Institute, which was full of boys preparing for active service, and this kept him for a time at home. "Stonewall" Jackson, Mrs. Preston's intimate friend and kinsman, was in command of operations in the Valley of Virginia; her brother, the Rev. W. F. Junkin, was a captain of infantry; her uncle's son (afterwards Judge George Junkin, of Christiansburg, Va.) was also in the Confederate army. All except the old men of the town of Lexington were in the army; no boy over seventeen could be restrained; our world was a world of femininity with a thin line of boys and octogenarians. But the journal speaks for itself:

*April 3d, 1862:* I regret now that I did not, a year ago, make brief notes of what was passing under my eye. Not write a journal, — I have no time nor inclination for that, — but just such slight jottings as might serve to recall the incidents of this most eventful year in our country's history. It is too late now to attempt the review. While the year has not brought the sorrow and trial to me, which it has to such multitudes of hearts, it still has had in it much of trouble and perplexity. The sudden breaking up of my Father's family — his and Sister Julia's departure to Philadelphia — my husband's long absence in the army — my many cares incident upon this absence — my days and nights of torturing apprehension while he was campaigning with General Jackson — my entire ignorance of all that appertained to my Father, Sister, and most of my friends — these were the troubles that made my year sorrowful. Thanks to God's mercy, I got through all *somehow*, and was blest by having my husband restored to me by February 1st.

. . . . .  
Darkness seems gathering over the Southern land; disaster follows disaster; where is it all to end? My very soul is sick of carnage. I loathe the word — *War*. It is destroying and paralyzing all before it. Our schools are closed — all the able-bodied men gone — stores shut up, or only here and there one open; goods not to be bought, or so exorbitant that we are obliged to do without. I actually dressed my baby all winter in calico dresses made out of the lining of an old dressing-gown; and G. in clothes concocted out of old castaways. As to myself, I rigidly abstained from getting a single article of dress in the entire past year, except shoes and stockings. Calico is not to be had; a few pieces had been

offered at 40 cents per yard. Coarse, unbleached cottons are very occasionally to be met with, and are caught up eagerly at 40 cents per yard. Such material as we used to give ninepence for (common blue twill) is a bargain now at 40 cents, and then of a very inferior quality. Soda, if to be had at all, is 75 cents per lb. Coffee is not to be bought. We have some on hand, and for eight months have drunk a poor mixture, half wheat, half coffee. Many persons have nothing but wheat or rye.

These are some of the *very trifling* effects of this horrid and senseless war. Just now I am bound down under the apprehension of having my husband again enter the service; and if he goes, he says he will not return until the war closes, if indeed he come back alive. May God's providence interpose to prevent his going! His presence is surely needed at home; his hands are taken away by the militia draught, and he has almost despaired of having his farms cultivated this year. His overseer is draughted, and will have to go, unless the plea of sickness will avail to release him, as he has been seriously unwell. The Institute is full, two hundred and fifty cadets being in it; but they may disperse at any time, so uncertain is the tenure of everything now. The College has five students; boys too young to enter the army.

. . . . .  
*April 10th*: Ground white with snow; no mails still: Mr. P. consents to postpone his going to the army, till there is a more decided change in George (an ill child). How this unnatural war affects everything! Mr. P. asks me for some old pants of Willy's or Randolph's, for a boy at the farm. I tell him that on them I am relying wholly to clothe John and George this summer.



For months we have had no service at night in any church in town, owing to the scarcity of candles, or rather to *save* lights and fuel. Common brown sugar, too dark to use in coffee, sells here now for 25 cents per lb. Salt is 50 cents per quart in Richmond. I jot down things like these, to show how the war is affecting us. A bit of silver is *never* seen. We are afraid of all sorts of notes. Mr. P. is trying to put what means he has left, from the wreck of his handsome fortune, in *land*, as the only safe investment; he bought a farm (which he does not want, and does n't know how to get cultivated) the other day from Dr. Leyburn, so as to have something tangible for his money. While watching beside my child, I have managed to read, "Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India," a most interesting book. What a brave, noble fellow Hodson was! But in its best, most exciting aspects, how unattractive (to me at least) is a soldier's life!

I think continually of Father and Julia, and long to hear from them. Thank God they are not suffering the apprehension — the undefined fear — the constant dread — which I am never free from. We hesitate about engaging in anything. Is it worth while to have garden made? We may be flying before an advancing Federal army before many weeks. Mrs. Cocke writes imploring us to come down to Oakland, bag and baggage; but to fly (in case of the occupation of the Valley) would be to give up everything to certain destruction. The disposition of people here seems to be — very universally, to hold on to their homes. I shall do so, unless Mr. P. constrains me to go away.

One thing surprises me very much in the progress of this war; and I think it is a matter of general surprise — *the entire quietness and subordination of the negroes.*

We have slept all winter with the doors of our house, outside and inside, all unlocked; indeed the back door has not even a hasp on it, and stands open. I have shut it frequently at midnight (when accident called me down stairs), to keep the dogs out; and some \$600 worth of silver, most of it in an unlocked closet, is in the dining room. Would I get my Northern friends to believe this? It is more remarkable, this quietness and sense of security, because there are no men left in the town, except the old men and boys. I note this thing, by the way, as an unexpected phase of these war times. There is not, and never has been, a particle of fear of anything like insurrectionary movements. I am sure *I* have none.

*April 14th*: For two or three days George has been improving, but he is still too weak to sit up. His Father, however, considered it safe to leave home this morning for Jackson's camp, near Mt. Jackson, a day's ride beyond Staunton. Whether he will return to the service remains to be seen. I do not conceive that the indications of Providence point him to go, and I have perhaps gone beyond a wife's privilege in my *strenuous* use of arguments to induce him to think so too. Oh! if we might only be permitted to withdraw ourselves from this turmoil of horrid strife — if it were only to a log cabin on some mountain side! But I mean to indulge in no moaning in these bald pages; nor to write down any opinions; merely to essay a very brief record of such *facts* as I am personally concerned with, for future reference.

. . . . .  
*April 22d*: I dare to feel something like happiness today. Last night Mr. P. *returned*, to my inexpressible relief and joy.\* Thank God for this mercy! The

Inspector-generalship was a post which did not suit Mr. Preston at all, so he has declined it, and for the present accepts no place with Jackson. He brings word that Jackson is making a stand 20 miles east of Harrisonburg, at Swift-Run Gap. Mr. P. was in a little artillery skirmish while with the army, and after learning from Jackson that he did not anticipate any battle speedily, left him. Afterwards, hearing that the U. S. troops were advancing, and that there was a possibility of an engagement, he turned back, offered his services as a volunteer aid, and determined to remain until the fight was over. It soon became clear, however, that no fight was to come off just now, according to Jackson's opinion; perhaps no general engagement at all. So Mr. P. turned his face homeward again. I will try not to darken my present relief, by the thought that he may soon have to be separated from me, and I not be able to hear from him, or hold any communication with him; for Fremont and Rosencrantz are both west of us, each about 30 or 40 miles, and may advance against Lexington at any time.

*May 1st:* A dreary dismal day of rain, and my feelings are in accordance with the weather. At midnight last night Mr. P. was summoned to the Institute by a dispatch received from Jackson, requiring the corps of cadets to march at once to his support in an expected battle. Before three o'clock he returned, saying he too was to go early in the morning. Although something of the kind has been continually dreaded, it was a shock to me — and such a grief! He is gone — to be exposed certainly to the chances of a stern battle; there is no mail communication between Jackson's position and this, so I can't hear from him, and must be content with rumors, which are torturing, because generally so exaggerated.

After he left me, I shut myself in his study, and blotted the leaves of his Bible with my tears, while I read on my knees the 91st Psalm, and besought God to realize to him all the promises contained in that Psalm. Then, with my finger on the Saviour's promise, "Ask and it shall be given you," etc., I plead his fulfilment of it to me in my precious husband's behalf; and I *think* I felt a relief in laying my aching heart on the bosom of the Redeemer. "Be not afraid, only believe! God has been so good to us in the past, let us trust him for the future" — my Beloved said to me as he held me in his arms at parting. With God's help I will try and act upon his counsel. Am I not limiting my heavenly Father's power when I feel that my husband is less safe on the battle field than at home? Wherever he is, the Almighty arms are around him; this being so, why should I be afraid? "Why art thou so fearful, oh, thou of little faith!"

*May 10th*: Oh! this heart-crushing suspense! No news from the scene of battle, except the report that Major Ross is among the killed. Thursday, the day of the battle at Buffalo Gap, cannonading was distinctly heard here; our servants noticed it and spoke of it during the day. Today, they insist that they heard it distinctly again. Oh! my husband! Could I but know he was safe! I wonder at myself that I do not loose my senses. My God! help me to stay my heart on thee!

*May 15th*: Have had various notes from Mr. P. since Saturday. Was extremely relieved to find that he was not in the fight; that there were only 50 killed and 250 wounded, instead of 300 killed, as first reported. It is not true that Major Ross was killed. The pursuit

of the Federal forces has been kept up for several days. Tonight, a letter from Mr. P. says they halted on Monday, to rest the army half a day, and hear a sermon from Dr. Dabney, a thanksgiving for the victory. This evening we hear the report that Jackson is retreating — the Federal force having been reinforced with fresh troops. Mr. P. says a battle seems imminent; he is not on Jackson's staff, but marching with the corps of cadets. News of the burning of the steam iron-clad ship, Merrimac. What a sacrifice! But I record here nothing of public news, beyond what touches myself. It is not my purpose to do more.

*May 17th:* With what different feelings do I make a record in this little note book today, from last Saturday! Last night my husband, almost without any warning, (none, except that we heard Jackson had relieved the corps from farther duty, and they were soon to return), stepped in upon us just as tea was over. What a welcome we gave him! I do thank God for his mercy in having fulfilled my petitions, as I would fain hope, in restoring to me safe my precious husband. He was not in the battle at McDowell, though they marched 40 miles in one day in order to come up in time. The fight was just over, but he was left in charge of the battle field, helped to bury the dead, and saw the wounded borne off the field; the Southerners lost some 60 or 70 killed, and some 280 wounded; about 340 he certainly thinks in all. What the Federal loss was he could not tell. The Confederates buried about 40 of them, and the country people around say that multitudes of wagon-loads of dead and wounded were carried away. As the Confederates pursued, they came upon many graves just filled up, but how many were in them of course they could not tell. It seemed awfully unfeeling

to hear Mr. P. say that they took off the dead men's shoes before burying them, and in one instance a soldier applied to him for leave to wear them. He stopped one soldier who was cutting buttons off a dead Federal's coat. (Buttons are a scarce article in the Confederacy!) The corps of cadets could not get the permission of the Board of Visitors to continue in the service, or they would have gone on with Jackson's army, as he desired them to do. This accounts for their return.

*May 27th*: As we rose from the dinner table today, I asked Mr. Preston if he was going to ride out to the farm this afternoon. "No," he said, "I will read a while, and then go down street and hear the news." He had scarcely done speaking, when he was summoned to the door, to "hear the news," the sad news, that in a fight just over, at Winchester, Frank Preston [the second son of the family] had been "severely wounded." In about two hours, the carriage was ready, and Mr. P. on his way to Staunton. Prof. Nelson went with him, as his brother-in-law is slightly wounded. How he will find poor Frank, God only knows: he said he would be thankful to find him alive, and seemed little disposed to be hopeful about him: he has an arm broken, and a ball in his side. Oh! this horrid, unnatural war! Had a letter today from W. F. J.— he says his time is absorbed in trying to comfort the afflicted. Must write to the distressed G. family; R. was brought home *dead* a few days ago. May God be gracious, and spare my husband the anguish of seeing his son cut off in the first flush of his opening manhood!

*May 28th*: This has been a day of painful suspense about poor Frank; the mail brought us no letter; but

one was received by some one else, which says that Frank's arm (in the opinion of the surgeon who spoke to the writer) may probably have to be amputated.

*After Dark:* Phil returned with the carriage; Mr. P. went on to Winchester in an ambulance. Phil heard a gentleman say to him, just as he was stepping into the ambulance, that he was just from Winchester, and Frank was not so ill as he might expect to find him. This is some alleviation of the suspense. Heard today of a son of Dr. Breckenridge's being killed at Shiloh; also, a cousin of Mr. P. being desperately wounded. Two dead soldiers passed through Lexington today. Last week *eight* dead bodies passed through. We are getting so used to these things, that they cease to excite any attention. Jackson has gained a great success, and the papers ring with eulogiums on "old Stonewall" as they delight to call him. We have heard today of five Lexington boys being wounded at Winchester; Frank P. the only one seriously so.

Miss Magdalen Reid tells me that in buying groceries to begin housekeeping, she paid 45 cents for *brown* sugar, \$1 per lb. for coffee, and \$4.50 for tea! The coarsest domestic cotton I ever saw — such as very few servants would be willing to wear, I can only get for 75 cents per yard. Calico, when it can be had at all, is the same price. These records will be interesting for reference hereafter.

*May 30th:* Today brought letters from the surgeon and others, in reference to poor Frank; our worst fears about amputation realized! the arm was taken off at the shoulder on Tuesday morning; the elbow joint was too much injured, in the opinion of three surgeons, to make it safe to try to save it. Pray God his life may be

spared! this is a sad misfortune, but if he only lives through it, what a mercy compared with what multitudes of others suffer! The letters speak of Frank's great fortitude and composure, even under excessive pain; indeed of his gallant bearing throughout the whole thing. What life-long trial and sorrow this dreadful war will impose upon thousands of families! How long, Lord, how long, shall we thy guilty people who deserve all this fierce wrath, continue to suffer it!

*June 3d:* Yesterday, Bro. Wm., Anna, and the children came in; W. was only here a short time. It was very sweet, however, to have even this little visit from some of my own kin. I feel so lonely and isolated. How I long often to fly to dear Father and Julia for a little while, have a good cry on their bosoms, and then fly back! It is very sorrowful to be so utterly cut off from them. They are in my thoughts every day, and almost every hour. So are my brothers and their families. When I am compelled to hear scorn and loathing predicated of everything *Northern* (as must continually be the case), my heart boils up, and sobs to itself. But I must be silent.

*June 4th:* No letter from Mr. P. today; no mail from Winchester. . . . Of three of the boys who used to live at my Father's, one is a cripple for life; another is a prisoner of war; a third lies in a nameless grave, if indeed he ever had burial; and the most distinguished General — certainly the one about whom the whole Confederacy has the most enthusiasm, is our brother-in-law Jackson, the inmate for years of my Father's house. What strange upheavings and separations this direful war has made!

. . . By way of recording the straits to which war-



times have reduced matters, let me note that today I made my George a jacket out of a *worn out* old gingham apron! And pants out of an old coat, by piecing the sleeves together. For weeks I have been wearing a pair of slippers which I made myself. Anna's little children were all barefoot the other day, not because she would willingly have them so, but because shoes cannot be bought.

*June 6th*: Had a letter from Mr. P. yesterday. He was at Harrisonburg, having been obliged to fly from Winchester on foot, sleeping on the bare ground: At Strausburg, 18 miles distant, he found an ambulance, in which he went to Harrisonburg. It was hard to leave poor Frank in his helpless condition, among strangers, and within Federal lines; the Federal army expected to take possession Sunday morning, so that he is now a prisoner: and we will not know anything about him. His Father had only been with him a day and a half. But he was improving when he left him, and he had every attention from the kind family in whose house he was. Still he is utterly cut off from his friends, and if he should die we will not know it! These are some of the experiences of this war.

*June 24th*: Rose before 5 o'clock this morning, and had a pleasant ride on horseback with my husband before breakfast. It gave me back my earlier days for the time, to find myself cantering as of old over the hills. Rode a fine horse of Mr. Ruffner's of Harrisonburg, sent here to keep it from being seized by the Federals. (Bro. Eben bought some indigo today, at \$6.00 per lb.)

Mr. P. came home from the farm tonight, saying that everybody out there had heard distinct cannonad-

ing during the day. I note it to see if it shall turn out that there has been fighting within any *audible* distance today.

. . . . .  
*July 1st*: It turns out that the cannonading heard on Thursday was the beginning of the great battle at Richmond. All around, people who have acuter ears than I have hear it with wonderful distinctness. Every day since, the sound has been audible, especially when on a hill top. Mr. P. stood this morning (I was beside him) and counted the rounds.

*July 2d*: . . . People think that the reason Jackson is so successful is because he prays so much. One of his staff told Mr. P. not long ago, that amid the strife of battle he had sometimes seen him for a moment with uplifted hands in the act of prayer. When Mr. P. was his Adjutant-General, he says Jackson was in the habit of withdrawing frequently during the day, when it was practicable, as Mr. P. believes, for prayer.

*July 9th*: . . . Yesterday we began to narrow down our use of even "Confederate coffee" (half wheat or rye) to *once a day* — our sugar is getting so low, and we expect to get no more till the war is over. Sugar is rarely to be bought, and when a little is to be had it is \$1.00 per lb.!

. . . . .  
*July 22d*: Yesterday, while we sat at dinner, who should step into the dining room but Frank Preston! Poor fellow! it was a piteous thing to see him with but one arm; but what a relief to see him again, and have him safe, when we were mourning him as perhaps ill and carried to Fort Delaware! He looks right well, though he had to endure the pain of a second amputation, which was done by the Federal surgeons, from whom

he says he received skilful treatment and true kindness. They would not parole him, so a lady who lives outside the pickets, about eight or ten miles from Winchester, came in and took him to her house in her carriage, no one challenging them: there he remained two days; when two other sick prisoners, whom she had sent her carriage for in the same way, were seized and taken back. As soon as this was known to her, she sent Frank on in her own carriage, immediately, twenty miles (after night), lest he too should be sent for: and so he escaped. He was confined to bed several weeks with his wound. Two or three hours before Frank came, Willy P. started to join his company, the Liberty Hall Volunteers; so the brothers just missed each other.

August 2d: . . . What straits war reduces us to! I carried a lb. or so of sugar and coffee to Sister Agnes lest she should not have any, and she gave me a great treasure — a *pound of soda!* When it can be had, it is \$1.25 per lb.

August 23d: . . . Willy Preston has been in a battle (Cedar Run), and we hear behaved with remarkable gallantry — rallied a disorganized regiment, or rather parts of many companies, and with a lieutenant led them to the charge.

Sept. 3d: . . . Yesterday asked the price of a calico dress; “Fifteen dollars and sixty cents!” Tea is \$20. per lb. A merchant told me he gave \$50. for a pound of sewing silk! The other day our sister, Mrs. Cocke, purchased 5 gallons of whiskey, for which, by way of favor, she only paid \$50.! It is selling for \$15. per gallon. Very coarse unbleached cotton (ten cent cot-

ton) I was asked 75 cts. for yesterday. Eight dollars a pair for servants' coarse shoes. Mr. P. paid \$11. for a pair for Willy. These prices will do to wonder over after a while.

10 o'clock P. M. Little did I think, when I wrote the above, that such sorrow would overtake this family so soon! News came this afternoon of the late fearful fight on Manassas Plains, and of Willy Preston *being mortally wounded* — in the opinion of the surgeons! His Father was not at home, and did not hear the news for some time. Oh! the anguish of the father-heart! This evening he has gone to Staunton; will travel all night in order to take the cars tomorrow morning. I am afraid to go to bed, lest I be roused by some messenger of evil tidings, or (terrible to dread) the possible arrival of the dear boy — dead! Father in Heaven! Be merciful to us, and spare us this bitterness!

*Sept. 4th*: The worst has happened — our fearful suspense is over: Willy, the gentle, tender-hearted, brave boy, lies in a soldier's grave on the Plains of Manassas! This has been a day of weeping and of woe to this household. I did not know how I loved the dear boy. My heart is wrung with grief to think that his sweet face, his genial smile, his sympathetic heart are gone. My eyes ache with weeping. But what is the loss to me, compared to the loss to his Father, his sisters, his brothers! Oh! his precious stricken Father! God support him to bear the blow! The carriage has returned, bringing me a note from Mr. P. saying he had heard there was faint hope. Alas! the beloved son has been five days in his grave. My poor husband! Oh! if he were only here, to groan out his anguish on my bosom. I can't write more.

*Sept. 6th*: Our grief has sorrowed itself down to

calmness; but how sad the household! Dear Willy was the darling of all. His unselfish nature led him to be considerate to a most remarkable degree of every one's comfort. Never have I seen so devoted and thoughtful a son. His love and care for his father had a womanly tenderness in it. I have need to miss him! He was ever gentle and kind to me, and loving to my children. A more faultless character I think I have never known. And then he was so consistent a Christian; *that* is the crowning blessedness of all. When he was struck down on the battle field, friends gathered around him with expressions of sympathy (we are told), when he said, "Don't distress yourselves about me, I am not afraid to die." To the surgeon he said, "I am at peace with God and with all the world." My heart aches for his poor father; he will stagger under the blow. His poor sisters are heart-wrung. Nothing could exceed his brotherly love to them. Alas! what sorrow reigns over the land! there is a universal wail of woe. Dr. White's family is stricken just as this one is. Hugh, their most cherished one, is killed, and today Professor White went with a hearse to try to recover his body. Henry Paine, the Dr.'s son, is killed; Col. Baylor killed; Major Patrick killed. It is like the death of the first born in Egypt. Who thinks of or cares for victory now!

*Monday night, Sept. 8th:* A note today from Mr. P. at Gordonsville, written Thursday evening; not a word had he yet heard of dear Willy's death; he would probably hear nothing, until he reached the place and was shown his grave! We are enduring the painful suspense of waiting for the coming home of his father with the sad remains; it will be a torturing thing. He may come tonight.

*Sept. 11th:* My husband has today returned without

the dear remains of Willy. . . . "Slain in battle — Slain in battle" — he continually reiterates. . . . He could not know certainly which was Willy's grave ; had the one he supposed to be, opened ; alas ! for our poor humanity ! when he opened the blanket in which the body was wrapped, he could not distinguish a feature of his boy on the despoiled face — he tore open the shirt, and there where *I* had written it was W. C. Preston ! He thought to bring a lock of his hair, — it crumbled to the touch ! It was impossible to have him removed, so he carefully marked the spot, and left the removal to be accomplished another time.

Such pictures of horror as Mr. P. gives ! Unnumbered dead Federal soldiers covering the battle field ; one hundred in one gully, uncovered, and rotting in the sun ; they were strewn all along the roadside. And dead horses everywhere, by the hundred. Hospitals crowded to excess, and loathsome beyond expression in many instances. How fearful is war ! I cannot put down the details he gave me, they are too horrid.

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Building, at the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va., June 23, 1897, the late Dr. Hunter McGuire, Jackson's medical director, made a deeply interesting address on Jackson, as he had known him, during the four years' close companionship, as a member of his military family. He made touching mention of the dear boy whose death this journal has just chronicled : a single paragraph may be quoted.

A short time before the battle of the second Manassas, there came from this town to join the Liberty Hall

Volunteers, a fine lad, whose parents (living here) were dear friends of General Jackson. The General asked him to stay at Headquarters for a few days before joining his company, and he slept and messed with us. We all became much attached to the young fellow, and Jackson, in his gentle, winning way, did his best to make him feel at home, and at his ease; the lad's manners were so gentle, kindly, and diffident, and his beardless, blue-eyed, boyish face so manly and so handsome! Just before the battle, he reported for duty with his company. The night of the day of the great battle, I was telling the General of the wounded, as we stood over a fire where black Jim, his servant, was making some coffee. I mentioned many of the wounded, and their condition, and presently, calling by name the lad we all loved, told him he was mortally wounded. Jim, faithful, brave, big-hearted Jim, God bless his memory! rolled on the ground groaning, in his agony of grief, but the General's face was a study. The muscles in his face were twitching convulsively, and his eyes were all aglow. He gripped me by the shoulder till it hurt me, and in a savage, threatening manner asked why I had left the boy. In a few seconds he recovered himself, and turned and walked off into the woods alone. He soon came back, however, and I continued my report of the wounded and dead. We were still sitting by the fire, drinking coffee out of our tin cups, when I said, "We have won this battle by the hardest kind of fighting." And he answered me very gently and softly, "No, no, we have won it by the blessing of Almighty God."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAR JOURNAL CONTINUED

As a break has been made in the war journal, at the end of the last chapter, to tell Dr. McGuire's little story of Stonewall Jackson's strong affection for Willy Preston, this chapter may fittingly open with two or three letters from the great soldier, from the seat of war: they belong to this year of 1862:—

HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY DISTRICT,  
July 22d, 1862.

DEAR COLONEL PRESTON, — Your letter, and the touching poetical production of Maggie have been handed me by Cadet Morrison. I have known your son Willy long, and hope that an opportunity will offer for showing my appreciation of his great worth. Accept my thanks for your kindness in advancing funds to Cadet Morrison. Please settle it as you suggest, and keep the bond until you hear from me upon the subject; unless you should meet with an opportunity of handing it to Mrs. Jackson; but do not send it to her. I congratulate you upon Frank's return home. Remember me very kindly to all enquiring friends. Please say to Dr. White that I wish him to pay my stipends last due, from the money I sent him by you. I think he acknowledged the receipt of the funds, but said no-



thing about the stipends, and I fear that he did not feel authorized to pay himself from the funds placed in his hands?

Very truly your friend,

T. J. JACKSON.

BUNKER HILL, BERKELEY Co., VA.

(Undated.)

MY DEAR MAGGIE, — In haste I drop you a line in answer to your letter of October 3d. I regret not having a position to which with propriety Mr. E. can be assigned. The best opening that I see for him is to secure an appointment as an ordnance officer. There are to be seventy appointed, after being examined by a Board upon their qualifications. Mr. E.'s brother is among the number. It appears to me that he ought to pass upon examination, by giving attention to the subject. I am much obliged to you for your kindness.

I deeply sympathize with you all in the death of dear Willy. He was in my first Sabbath school class, where I became attached to him when he was a little boy. I had expected to have him as one of my aides-de-camp, but God in His providence has ordered otherwise. Remember me very kindly to Colonel Preston and all the family.

Affectionately your brother,

T. J. JACKSON.

CAROLINE Co., VA., Dec. 22d, 1862.

DEAR COLONEL, — I hope that ere this your son Randolph is out of danger. I regretted to hear of his sickness.

Before this, you have, I presume, seen the details of the recent battle near Fredericksburg.

I greatly desire to see *peace, blessed peace*, and I am persuaded that if God's people throughout our Confederacy will earnestly and perseveringly unite in imploring His interposition for peace, that we may expect it. Let our Government acknowledge the God of the Bible as its God, and we may expect soon to be a happy and independent people. It appears to me that extremes are to be avoided, and it also appears to me that the old United States occupied an extreme position in the means it took to prevent the union of Church and State. We call ourselves a Christian people, and it seems to me our Government may be of the same character, without committing itself with an established Church. It does appear to me that as our President, our Congress, and our people have thanked God for victories, and prayed to him for additional ones, and He has answered such prayers, and gives us a government, that it is gross ingratitude not to acknowledge Him in the gifts.

Let the framework of our government show that we are not ungrateful to Him. If you think with me, I hope you will use the talent God has given you of impressively presenting facts to others, in securing a government which will gain God's blessing. Our Congressional Committee is in favor of repealing the law which requires Sabbath mails. Can you not write to several members of Congress for the purpose of securing their support of the committee's report? I have only seen one member of the House, Mr. Boteler, who warmly favors the repeal.

I am much obliged to you for your kind offer respecting Albert, &c. Please hire him to any one with whom he desires to live: and please ascertain whether Hetty has been hired, and if not, may I trouble you to do it

for me? . . . I also wish you would sell my lot the first opportunity. I do not desire to keep it any longer. You need not consult me about the price, but take what you can get. Remember me very kindly to Maggie and all the family. I sent her a note from her brother John a few days since. He was on the recent battle field.

Very truly your friend,

T. J. JACKSON.

To those of us who passed through these scenes described in the journal, at Mrs. Preston's side, it is a matter of surprise that her tone was so intensely sad. For terrible as many phases of the times were, there was a brighter side, lighted up with hope and courage and enthusiasm, and with a joyous pride in our brave armies and their achievements. There were two reasons why Mrs. Preston did not share this happier experience: in the first place, she could not, of course, feel the same intense love and loyalty to Virginia and the Confederacy that we did. She was true to the South, believed in the justness of our cause, and prayed for the overthrow of our enemies; but it must not be forgotten — for she did not forget — that those enemies were her own people, her blood kin, whom she loved and honored through all, whom she knew to be honest and true also. This struggle in such a tender heart was obliged to cause unhappiness.

And then the wife knew — what the younger members of the family did not — that her husband had not from the first had much expectation of

success in the struggle. There were no doubt times when our brilliant successes caused him to hope that we might wrest independence from the so much stronger nation, or gain the interference of foreign powers; but from the first, as Mrs. Preston afterwards told us, his calm, judicial mind had grasped the hopeless inequality of the contending powers, and there were few months when he did not fear the worst. Whether she agreed with her husband's views or not, this knowledge was obliged to lie on Mrs. Preston's heart with a saddening weight. This much must be said, in order that the younger generation may not have a one-sided impression of those four years, before going on with the extracts from the journal.

*October 23d, 1862:* Just heard of the birth of General Jackson's daughter: as much talk and ado about it almost, as if it were a little princess!

Unexampled drought! Not rain enough yet to enable the farmers to seed; consequently they cannot sow half crops. What is to become of the country? The fear is that there is not enough food in it to keep the people from starving.

*October 27th:* Yesterday it rained steadily all day; the first day of continuous rain we have had since August: and even yet, Mr. P. says, in plowing today at the farm, they turn up dry earth.

Mr. P.'s cousin, Rev. R. Taylor here to tea tonight. He is a chaplain in the army. It makes me feel despairing to hear him tell of the ragged and barefoot soldiery: of the desolation inflicted by war: of the country laid waste, and the houses burned, and the

blackened chimneys standing. It is a very serious question how the army is to be clothed and fed this winter.

November 6th: Randolph [Col. P.'s fourth son] has come home from the Institute sick.

November 10th: Randolph very ill with typhoid fever; has been delirious almost a week. The Dr. thinks there is some change for the better. I pray it may be God's will to spare his life. A cadet has died at the Institute, with this same fever, after seven days' illness.

December 8th: A long hiatus in my little note book. Poor Randolph has been trembling in the balance between life and death ever since my last entry; sometimes the scales seemed descending beyond all hope; again they incline toward the side of life. Today his symptoms are more discouraging.

Dec. 10th: . . . Have had the extreme joy of receiving today a short note from my precious sister; the first I have had from her since August 21st, 1861, a year and a half ago! No wonder I rejoice. It contained comfortable tidings of my beloved ones; my dear Father well and in good spirits; for which thank God! Julia had received my note of October 28th.

December 18th: Today, at half past three o'clock in the afternoon, our poor suffering Randolph breathed his last!

December 19th: This evening, just before sunset, we saw the mortal remains of the dear boy committed to the grave. It is a sore blow to his precious father, to his sisters, and to us all. God grant it may be a sanctified affliction! We have surely need of chastisement, or it would not have been repeated so painfully, within

so brief a period. Three months and a half only, since dear Willy laid down his life on the battle field ; and now another, as full of life — as perfect a model of health — as seemingly fitted for long life as any one I ever saw, after a lingering illness of seven weeks, is cut off. How mysterious the providence appears ! Few parents have as noble boys to lose ; and yet their father bows to the stroke with entireness of Christian resignation. May God sustain his bruised heart !

Had a note from Gen. Jackson yesterday, most kindly written amidst the hurry of a day or two succeeding the Fredericksburg battle, informing me that Bro. John was met on the field by one of his aids, as he was removing the dead — he being a Federal surgeon — and that a cousin named Junkin, whom I have never seen, was among the slain. Bro. John sent word through the aid that my friends were all well. I desire to be thankful for this last item of information.

*December 24th : Christmas Eve :* How different the scene our house presents tonight, and this time last year ! Then *every one* of Mr. P.'s children was here, except Frank ; himself only absent ; the utmost hilarity reigned. We had a beautiful Christmas tree, filled with innumerable presents for everybody, servants and all. The Library was a scene of innocent gayety. Dear Willy P. distributed the contents of the tree, as his Father had done the year before. Everybody was pleased and happy. The war had not then claimed any victim from our circle, and the chief shadow that for that night rested upon us was Mr. P.'s absence in the army. *Now* the sadness of the household forbids any recognition of Christmas ; we are scattered to our own separate rooms to mourn over the contrast, and the Library is in darkness. \* Willy, whose genial face rises so

brightly before me, lies in a distant grave — cut off by a violent death. Randolph's coffin has been carried out of the house so recently that no sunshine has yet come back. Frank is here with his *one* arm, making me feel perpetually grieved for him. Yet why complain? This is nothing to what many others have suffered. My husband and children are spared to me, so that I have peculiar cause for gratitude. I have been permitted to hear of my father's and sisters' and brothers' welfare, too. Surely it does illy become *me* to utter lamentations. Rather let me bless God that his rod has been laid on me so lightly.

*December 31st*: Last night of the year! Servants away all day on their holiday, and I have been doing much of their work. . . . God grant us a happier year in the one to come than the last has been!

*January 9th*: So eventless have the last few days been that it has not been worth while to make any note of them. Have been busy as usual, sewing, &c. . . . It is amazing, and sorrowful too, to see how the language, operations, &c. of war are understood and imitated by the children. Almost their entire set of plays have reference to a state of war. George cuts lines of soldiers every day; marches them about; has battles; beats "the Yankees," and carries off prisoners. Builds hospitals with blocks and corn-cobs; drives ambulances with chairs; administers pills to his rag-boy-babies, who are laid up in bed as sick and wounded soldiers. He gets sticks and hobbles about, saying that he lost a leg at the Second battle of Manassas; tells wonderful stories of how he cut off Yankees' heads, bayoneted them, &c. He has an old cartridge box and haversack, and with a stick for a sword, and something stuck in his belt for pistols, he struts about, bids me good-by daily

with entire gravity, as his furlough is out and he must go to his regiment again. Little Herbert also kills "Lankees," as he calls them, and can talk war lingo almost as well as George. The children are more familiar with war language than I was when I was grown up. They can tell all about pickets, cavalry, cannon, ambulances, &c. Sad indeed that very infancy has learned such language!

. . . Had a present that I hailed with a joy that cannot be easily imagined, yesterday — a pair of coarse shoes for little Herbert! Agnes sent them to him. The last two pair I had made him, and I had no more soles, so was at my wits' end; no shoemaker can be prevailed upon, for any money, to make a pair of child's shoes. Heard W. F. J. say, the other day, that he had married K. G. not long since, in a plain bombazine dress, the simple dress pattern of which cost \$110! Potatoes are now \$5. a bushel. The price of negroes is enormous. A young girl sold on the street the other day for a few dollars short of \$2000. Heard of a not at all "likely" woman of 40 and her two babies selling for \$3000.

*January 22d*: . . . I sew all day, and am busy with housekeeping; never go out, scarcely; have not paid a visit anywhere for months. At night, after the noisy children are asleep, I read a little, or hear Mr. P. read; and so the days pass. I think a great deal about my father and sister, and am about to try to get a letter to them thro' General Jackson.

*January 23d*: Wrote to Julia, and sent it by the Rev. B. T. Lacy, to General Jackson.

. . . . .  
*February 3d*: Have been pleasing myself with a very rare occupation, today, which brings back my young days again; i. e. drawing a small crayon head. I hap-



pened to be not actually pressed with sewing, and so did not resist the strong impulse I felt to give my fingers a little treat, and substitute the crayon for the needle. But the children teased me so that it was the "pursuit of accomplishments under difficulties," that I found myself illustrating.

*February 23d*: This day nine years ago my precious Mother was called hence. I thank God for her holy life and blessed death; for her teaching, her prayers, and her example. Surely one of the chiefest joys of heaven will be to sit at her feet, and tell her how infinitely below her merit I now realize my love for her to have been. How constantly I dream of her, almost every night. How devoted — how judicious — how self-denying — how humble-minded — how sweet tempered — how forbearing — how faithful — how deeply Christian-spirited she was! Few have had such a mother to lose. I often weep over her loss with bitter tears still; and yet I wonder even that time has been able to heal the wound which has been so deep, as much as it has been healed. I can never attain to such a character, to such usefulness, as my Mother! She had such heavenly patience, and how exceedingly impatient am I. But these pages are not for reflections or confessions — only for bald facts.

*March 11th*: . . . Had a note yesterday from Gen. Jackson, promising to do all he could to get a letter I sent him for Sister Julia, across the lines. His note had hardly anything else in it than earnest breathings after heavenly peace and rest. He surely is a most devoted Christian. All his letters to Mr. P., and he writes right often, are full of religious experiences and utterances, and pleadings for prayer for himself and his

country. He is quite absorbed now in trying to provide chaplains for his army.

*March 18th*: Planted out a few trees today, which I had gotten from a man in Lynchburg; paid \$25 for them, and can hardly see them in the yard. Heard Phil say that Mr. Jim Smith had sold some fine seed potatoes for 25 cents apiece, and that \$20 was paid by Mr. Tutwiler for one bushel of onions. . . .

*March 24th*: Wrote yesterday to my dear father by Flag of Truce; hope and pray I may succeed in getting a reply from him or Julia.

*April 3d*: Mr. P. has put us upon soldiers' rations in regard to meat; once a day, a quarter of a pound apiece for the whites, and a half pound for the blacks. The soldiers have only a quarter of a pound of bacon, and a pound of bread.

*April 6th*: Have been sick for two days with severe cold; in bed all day Saturday, and not able to be at church yesterday. Brother Willy here to dinner today. Has just been on a little visit to General Jackson's army; preached there; says Jackson is longing to be out of the field, and at home once more.

*April 14th*: We hear much of the danger of the army being starved out of Virginia. Mr. P. has let the Government have every pound of bacon he can spare, after putting his family on short allowance. The town is crowded with refugees; heard of four families today; one is a mother with eight children, one of them twenty months old, and one four weeks; they had to fly from their homes. Such distresses as we do hear of continually; it is a wonder we dare to feel any thing like happiness. Oh! when will the war cease!

*April 15th*: . . . Today made two petticoats (for E. and self) out of a window curtain. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Cut a pair of drawers for Mr. P. out of a sheet; not because I could well spare the sheet, but because I had nothing else; unbleached cotton not to be had, or if obtainable, \$2 per yard.

*April 18th*: . . . We have heard of fighting at Fredericksburg; refugees still crowd into Lexington. \$75. is now the price asked for board per month, at the hotel.

*April 21st*: Made a few purchases today; two common gingham aprons for G. for which I gave \$12! Two thin, *very* common cotton stockings, \$4 per pair! Ten cent handkerchiefs at \$2.50 apiece. This little note book is a record of prices more than any thing else; yet when I look back a year or six months, to pages where I have made notices of prices, how very reasonable they seem now!

*April 30th*: This evening Mr. P. left us for Columbia, S. C., whither he goes as a delegate to the General Assembly. [Presbyterian highest church court.] . . . This night one year ago he was summoned from his bed at midnight, by a despatch from General Jackson, and he had to march the next morning with the cadets. Thank God he is called away on no such summons to-night, but goes on the peaceful errands of the church. May the great Head of the church watch over his precious life!

*May 2d*: Hear to-day of a prospective battle in Culpeper; everybody is anxious. . . .

*Monday, 4th*: . . . Cannon was distinctly heard by many persons yesterday; great anxiety prevails to hear

the tidings ; no mails today ; we hear the Federal army has torn up some miles of railroad.

*May 5th* : Today brings news of a terrible battle — but no particulars ; only that General Frank Paxton is killed ; Jackson and A. P. Hill wounded. Of the mothers in this town, almost all of them have sons in this battle ; not one lays her head on her pillow this night, sure that her sons are not slain. This suspense must be awful. Mrs. Estill has four sons there ; Mrs. Moore two ; Mrs. Graham three, and so on. Yet not a word of special news, except that a copy of General Lee's telegram came, saying, a decided victory, but at great cost. God pity the tortured hearts that will pant through this night ! And the agony of the poor wife who has heard that her husband is really killed ! I was told to-night that a few weeks ago General Paxton wrote to his wife, sending his will, with minute directions in regard to his property ; telling her that he had made a profession of religion ; that he was expecting to be killed in the next battle, and was resigned and willing to die.

My brother John is a surgeon in the Federal army ; it is routed, we hear ; so I don't know what may be his fate ; nor can I know. I pray God he may be safe. The Northern people can't *conceive* the horrors of this war. It is far away from them ; their private soldiers are all from the lower classes — persons with whom the masses of Christian and cultivated people feel no tie in common ; while the mass of Southern private soldiers are from the educated classes ; this makes a woeful difference in the suffering a battle entails : not that these Dutch and Irish and uneducated people have *no* friends to mourn for them — But oh ! the sickness of soul with which almost every household in this town awaits the tidings to-morrow may bring !

*May 7th*: Another day of awful suspense, for which there is yet no relief. Not a solitary letter or person has come from the army to Lexington; only a telegram from Governor Letcher, announcing that Captain Greenlee Davidson is killed; his body and Paxton's are expected tomorrow. What fearful times we live in!

*Friday, 8th*: Today we hear that General Jackson's arm is amputated, and that he is wounded in the right hand. How singular that it should have been done through mistake by a volley from his own men! It happened at midnight, Saturday. Major Crutchfield is severely wounded by the same volley, and one of the staff instantly killed. How must our near neighbors the Pendletons feel tonight, knowing that it may be Sandy, as he is one of Jackson's staff! No relief still to the tormenting suspense which is hanging over almost every household. Not a letter yet from the army.

*May 10th, Sabbath*: This afternoon Dr. White attempted to hold service; but just as he was beginning, the mail arrived, and so great was the excitement, and so intense the desire for news, that he was obliged to dismiss the congregation. We only hear of one more death among Lexington boys, young Imboden. Several wounded; this is much better than we had dared to hope.

*May 12th: Tuesday*: Last night I sat at this desk writing a letter to General Jackson, urging him to come up and stay with us, as soon as his wound would permit him to move. I went down stairs this morning early, with the letter in my hand, and was met by the overwhelming news that Jackson was *dead*! A telegram had been sent to Colonel Smith by a courier from Staunton. Doubt was soon thrown upon this by the arrival of some one from Richmond, who said he had

left when the telegram did, and there was no such rumor in Richmond. So, between alternate hope and fear, the day passed. It was saddened by the bringing home of General Paxton's remains, and by his funeral. At five this evening the startling confirmation comes — Jackson is indeed dead! My heart overflows with sorrow. The grief in this community is intense; everybody is in tears. What a release from his weary two years' warfare! To be released into the blessedness and peace of heaven! . . . How fearful the loss to the Confederacy! The people made an idol of him, and God has rebuked them. No more ready soul has ascended to the throne than was his. Never have I known a holier man. Never have I seen a human being as thoroughly governed by duty. He lived only to please God; his daily life was a daily offering up of himself. All his letters to Mr. P. and to me since the war began, have breathed the spirit of a saint. In his last letter to me he spoke of our precious Ellie, and of the blessedness of being with her in heaven. And now he has rejoined her, and together they unite in ascribing praises to Him who has redeemed them by his blood. Oh, the havoc death is making! The beautiful sky and the rich, perfumed spring air seemed darkened by oppressive sorrow. Who thinks or speaks of victory? The word is scarcely ever heard. Alas! Alas! When is the end to be?

. . . . .

*May 15th: Friday:* General Jackson was buried today, amid the flowing tears of a vast concourse of people. By a strange coincidence, two cavalry companies happened to be passing through Lexington from the West, just at the hour of the ceremonies: they stopped, procured mourning for their colors, and joined

the procession. . . . The exercises were very appropriate; a touching voluntary was sung with subdued, sobbing voices; a prayer from Dr. Ramsay of most melting tenderness; very true and discriminating remarks from Dr. White, and a beautiful prayer from W. F. J. — The coffin was draped in the *first* Confederate flag ever made, and presented by Pres. Davis to Mrs. Jackson; it was wrapped around the coffin, and on it were laid multitudes of wreaths and flowers which had been piled upon it all along the sad journey to Richmond and thence to Lexington. The grave too was heaped with flowers. And now it is all over, and the hero is left "alone in his glory." Not many better men have lived and died. His body-servant said to me, "I never knew a *piouiser* gentleman." Sincerer mourning was never manifested for any one, I do think. . . . The dear little child is so like her father; she is a sweet thing, and will be a blessing, I trust, to the heart-wrung mother.

. . . . .

*May 19th*: My birthday. I would record my thankfulness to God for His special favors to me through the past year. I would commit into His wise and gracious hands all the future. I would set before myself three special things for the coming year; an aiming after *spiritual-mindedness*; the cultivation of a spirit of prayer; and the daily keeping in view God's glory.

. . . . .

*June 1st*: As I mean to keep a note of the way prices advance, I will mention that the *perfectly plain* crêpe bonnet which Mrs. Jackson got in Richmond cost \$75 and a bombazine dress, as plain as could be made, cost about \$180. Mr. P. paid for some days' work of a white man, a short while ago, at \$8 per diem.

. . . . .

*June 16th:* . . . Continued anxiety about the fate of Vicksburg. Everybody is watching eagerly for the result.

*June 20th:* Yesterday brought news of the capture of Winchester by Ewell. Two ladies, refugees from the neighborhood of Winchester, who have been here for some months, called on me this morning. They say they are heart-sick of exile, and long to fly home. W. F. J. here for dinner; is just back from the army; says the religious interest is wonderfully great; had strangers to follow him often about camp, to ask about their souls' salvation. . . .

*June 24th:* . . . Hear that Lee's army is invading my native State. Well! Virginia has endured it for more than two years! So I must not think it hard that another State whose troops have been helping to ravage her all this time, should take its turn.

*June 25th:* The joy of a note from Julia by Flag of Truce. Thank God! my beloved father and sister are well, and my other friends too. I wrote *instantly* in answer.

*June 30th:* Bought E. a ninepence calico dress to-day, for which I gave \$30! Unbleached, *very coarse* cottons are now \$2.25 per yard.

*July 1st:* The papers are full of the accounts of the advance of the Confederate army into Penna. I trust this army will not be guilty of the outrages which have everywhere characterized the Federal armies in Virginia. It is perhaps well that those who still keep up this terrible war should have some short experience of what war is. But this will not give it to them. The country would have to be overrun for two years before the Pennsylvanians could know what the Virginians know of war. Our town is so full of refugees, people



who have fled from their homes, that I scarcely know anybody I meet. . . .

*July 7th*: Mr. P. started this morning for Harrisonburg, on business. We hear this evening startling tidings — that a great battle has been fought at Gettysburg; 4000 Southerners captured; 12,000 Federals killed — three generals among them, and three wounded. I do not feel disposed to give half credit to the news; we always hear such exaggerated accounts at first. Sister's sons [Mrs. Cocke's] are with Longstreet, and her anxiety is intense, as that division, it is said, lost so heavily.

*July 11th*: We rode out to Bro. Will's today, Sister, the children and I; had a pleasant day; returned at nightfall, to be met by the alarming news that of Sister's two boys, Edmund [the Captain] is slightly wounded, and William missing, perhaps killed! . . . The household is wrapped in gloom. Mr. P. thinks from what he heard of the fearful loss in Pickett's Division, that William is most probably killed.

*November 6th*: A lovely day, and in contrast to the feelings of the whole population. Last night I became uneasy at Mr. P.'s not coming home from the Institute till near ten o'clock, so I went out to meet him, taking Johnny along. After waiting a half hour on the street, he came at last, but with the alarming tidings that a courier had come in from the West, asking that the cadets and the Home Guard should be forthwith sent to the assistance of Col. Jackson<sup>1</sup> and Imboden; that 7000

<sup>1</sup> This was Colonel William L. Jackson, a cousin of Stonewall Jackson, and a former lieutenant-governor of Virginia. His men nicknamed him "Mudwall" Jackson, a play upon the sobriquet of his more famous kinsman. — E. P. A.

of the enemy were between Jackson and the Warm Springs. So we were up before day this morning; I with a heavy heart. The cadets have gone, and the Home Guard from the various parts of the country. Mr. P. gone too; I feel very desolate. Bro. Eben stopped to dinner; on his way his horse fell with him and hurt him considerably, but he will try to go on. [The Rev. E. D. Junkin, then pastor of New Providence church, about sixteen miles from Lexington.] The whole town is in commotion; no men left in it; even those over sixty-five have gone. I can't help hoping they may not have to stay any time or fight a battle.

*Nov. 8th, Sunday:* But little like the day of sacred rest. Last night, after dark, and just after I had heard that 14,000 of the enemy were advancing, and there had been two days' fighting near Huntersville, or rather, twelve miles this side, and when my mind was filled with discouragement, G., who had gone out, was heard to exclaim, "Here is Papa!" Yes! to my joy — but he had hardly drawn off his gloves, had certainly not been one minute in the house, before he was sent for to receive a dispatch brought by a courier, summoning the cadets to Covington. He started out at once, but came back and stayed until morning, when he hastened on to join the corps, and march towards Covington. We went to church, but the services were interrupted by the announcement that the ladies must go home and make instantly 250 haversacks. All was commotion and anxiety. The congregation had been anxious before; it was composed wholly of females, and a few old men and boys; but all anxiety was heightened. Met Mr. Middleton as I came home, who was just returning to hurry on provisions. All the force of the county is ordered to Clifton Forge for the present. The whole available

force is so small, that if there are 14,000 of the enemy near Lewisburg, pushing on eastward, this handful can't keep them back. The reason Imboden sent Mr. P. the dispatch yesterday to send the corps back, was because he said he was moving so rapidly that only mounted men would avail him any thing. But now infantry and everything is desired.

*Monday, Nov. 9th:* We hear today that Echols has had a fight at Lewisburg with 8000 of the enemy, and been badly whipped — lost all his artillery, and many of his men. Hear too that the Home Guard and cadets are ordered on from Clifton Forge to Covington, so that the provision that was started last night would not reach them. All is anxiety. So hurriedly did many go off, that they carried no blankets, and some went with cotton clothes only. Mr. P. went with a pair of worn-out summer boots, and without an article of clothing but what he had on; not even an extra pair of stockings. It is bitterly cold tonight; snowed a little today; the coldest day of the season as yet. I am tasting some of the cruel anxieties which war occasions.

*Tuesday, Nov. 10th:* Hear that there was fighting yesterday *all day* at Callihans, six miles west of Covington; that the Home Guard and cadets were being pushed on as fast as they could move, in order to assist, and expected to arrive at 4 o'clock, P. M. So my husband and Bro. W. *may* have been in a battle — *may* be wounded — *may* be prisoners — *may* be killed — all is uncertainty. These torturing rumors are very hard to bear.

Exceedingly cold today. A Flag of Truce note from Julia to W. — Father is sick, to add to my anxieties. Had a letter in reply to mine to Judge Ould about William Cocke. Mine was sent on to Washington City, and

is returned endorsed, "No record of W. F. Cocke." So that settles the question; he perished in the assault upon Gettysburg. I have to communicate this to his mother. What awful times we live in!

*Nov. 11th*: I feel angry when I have been tortured to no purpose, as now. This evening the Cadets and Home Guard are back again without anything happening to them. I have heard no particulars; last night rumor after rumor reached us, and at last we became convinced that they were really on the return. Imboden had a slight skirmish with the enemy, but whether any of the Rockbridge forces took part in it, I don't know. Mr. P. has not returned; stayed to hunt deer on the mountain, as he failed to find Yankees!

*Nov. 12th*: After dark last night Mr. P. returned, and I find that I was greatly mistaken in supposing that the hurrying out of the Rockbridge forces had accomplished nothing. But for their acting as Imboden's reserve, he would not have dared to open fire upon the enemy as they approached Covington. Strange to say, although they numbered several thousand (for Imboden himself counted 90 wagons in the train), they retreated at the first fire towards Huntersville. It was discovered afterwards that they had heard of large reinforcements being received by Imboden, which it is supposed they thought were from Lee. Every body expected a fight, and I think there was general disappointment that there was only a skirmish. For the present, the forces have returned, and gone to their homes; with the expectation, however, that at any time they may be recalled.

*Nov. 16th*: Was present tonight at Louisa Brockenborough's wedding at the Episcopal Church; a beautiful affair; eight bridesmaids; one of the bride's silk dresses cost between \$500 & \$600 for the unmade material.

Wood is now \$30 per cord; flour \$100 per barrel in Richmond, \$50 here, and rising. Butter selling here by the quantity for \$3.50 per lb.

*Nov. 24th*: Wrote today to my dear father by Flag of Truce. Still suffering with my eyes, so as not to be able to read or write much. I *pretend* not to sew any, but am constrained to do some almost every day, though I always suffer in consequence.

*Nov. 25th*: Last night Sister and P. came: Sister does not allude in any way to William, nor have we mentioned his name to her. She *must* surely believe in her heart that he has perished, though she will not allow it to herself.

*Nov. 26th*: Had 12 hogs killed today.

*Nov. 27th*: Busy with putting up pork. Got a wretched cold.

*Dec. 2d*: All day Sunday sick in bed; not much better on Monday; and today still *hors du combat*. Weather very cold; river frozen.

*Dec. 4th*: Bro. E. came up yesterday on business; bought 150 lbs. of brown sugar, and gave for it \$450.

Bad news from Bragg and the Southwest, and everybody discouraged.

A recent fight on the Rapidan; one of our neighbors had a son killed; one other person from the town also killed.

*Dec. 11th*: Sister had a letter last night, giving positive information of William Cocke's death. He was instantly killed on July 3d and fell without a groan. She bears this confirmation of her worst fears better than we could have expected; the long suspense has broken the shock in some measure.

*Dec. 6th*: Again the Cadets and Home Guard are

summoned out; they started yesterday; and Mr. P. went early this morning. It is a cold raw day, and they will find marching and bivouacing in the open air very disagreeable. The reports are that the enemy is advancing upon the Valley from *four* different points. When will these alarms cease? I am in despair about the war.

*Dec. 18th:* Went on the street to hear some news; found that a dispatch had been received, ordering a body of men to go on to Pattonsburg to burn down the fine bridge over the James river, to prevent Averill's escape; Averill is at Salem with 4000 men.

At 11 o'clock, Imboden's cavalry and artillery passed through. It is the first time I have seen an army. Poor fellows! with their broken down horses, muddy up to the eyes, and their muddy wallets and blankets, they looked like an army of tatterdemalions; the horses looked starved. Then came the Home Guard, drenched and muddy, as if they had seen hard service, though they had only been out four days; but such weather! It rained terribly, the rain part of the time freezing as it fell; and they were out in it all: stood round their fires all night, or lay down in the puddles of water. At 3 P. M. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry (2700) passed through. Their horses were in better condition. All the men in both divisions looked in fine spirits, and cheered vociferously as the ladies waved scarves and handkerchiefs on their passing. People brought out waiters of eatables for the poor tired men. I put our dinner, which was just ready, on a waiter, and sent it down to them. Found Bro. E. and brought him home to dinner, and filled his haversack. All went on to Collierstown last night. Bro. W. is Lt. Col. of the Home Guards. They were all sent on for the protection

of Lexington last night, it being supposed that Averill would advance upon us from Salem. An exciting day indeed.

At night my husband came; the Cadets were water bound; some of them waded to their waists in water, building bridges for artillery. Mr. P. says he saw one marching along in his *naked* feet. This is "glorious war"!

Received a note from A. enclosing a Flag of Truce letter from J. Thankful that my dear father is better. J. says, "It does n't matter how soon all of us go." She would feel so indeed, if she were in the midst of such war scenes as now surround us.

*Dec. 19th*: Busy all forenoon getting breakfasts for soldiers, and filling haversacks. Two young cousins of Mr. P. (Moncures) who have lived most of their lives in Paris, came, looking as rough and dirty as any of the soldiers we saw yesterday. They belong to Lee's cavalry, and had straggled behind. We fed them, *mended them up*, and they passed on refreshed. I asked one of them if he could realize that he used to promenade the "*Boulevards*," and take his dinner at the "*Palais Royal*." Their father is worth millions. . . . Yet these young men were just as merry and contented as possible, though living a life infinitely harder than the worst worked slave. One of them had on coarse jeans trousers. The cadets are to go on to Buchanan tomorrow morning. The weather is bitterly cold, the roads very bad, and hard frozen. This day a twelvemonth poor Randolph was buried.

"Pain in the heart — pain in the head —  
Grief for the living — grief for the dead!"

*Sunday, December 20th*. An order from Imboden for the cadets to march to Buchanan. They started

this morning. Mr. P. went at noon. A very cold day.

*December 21st*: Averill has escaped! To-day Mr. P. returned; also Eben: all are terribly chagrined at the escape of Averill. We hear thro' a dispatch from Staunton that the enemy is advancing from Harrisonburg. A letter to-night from Sister Julia; thankful that my father is better.

. . . . .  
*December 24th*: Making a few simple preparations for Christmas, such as crullers with molasses, and mince pies without sugar or fruit or spirit. The Moncures came back at night, worn out with their bootless marching. They blame E. with the miscarriage of the expedition against Averill.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WAR JOURNAL CONCLUDED

*New Year's Day, 1864*: How times flies! though his wings are heavy. Had hardly gotten used to '63, when here is '64 upon me. A bright beautiful day, after ten days' rain and snow. . . . Roads and streets terribly muddy; scarcely attempt going out. Most of the servants back again. Excessively cold.

*January 2d*: The coldest day of the season; river frozen over; can hardly keep warm at all. Poor people, soldiers' wives, &c., coming every day for flour and wood; Mr. P. supplies very many of them.

*January 4th*: Snowing and sleeting: . . . Busy cutting out clothes for Mr. P.'s new farm servants.

. . . . .  
*January 23d*: Wrote a letter which I mean to try to get through the lines to Julia. Weather mild and fine.

*January 27th*: Had the Ruffners, Cousin R. Taylor's family, Dr. Madison, Mr. Norton, and two or three others to tea this evening; the first company invited to tea, I believe, since the war began. Had an agreeable evening. Weather beautiful and mild as May. . . . Had a pleasant ride on horseback with Mr. P. this evening.

. . . . .  
*February 3d*: Have been making some notes for Dr. Dabney lately, relative to Jackson; find my eyes a great barrier in the way of my doing it properly.

*February 10th:* Have been suffering more than usual with my eyes, so as not to be able to use them at all. . . . Rev. W. H. Ruffner here after tea; felt very much depressed by the tenor of his and Mr. P.'s conversation: they seem to think that the Valley must be relinquished this summer.

*February 19th:* Everybody is in an excitement about the currency bill, which we heard of last night. Confederate money is refused this morning. On the 1st of April it is to sink to two thirds its present value; so everybody is trying to get it off their hands. I have ceased noting the prices of things, they are so incredible; as, for example, \$30 per gallon for sorghum molasses; calico, \$12 per yard; tallow candles, \$6 per pound; unbleached cotton, \$5 per yard. It is astonishing how coolly we talk about the probability next summer of having to relinquish the Valley, and how our plans take in that probability. Oh! but we are growing weary of this horrid war! How it oppresses us!

*February 23d.* This day ten years ago my blessed mother went from us to Heaven. I have thought much about her to-day, and have recalled the anguish of losing her. What she is spared in not being here now!

*February 26th:* The currency is in a transition state, and it does create the strangest difficulties. Sister pays today \$20 for having a home-made cotton dress made up. Unbleached cottons are \$8 per yard. People are *trading* as far as possible, instead of paying money. As for example, the shoemaker tells me that he won't make a pair of shoes for me unless I send him a load of wood; so before the shoes can be had, the wood is sent. Flour is selling at \$250 per barrel.

*February 29th*: G. and H. at Sally White's birthday party; H. said they had "white mush" on the table; on inquiry, I found it was *ice-cream*! Not having made any ice-cream since war-times, the child had never seen any, and so called it white mush. The only luxury I long for is *real coffee*. I have drunk wheat coffee for more than two years, till I am made a dyspeptic by it. Coffee has sold at \$16 a pound. Tea is now \$40 per pound.

*April 18th*: A long hiatus in my notes: I have had a severe attack of illness, from which I have scarcely fully recovered. Took cold from exposure in having some trees set out, and had internal neuralgia, and after that something like gastritis; was confined to bed about a fortnight; have regained my strength very slowly.

*April 26th*: Busy getting Mr. P. ready to go to the General Assembly, which meets at Charlotte, N. C., to which he is a delegate. Busy too in putting up a box of provisions to send to the army to Frank Wilson.

*April 29th*: This evening Mr. P. and T. started to the General Assembly. A curious commentary upon the times is that I had to prepare provisions sufficient for the journey, for them to take along, as nothing can be gotten on the way. All travellers carry their own food, even for a five days' journey.

*May 10th*: The anniversary of Jackson's death. A flag sent from England was reared over his grave this morning with appropriate ceremonies. He is safe from the fearful turmoil of war! Had two letters from Sister Julia last week, written a fortnight apart. She has received none of the letters I sent through the lines. This

is discouraging. My hands are rheumatic and I can hardly hold a pen.

*May 11th* : We surely "dwell in the midst of alarms." We were roused from our beds this morning at five o'clock by an order for the impressment of our horses to haul the Institute cannon : then came Frank, Preston Cocke, and William Lewis for a hurried breakfast, and provision for their haversacks ; ordered towards Winchester, where is Seigle with a large Yankee force. They left at seven o'clock ; all the Home Guard is ordered out too ; so Lexington is left without men. Last night firing was heard by a great many persons, more distinctly they say than ever before. They suppose it to be at Richmond. I'm thankful my husband is away, on the errand of God's Church, and so escapes going to Winchester. *He* will regret it no little !

I was very much struck, a few weeks ago, in listening to my children at play. They dramatized that familiar passage in Childe Harold as closely as if it had been explained to them, —

"There was a sound of revelry by night," &c.

Of course they had never even heard it read ; but they got their "Mammy" to cut paper soldiers and ladies ; then they had a "party," and made the soldiers and ladies dance together. While they were busy dancing, came a shout from George : "The enemy — the Yankees — they are coming ! Your guns ! Your guns !" So the soldiers tore themselves away. "There was mounting in hot haste," and they made them rush to battle, leaving the poor paper ladies scattered disconsolately about the floor. The thought of war is never out of our minds. If it could be, our children would bring it

back by their plays! For they are almost wholly of a military character. Oh! when will the end come! No mail last night; but news by stage that Pickett has been successful above Petersburg.

*May 13th*: Still no mail from Richmond, and only rumors of the continuous fighting. I feel oppressed and spiritless. No letters from Mr. P.; the enemy are at Salem; if they come on to Lynchburg, Mr. P. is cut off from his home, and I will not even be able to hear from him.

*May 18th*: Surely we have fallen upon evil times! Last night we received intelligence of the very severe battle at or near New Market, between Breckenridge and Seigle; the latter was repulsed, and is retreating, pursued by Breckenridge. The Cadets asked to be permitted to take the front; they were allowed to do so. (Later, this is doubtful, but General B. says, "They behaved splendidly!") Five of them were killed, and forty-five wounded, some of them very badly. For a while we did not know but that Frank or Preston Cocke or William Lewis were among the killed; but when the list came, we could not find their names! Thank God for sparing them! But they are pushing the enemy on; another battle will probably ensue, and then their turn may come. We received a Richmond paper, the first for ten days, and find that a fight has taken place near Sister's; thirty killed; and there she is, alone on her plantation; her three only sons in battle. How do we ever live through such scenes as are daily coming to our notice! The reserve is ordered out all over the State. Matters are touching the point of desperation. All seems to depend upon the final throw. We will soon have attained "the zenith point of hope," or "the nadir of despair."

Father and J. do not *begin* to conceive what we go through here. How should they? Thank God they do not!

*May 19th*: My birthday. I feel the pressure of years upon me in this respect, that all life seems sadder; hope's wings droop; illusions vanish. Yet am I a slow learner of the solemn lessons thus taught me. Letters from Frank; the Cadets have had a severe time of it. Several have died of their wounds; forty-five were wounded. They are now ordered on to Richmond, by the Secretary of War, and I expect nothing else than that they are in for the remainder of the war, and my husband with them. We hear nothing but tales of blood. Today comes another report of a fight between Lee and Grant, and the details of Beauregard's success at Richmond. Pickett's Division stormed the enemy's breastworks, and have 700 or 800 killed and wounded. E. C. is in this Division; we know not whether he has fallen, and are afraid to hear. People busy here scraping lint; the schools dismissed in order that the children may help. . . .

*May 23d*: At nine o'clock this night my husband returned home, safe, having walked twenty miles owing to a break in the canal. . . . He has had a very pleasant trip; was ten days on the way returning; the difficulty of travelling is now almost insurmountable. Anna Jackson came on as far as Greensboro' on her way to Lexington, but was obliged to give up the attempt to come further. The Government absorbs the railroads for the transportation of troops and supplies, and no passenger cars are run.

. . . . .  
*May 26th*: We have prayer-meetings *very* well attended every afternoon at four o'clock. They are very

general all over the country. Oh! that the Hearer of prayer would answer the thousands of petitions that rise from all parts of the land! Alarms every day.

*June 3d:* All was quietness with us yesterday; today we are all in excitement and alarm. A courier has come in with news that the enemy is this side of Covington (40 miles off), and is advancing, and no force that we know of between us and them. General J. is somewhere out there. Again we hear that the Yankees are 17 miles from Staunton; so that we are between two fires. People are busy packing up silver and valuables; negroes are coming in from west of us; and all is distraction. The few men here are going out to-night to join J. if they can find him. They are more likely to be taken prisoners, it seems to me. Mr. P. is not well; has had fever every day since his return home; yet he goes out to-night, and will be in the saddle all night. He is making arrangements to have our bacon and flour hidden away, and his stock driven over the mountain. My heart sinks within me. Are we to experience what so many others have suffered? God deliver us! Let our help be in Thee!

*June 4th:* Such a blessed deliverance! Mr. P. was all ready to start out with the scouting party — his horse saddled — to start in an hour, when a messenger came in with the tidings that J. had had a sharp skirmish with an advance party of Averill, and on McCausland's coming up with 4 regiments, they retreated. McCausland is now between us and the enemy. General Jones is coming on from Salem; so we feel respited.

*Sunday, June 6th:* No sooner is one alarm over than another comes. Mr. P. took me down to the hospital this morning, to see some wounded cadets, one of whom

was wounded in seven places, and will probably die. As we returned, and were stopping at Mr. Sam Moore's, to see a V. M. I. professor who had a piece of his skull grooved out by a minnie ball, we were startled by the news that the enemy were at Milboro'. We reached the church just as the services were closing, so did not go in. Found that Gen. W. E. Jones's command was approaching the town, only two miles out. At dusk, in walked Capt. George Junkin and another officer; they belong to Jones' division, and have left their companies five miles out, to come in and pass the night with us. We were just about to have our bread and milk supper handed; but of course more substantial fare had to be prepared for tired soldiers; so we all had *real* coffee, biscuits, and bacon; a royal repast for these times. . . .

*Monday, June 7th:* This has been one of the most exciting days we have ever had here. At half past six we gave the soldiers breakfast, and filled their haversacks. But at breakfast we heard of Gen. Elzey's arrival in town, and of the burning of the woollen factory of which Mr. P. is part owner, at Port Republic. After breakfast, we all went down street, to see the passage of the troops, 1700 men; G.'s company among them. Poor fellows! It was melancholy to see them with the bouquets with which the ladies had saluted them, in their hands. Such a mockery in the fresh, brilliant-looking flowers, and their soiled, jaded appearance. I knew they were marching to meet the enemy, and must be brought into action at once, and I could not but know that many of them would soon lie down in death. A courier arrived, as they came through the place, with news of an engagement a few miles from Staunton, in which Gen. Jones was killed. He had just



reached the place — had only a small portion of his command with him, but he collected parts of some scattered commands, and attempted to withstand the enemy. His own troops fought bravely, but the others ran shamefully: Jones threw himself into the thickest of the fight to rally them, and fell dead. It is a great loss; he was esteemed a fine officer; was an attached friend of Gen. Jackson.

All has been wild excitement this afternoon. Stages and wagons loaded with negroes poured in from Staunton. Everybody was in alarm. In the midst of it, after hearing that the enemy was in possession of Waynesboro and Staunton both, we went to the daily prayer meeting. There Dr. White calmed the people by a succinct statement of facts, so far as it was possible to obtain them. . . .

. . . . .  
*June 7th:* A courier has brought in the intelligence that Averill's force is at Jordan's Furnace, between 20 and 30 miles from this, and advancing this way. That the force engaged with Jones was *not* Averill's: probably Crooke's. People are more certain to-day of "the Yankees coming" than they have been at all yet, because there is not a soldier between them and us, and if they chose to ride into Lexington to-night, there is not a thing to hinder them, all the Confederates having passed on to Staunton or its neighborhood. Mr. P. is as busy as he can be, getting things at the V. M. I. moved away. The library has been carried to the College. As the Institute is Government property, they will most likely burn it; that, at all events, is what we apprehend. We have hidden our own valuables to some extent; and Mr. P. is having his bacon hauled into the mountains. Yet the enemy may not come; we have

expected them *so* often when they did n't come, that we may be delivered again. Gen. Elzey has passed on to Lynchburg to-day.

*Later* : At half past four o'clock we went to the daily prayer-meeting. Dr. White gave us what information he had been able to collect ; told us that the enemy was certainly on his way hither ; but inculcated calm reliance upon God ; said the force advancing would not reach us today ; and appointed the meeting for to-morrow, saying that we should come, unless it was dangerous for ladies to be upon the street. As we went from the Lecture Room, three couriers rode up, and the street was crowded from one pavement to the other. We found that Imboden, Jackson, and McCausland are all with their small forces falling back ; that the enemy took possession of Staunton yesterday at one o'clock ; burnt a large factory and the railroad Depot ; and *it is said* the Virginia Hotel ; and were advancing this way. All was such commotion as I have never seen in Lexington ; people moving flour, goods, &c. ; driving out their cows ; ladies flying about in a high state of excitement. A little while after I reached home, in came E. and Mr. W. from Brownsburg, fugitives from the enemy. E.'s carriage was broken, so he could not bring his wife and children to us ; but he took them and the servants over to Mrs. W.'s ; moved out his bacon, and what flour he had, shut up his house, and left it to its fate. At his church on Sunday, a courier arrived, and demanded in the name of Gen. McC. that the citizens should turn out *en masse* and blockade two of the mountain passes. E. went with them ; spent all Sunday night cutting down trees, and was near enough to Crooke's camp to hear the band ; almost to distinguish the tunes ; heard ten *reveilles*, which would indicate ten regiments ; saw the

camp fires. When he left home, McC. had passed his house coming this way; the enemy was several miles above Brownsburg. Agnes is pretty brave; she was willing to be left alone in the house, the only white person, with her little children. All her anxiety was to get E. off. I was busy until ten o'clock getting off our bacon and flour, which E. tells me the enemy is taking all along the route.

*June 8th:* I must continue to make some notes, as I have opportunity. . . . Listened all night for the knock of the courier who was to return to Mr. P. bringing tidings from McCausland; but he did not come till morning. McC. says he will dispute the whole way with the enemy. . . . A cadet, who will probably die, is to be removed to our house from the V. M. I. hospital this morning. I am about to have the library carpet lifted, and the room prepared for him; he is too ill to be taken upstairs. Mr. P.'s overseer was to drive the cattle off from the farm at daylight. We wait the unfolding of events. I would that my father and J. knew the situation in which I find myself to-day. I wonder if they would n't pray for the defeat of those who are coming against us! Mr. P. talks of going to join McC. He can't stay here; but with McC. he could only go into the ranks, and he holds a Lt. Col.'s commission. I pray he may not go; for what can that handful of men do? They may harass a little, but are too small a force to make a stand, without the prospect of being cut to pieces.

*June 9th:* Part of Crooke's command came as far as Brownsburg (they were four miles from E.'s house), and *there they turned around and went back to Staunton*, we hear. All this seems very inconsistent; why should they come up the Valley Road this far, and wheel

round with nothing before them but McC.'s and J.'s little remnants of regiments? It is quite mysterious, for it seems to have accomplished nothing.

*Saturday Morning, June 11th:* Last night all our alarm was again aroused by a courier arriving with the news that the enemy had turned suddenly back, and were in full force at Brownsburg, and that McCausland was retreating with his 1400 men before him. This was soon confirmed by the arrival of brother Eben and Mr. W. again fleeing. The enemy's column entered Brownsburg as they left; they stayed long enough to hear the musketry of the skirmishers; this return was so sudden that they had barely time to escape. Some of the Institute professors were here to tea; all had to depart at once, when Mr. P. came in saying that he had just read a dispatch from McC. saying that he would be here in *two hours*, and that the enemy was at Cedar Grove, eight miles from this. Sure enough, in less than two hours, McC's men were at Cameron's farm. Mr. P. and two of the officers rode out to see McC. — did not get back till three in the morning; we sitting up till then. Indeed we did not go to bed at all; only threw ourselves down for an hour or so. The cadets have been under arms all night; have not yet moved. Resistance was at first spoken of; but there are only three of the Institute cannon brought back, and McC. has found to his cost that it is in vain to offer opposition with such a mere handful as could be brought together, to the ten thousand who are approaching. So certain did we feel yesterday that the danger was for the time over, that Mr. P. had his stock all brought back from the mountains, and I had "unhid" as George says, our silver. At once Uncle Young [a trusted servant] was dispatched with the carriage horses to Overseer Clark,

and he was ordered to proceed at daylight to the mountains. A courier came in at ten o'clock P.M. saying that another force was advancing by way of Kerr's Creek; whereupon E. and the gentlemen from Brownsburg, one a wounded Lt., mounted and decamped. If the enemy advances on Lexington this morning, McC. will most probably burn our bridge, and retreat, the Cadets with him, on the Lynchburg road. Mr. P. goes with the Cadets. They only arrived from Richmond night before last.

*Evening:* Our fears have all been realized: the enemy is upon us, and is in pursuit of McCausland, who left the town about an hour before they entered. About ten o'clock this morning, McC. burned the bridge as the enemy approached it; he then began to fire upon them. We have been shelled in reply all day; one shell exploded in our orchard, a few yards beyond us, — our house being just in their range as they threw them at the retreating Confederates. The Cadets, my husband among them, remained on the Institute hill, till the shot and shell fell so thick that it was dangerous; the Cadets then retreated, and are several hours ahead; but they are infantry, and this is a cavalry force altogether. Mr. P. is just two hours ahead of them. The people from the lower part of the town fled from their dwellings, and our house was filled with women and children. Just in the midst of the thickest shelling, the poor wounded boy from the Institute hospital was carried here, surrounded by a guard of cadets. He has borne the removal very well. I have distributed some of J.'s blackberry-wine, which I have always forborne to open, among the frightened and almost fainting ladies. About four o'clock the head of the Yankee column came in sight. I went out and watched them approach; saw

six of our pickets run ahead of them some ten minutes. One of them dropped his gun near our door. For two hours there was one continuous stream of cavalry, riding at a fast trot, and several abreast, passing out at the top of town. Then the infantry began to pour in: these remained behind, and with cavalry who came in after, flooded the town. They began to pour into our yard and kitchen. I ordered them out of the kitchen, half a dozen at a time, and hesitated not to speak in the most firm and commanding tone to them. At first they were content to receive bacon, two slices apiece; but they soon became insolent; demanded the smokehouse key, and told me they would break the door unless I opened it. I protested against their pillage, and with a score of them surrounding me, with guns in their hands, proceeded to the smokehouse and threw it open, entreating them at the same time, by the respect they had for their wives, mothers, and sisters, to leave me a little meat. They heeded me no more than wild beasts would have done; swore at me; and left me not one piece. Some rushed down the cellar steps, seized the newly churned butter there, and made off. I succeeded in keeping them out of the house. We have had no dinner; managed to procure a little supper; we have nailed up all the windows. I wrote a polite note to Gen. Averill, asking for a guard; none was sent. At ten we went to bed, feeling that we had nothing between these ravagers and us but God's protecting arm.

*Sunday Morning, June 12th:* A day I will never forget. I slept undisturbed during the night, but was called down stairs early this morning by the servants, who told me the throng of soldiers could not be kept out of the house. I went down and appealed to them as a lone woman who had nobody to protect her.

might as well have appealed to the bricks. I had left the smokehouse door open, to let them see that every piece of meat was taken (I had some hid under the porch, which as yet they have not found). They came into the dining-room, and began to carry away the china, when a young fellow from Philadelphia (he said) took the dishes from them, and made them come out. I told them all I was a Northern woman, but confessed that I was ashamed of my Northern lineage when I saw them come on such an errand. They demanded to be let into the cellar, and one fellow threatened me with the burning of the house if I did not give them just what they demanded. I said, "Yes, we are at your mercy — burn it down — but I won't give you the key." They then demanded arms; we got the old shot guns and gave them; these they broke up, and left parts of them in the yard; broke into the cellar; carried off a firkin of lard hidden there; a keg of molasses, and whatever they could find; but did not get the bacon. They asked me if we had no more than this: I answered "Yes, but it is in the mountains." Sent to Gen. Crooke for a guard. At last they pressed into the house, and two began to search my dressing room. What they took I don't know. They seized our breakfast, and even snatched the toasted bread and egg that had been *begged* for the sick man's breakfast. My children were crying for something to eat; I had nothing to give them but crackers. They set fire to the Institute about nine o'clock; the flames are now enveloping it; the towers have fallen; the arsenal is exploding as I write. Governor Letcher's house has been burned down, and they told me that all the V. M. I. professors' houses were to be burned, Col. Preston's among them. At last old Dr. McClung came, and Phœbe asked

him to go to Averill's Head Quarters with her (Averill has his Head Quarters in Dr. White's yard); she went; did not see the General, but found a young man there (from Philadelphia!) who came back with her and ordered the men off. By and by an officer came, and asked for me; told me he had heard we were annoyed; said he was mortified, and would send a guard, though he had no authority to do so. . . . Let me note here, and I do it with chagrin and shame, that the only really civil men have been those from Western Virginia and these two Philadelphians. Invariably those from Virginia were polite; one offered silver for some bread; I had nothing but crackers, which I gave him, remarking that he was on the wrong side for a Virginian. He looked decidedly ashamed.

It was twelve o'clock before we could get any breakfast. They carried off the coffee pot and every thing they could lay their hands on, and while the guard, a boy of 17, was walking around the house, emptied the corn-crib. I asked Dr. P. to take the library for his medical stores, which he agreed to do; he was really polite. We asked him if they were going to burn our house; he said "not if it is private property." Gen. Hunter has ordered the burning of all the V. M. I. professors' houses. Mrs. Smith plead for hers to be spared, on account of her daughter, who lies there desperately ill; that alone saved it. Hunter has his Head Quarters in it. This has been an awful day, and it may be worse before night. One cavalryman told me that if they all talked as I did, they would fire the entire town.

*12 o'Clock:* We have just heard that Gen. Smith, Col. Williamson, and Col. Gilham with some of the Cadets have been taken prisoners! Where is my husband? Where is Frank? If our house is burned to-



night, and we hear of my husband being captured or killed, what will life be worth? God protect and have mercy upon us all! To whom can we look but Thee!

*Three o'Clock P. M.* . . . I am in despair! Forty thousand troops are marching upon Richmond through here; eight thousand more left in Staunton, as an intelligent guard told us. Richmond must fall — how can it withstand such numbers!

I am astonished that in the midst of our frightful troubles we are enabled to be so calm. How awful is war! Who would think this was Sunday, and our intended Communion! One of our overseers has just come into town, and has told one of our servants that every sheep has been slaughtered, every cow, and the horses carried off. We are ruined, nearly; if this house is burned, then all is gone but the bare land. I continue to scratch down a line now and then, to occupy myself. I do it too, that my father and friends in the North may know — if ever I can send them these notes — something of what I am passing through.

*Monday Morning, June 13th*: I had a calm, solemn, two-hours conversation yesterday, with an intelligent and seemingly Christian man, which has filled me with entire despair for the Confederacy. He listened to my solemn declarations that I *knew* the spirit which animated every man, woman, and child was a martyr spirit; was a conscientious belief that in the sight of heaven they were doing their holiest duty; that there was a deadly earnestness among our men which would make the last remnant of them fly to our mountain fastnesses and fight like tigers till the last inch of ground was taken from them: that then the women and children would be swept into the Ocean on one side, and into the wilds of Mexico on the other, but there *could* be no yielding.

"If," said he, after listening with deep interest to what I had been saying, "if I believed that your spirit animated your army, I would feel obliged to lay down this sword; I could not fight against men who fought for conscience' sake." "I beseech you, sir," I said, "to believe it; for it is as true as that the heavens are above us." This is the sentiment expressed by the best of them. He took from his pocket-book some leaves which he had gathered from Jackson's grave, which he said he would keep as sacred mementos. One of the guard which he sent us, decent fellows, who have kept us from being insulted, asked me for some trifle that had belonged to Jackson, saying, "We think as much of him as you do." I gave them each an autograph.

We were told the house was to be searched for arms as some of our neighbors' have been. I delivered up all the sporting guns, but forgot that I had hidden Jackson's sword in a dark loft above the portico. At one o'clock last night I crept up there as stealthily as a burglar, and brought it down, intending to deliver it up to this Lt. B.; but on running up the back way to Dr. White's gate, and consulting him, he said he had his old sword, which had never been in the service, and advised me to keep it as long as I could. I have hidden it in Anna Jackson's piano. We hear that we are to be searched this morning; almost every house in town has been, and but for the interest this Lt. has taken in us, I believe we should have been too.

Gen. Smith's house has not been burned; they have not yet discovered our wounded man. Oh! I am so exhausted — so heart and soul weary! We have heard many times this morning that the Cadets have been captured. Lynchburg no doubt has fallen, for there was no force there. The servants are flocking away. The

soldiers almost force them into the omnibuses. We have a young girl here now, our Mary's sister, whom they were about to drag away; Mary went and brought her here for safe keeping.

*Tuesday Morning, June 14th:* Have had many experiences since yesterday morning. Our guard has been very kind, and we have done everything for them as if they were our own men, because we feel that our safety rests with them. Yesterday the best one came and said, "An officer has just been at the gate, demanding to know if this house has been searched; I told him it had been; has it?" Phoebe said "No." He said the officer asked if there were not anything suspicious about us; the guard assured him there was not. "Now," said he, "you must assure me there is nothing contraband in your house, or I may compromise myself greatly by what I have done." We told him of the cadets who had left their trunks here; he said they must be examined, but that it would not do to send them at this late hour down to the Provost Marshal, after he had pledged himself that the house had been searched. He evidently was nonplussed, and so were we. He begged us to be in haste and have the trunks opened. We furnished a hatchet; he hewed them open, and there were the uniforms! He said they must be destroyed *somehow*, and that we had better *burn* them. We kindled a big fire in the ironing room, and piled it up with nice cloth clothes; but the smell of the burning cloth went all over the house, and the guard said we would be betrayed. Then, in our alarm, we poured water on the charred clothes, and by his directions, tore them to pieces. I suppose what we destroyed had cost two thousand dollars. Oh! what a consternation seized us as the guards bade us hurry. We were in despair about concealing the remnants, but

he bade us shun concealment ; to leave the remnants out upon the floor, and tell the officers, if they should come, that we had been searched, and he would confirm what we said. "All this is out of order," he said, "but I want to keep your house from being plundered, which it certainly will be if they find all these clothes." Such a pile as they amounted to ! We were frightened at it ; so I crept into the loft above the porch, and stowed away under the rafters quantities of the rags. We tore to strips all Frank's outside clothes, and how my heart did revolt at it, and my fingers refuse to do their office : we cut up Mr. P.'s new coat, which he had just gotten at a cost of something like \$300. We were afraid to let the guard know what an amount of uniform there was, lest he should think we were deceiving him. These officers and cadets (there were seven trunks besides Frank's and Mr. P.'s) had just sent their trunks here by the V. M. I. servants, and we did not know some of the young men even by name or sight. Just as I was descending from the loft, candle in hand, the guard's head appeared above the stairs ! One of the servants had just time to wave me back, and then I crouched at the open trap door, the guard talking a few feet from me ; I expecting every instant that he would advance and put his head up to see if there was anything suspicious up there. I never was placed in such circumstances of danger in my life. I called on God to aid me. After a little, the guard turned away, having ordered the buttons all to be given to him. Such a relief as I experienced ! After coming down, I found another cadet's suit, which had never been worn, of nice English cloth, which in Confederate money would have cost \$500. — I took a penknife and slit it to pieces, and added it to the pile. • Going out into the passage I en-

countered the guard coming down from the third story where the clothes lay, with a pair of new shoes in his hand; he said his comrade had an old pair on, and he might as well take this cadet's, as they were contraband. He took Frank's cap, vest, and pants, and this morning the other fellow rode away with them on. I had become so alarmed that I thought it time he should know the wounded man was here, so I said, "Come in and see this wounded cadet!" He seemed surprised, but came in, and talked very civilly; the cadet lay pale and motionless, never opening his eyes. The guard asked if we did not need help in sitting up with him at night, and talked so kindly that quiet tears began to steal down the poor wounded boy's face—for he is only seventeen. Phœbe began to weep too; the guard looked on a moment, and then said, "Well, in the other world there will surely be somebody made to suffer for all this!" I take time to note this; it is an incident worth preserving.

There was still Jackson's sword. With great trouble we carried it under our clothes—that sword that had flashed victoriously over many a battle field—and finally concealed it in an outhouse. Then breathing freely for the first time since our fright, we went to the guard and told him there was not to our knowledge, and we were willing to take our oath upon it, an article of contraband clothing, or an instrument of defence in the house. He said he was perfectly satisfied, and nobody should enter the house to search, except over him.

. . . . .  
*Thursday, June 16th:* As after a storm has passed, we go out and look abroad to see the extent of the damage done, so now, having been swept with the besom of destruction, we look around, as soon as the

calm has come, and try to collect our scattered remnants of property, and see whether we have anything to live on.

On Tuesday morning our guard left in a great hurry, though not before I had delivered a letter to one of them to carry to J., which he pledged himself to take care of. The town began gradually to be cleared, and though we did not know under what rule we were to be considered, we crept out to try to hear something. The experience of our neighbors has been in some instances worse, in some better than ours; but *all* have suffered. Some idea of our absorption of thought may be imagined, when I record that since last Friday till yesterday, we actually *forgot* to have any dinner gotten; we forgot to eat; four days we went from morning till dark without food.

. . . . .

*June 17th*: This morning as we sat at breakfast, we got news that Mr. P. was coming, and oh! with what joy we soon received him! Thank God for his deliverance! Two days ago I thought it a very possible thing that we might never meet in this world, and now he is here safe. Surely our prayers have been heard, and we have been blessed beyond all we dared to hope.

. . . . .

Our spirits begin to rise already, and we cease to feel subjugated, as we surely did two days ago. I thought the cause of the Confederacy was finished for the present, or at least that it was a hopeless struggle. I feel differently now. As to losses, Mr. P. says that \$30,000 would scarcely cover what he has lost by this invasion. He is a poor man now for the rest of his days, he says; but he bears it with a brave and Christian spirit, and utters no complaint.

Mrs. Preston continued to make entries in her journal until the fall of the Confederacy; but it seems hardly worth while to offer any further extracts of this record of a time that was growing steadily more gloomy and hopeless. Means of subsistence became narrower and narrower. Disasters thickened; starvation for the whole country threatened; and the only gleam of brightness that lights up these last pages is the cheerful courage of the soldiers in the field and of the suffering people at home, and the entire readiness of both to keep up the fight, as long as "Mars Robert," the Confederacy's idol, stood at their head.

So far these journals have concerned themselves mostly with war records; but we come now upon a brief notice or two of the only literary work — except a few passionate war poems — which Mrs. Preston seems to have undertaken during those years of anguish and excitement.

The estimate of Mrs. Preston's work as a writer of prose and poetry, is, fortunately for our readers, to be made on another page, by one in whose literary judgment Mrs. Preston had the greatest confidence; one who, though belonging to a younger generation, was for more than twenty years a valued friend, and for part of that time a neighbor as well, — Professor James A. Harrison, now of the University of Virginia.

But there is one poem so unique in its form and its history that the poet's biographer cannot choose but tell the story of how it came to be; this is "Beechenbrook, a Rhyme of the War," the

poem by which Mrs. Preston is best known in the South, and which won for her the love and gratitude of many readers whose ears were dull to the higher strains of her art.

The winter of 1864-65 (that dreariest winter of the century!) Col. Preston spent in Richmond, with the corps of Cadets, who were quartered in the State almshouse, their own beautiful barracks at Lexington having been burned by Hunter, as described in the war journal.

One dark winter day, the mail brought Mrs. Preston a letter from her husband, in which he said, "I send you a little poem which is making a great stir here in Richmond: it is rather a pretty thing, but you could do something much better in the same line."

The booklet accompanying the letter was "Wee Davie," a pathetic little story, told in very ordinary rhyme, and having no merit as a work of art. "You could do something better" Mrs. Preston accepted as a sort of dare, and she at once took up the gauntlet, though in absolute secrecy, except as regards her stepdaughter, a girl of sixteen, who was, in a way, her amanuensis.

Naturally the stirring scenes through which she had been passing suggested the theme for this poem, and no imagination was necessary to form the tragic plot. The story of Douglas and Alice was the story of thousands of lives in the Confederacy, and Mrs. Preston's picture of the environment, the scenes, the emotions, the sorrows of the war is so true to life that no ex-Confederate



can read "Beechenbrook" to-day without reopening those old wounds. Some of us cannot read it at all!

It was written on the rough paper made in the Confederacy, with a poor pencil, and the original manuscript is almost illegible. Many pages were written by firelight, partly for the secrecy of it, but partly because even the home-made tallow candles must be used with economy. To the girl amanuensis it was a time of eager delight, those evenings when she lay on the rug in the fire-glow, waiting for the words which came from a shaded corner, and which wove themselves into the smooth and yet animated verse. Many a tear had to be choked back, as the poet touched chords which woke sobbing memories even in that young heart.

Mrs. Preston's household that winter consisted of her two stepdaughters, a stepson of twelve, her own two little boys of six and four, and a young disabled cavalryman whose Winchester home was within Federal lines, and who could not therefore be nursed and cared for by his own family. This soldier was the late John J. Williams, at the time of his death mayor of Winchester and Grand Commander of the Confederate Camp of Veterans of Virginia. (He is the second friend whose help in these reminiscences has been snatched away by death, since the opening chapter was written!)

Young Williams had been a member of the Rockbridge Artillery at the time that Mrs. Preston's stepson Frank was wounded at the battle of Winchester, and as soon as the Confederates turned

back from pursuing the flying Banks, John Williams took his wounded comrade to his father's house. That house was already full of wounded Confederates; there was not a vacant bed. But Mrs. Williams' heart was as big as the Confederacy. "He shall have a bed made up in my parlor," she said at once, and it was in her parlor that the brave boy suffered the anguish of having his arm amputated; in her parlor that the noble woman nursed him back to life.

Judge if the Lexington household did not count itself happy, that last winter of the war, in having John Williams to nurse and honor and make much of! But it was Mr. Williams's connection with "Beechenbrook" that allows me the gratification of naming him here.

Mrs. Preston's youngest child had a wonderfully quick ear and memory for rhyme, and was constantly catching up and repeating snatches of verse. During the dictation of parts of "Beechenbrook" (for it was not all composed in the fire-light) the child learned many couplets by heart, and to his mother's chagrin would shout them over the house. His baby lingo, however, was so imperfect that no attention would have been attracted to the composer's secret, except for this singular coincidence: Mrs. Preston had, entirely by chance, selected for her hero the surname of Dunbar, which happened to be the maiden name of Mr. Williams's mother; and when the little raconteur went about his games shouting this couplet, —

“ If I 'm wounded or captured or killed in the war,  
’T will matter to nobody, Colonel Dunbar,”

the visitor's attention was attracted at once. “ What is this child saying about Colonel Dunbar ? ” he asked, and kept on asking, until he ran the secret down, and unearthed it. But by that time the last touches were being put to the poem.

Mrs. Preston sent the manuscript to her husband, in Richmond, and received in return extravagant and delighted praise. Colonel Preston gathered group after group of officers about him, and read them “ Beechenbrook ” from beginning to end ; never failing to win the tribute of tears from the sternest of them. He used to tell, with amused zest, how these bearded fellows protested against the death of Douglas, and insisted upon another *dénouement* for the book !

It was published at once, on coarse and rather dark paper, with paper backs : the journal records that Colonel Preston paid \$2600 of Confederate money for an edition of two thousand copies ; about fifty of these had been sent out of Richmond when the end of the world — *our* world — came : the publishing house was burned at the evacuation of Richmond, and the entire edition was destroyed !

Mrs. Preston's diary of that last winter of the war mentions “ Beechenbrook ” only two or three times, and then speaks slightly of it.

Have been employing my night hours for some time past weaving a little ballad story, “ A Rhyme of the

War." My eyes are so weak, and give me so much pain, that I write without a candle, merely by the light of the fire, and without looking at my page. It has served to lighten the time of my husband's absence, which otherwise oppresses me with its weariness, especially the long evenings alone at my fireside. I have simply tried to present a true picture of these war-times in which we live.

. . . . .  
 A letter from my darling husband, expressing extravagant praise of my little poetical story. It delights *him*, and that is enough for *me*. He is going to have it published.

. . . . .  
 Had four letters from my dearest husband to-day; have had none before since last Thursday. He has put my "Rhyme" into the printers' hands, to be gotten up in the *plainest* manner — dark paper — dim type — a small do. tract; and he is to pay \$2600 for 2000 copies, in stitched brown paper covers! A commentary upon our condition.

The last one of the war letters may be given here, as it belongs to the dying hours of the Confederacy. It is from the absent husband. Colonel Preston remained with Jackson until February, 1862, when he was recalled by the Board of Visitors to his place at the Virginia Military Institute. For two years and a half the wife had the comfort of her husband's presence in Lexington. During that time, as has been seen in the war journal, one son of the household was slain in battle; one died while preparing for the army; another lost an arm. The father's head had whitened under

these sorrows, and he had lost the buoyancy to which his perfect health and undiminished vigor still entitled him. But his Christian resignation was perfect, and his duty to his family, to his church, and to his suffering country filled his life. The following letter was written during the winter of 1865, spent in Richmond with the corps of Cadets, who were quartered at the State almshouse, as has been told in a former chapter.

RICHMOND, Tuesday, January 24th, 1865.

You will get this by General Smith. He goes up to rest, leaving me to discharge his duties as well as my own as professor. I will not underrate the laborious nature of the work, as I mean to make it the foundation of a claim for furlough when he gets back!

I send you as the principal item, Thackeray's last novel, "Philip." Remember when you read it to return your thanks for it to Colonel Crutchfield. I have read it with much satisfaction. As a story it is a mere framework, hastily and inartistically run up, and scarce aims to excite much interest by the events. It is a book of characters, and of characters by no means perfect. In fact there is but one actor introduced (Mrs. Pendennis) who does not require the veil of charity to conceal very considerable flaws. The staple of the book is a merciless exhibition of the badness of human nature. D. and the preacher Hunt are two of the most unmitigated evil-doers on the records of fiction. Other characters you will find in the book that are strong types of bad men, each in his peculiar line, but the analysis will bring out from all the root evil of supreme selfishness. The philosophy of his book is to make selfishness odious, or at all events, in a cynical way, to show how prevalent it is.

His female characters are not quite as bad as his men, but they are hard cases indeed. I have not time to individualize. But you will relish, I know, the picture of true married love in Pendennis and his wife. It is so exquisite and so natural and of course so true. And what art there is in the way in which he just opens the gates of Eden for us as we stand outside, not permitting us to enter, and not describing its beauties, but only allowing us to get a view along one vista of the trees in the heavenly garden, to hear one song of the birds of Paradise, to inhale the perfume wafted to the gate from the banks of ever blooming flowers, and to see at a distance Adam and Eve in loving talk and quiet bliss! And then the gates close upon our eager eyes, to be opened again when we do not expect it, and to furnish some other scene, differing in features, but the same in entrancing loveliness. I have hardly ever met with anything more charming than this fragmentary vision of perfect wifehood. The author gives us different colored bits of glory, and says to our imagination, "Put them together, and see what they will make."

Somebody has undertaken to restore the lost books of Livy, by his profound and minute acquaintance with history: I think if we were together, we know enough about the subject matter of Mrs. Pendennis' story, to fill up the gaps in it! The story falls off decidedly at the end, and the dénouement is as manifest, commonplace, and clap-trap as ever a lazy man of genius was guilty of. But take it altogether, it is so sharp and witty, and, from its standpoint, so true, that I enjoyed it amazingly. How much better it would have been if Phebe had read it aloud to us, so that we could have exchanged criticisms! By the time I see you I will have forgotten all about it. Indeed it would cost me some

trouble to recall its particulars even now. But at all events, I have had my talk with you about it.

Item second is a pair of rubber shoes. I don't think Cinderella's foot can get into them, but they are the only pair I have been able to find, and maybe they will answer. If they are too small, write me word; you can give them away, or sell them. I gave \$30. for them. Perhaps by further search I may pick up another pair.

Also, a ream of paper for you, like this I am writing on. It will try your eyes less than that you have been writing on. As it is much better than what we get ordinarily, you had better send to Captain Polk and get some of a larger size for the use of the household. . . .

Also, a piece of stuff for Phebe which Sister gave me at Oakland; this is the first opportunity I have had to send it.

Also, one orange. Some lady gave this ostentatious piece of blockade goods to Frank, and he (after eating another, I believe), brought this to me two weeks ago. Of course I was not child enough to eat it, but saved it for you all.

Also, a number of illustrated papers for G. and H. — Bless their hearts — I wish I had something better to send them!

There now is my invoice. Very small, but it is my little all, and represents more love than many a bride's trousseau, or rich man's legacy. I wish I could have procured something for all the household, but it is impossible. You have no idea how meagre all the shops look, and how absolutely unesthetic in things great and small the metropolis is. Absolutely, there is nothing grand about here but General Lee, and nothing beautiful but the music at the Monumental Church. (Dinner Drum!)

Postscript item: Since dinner has come in another important addition; this time for Johnny — a bridle! A regular army bridle, from the Ordnance Department. I give this to him upon condition that he puts mine away, and keeps it safe until I get back. Mind, he must not lose anything about it, not even *a bit!* Poor pun, but like my presents, the best I can make in these Confederate times.

. And now good-bye to you all. I send no news, though there are a great many rumors on the street today. You will see them all in the papers before this reaches you.

YOUR HUSBAND.

Not many weeks after this pathetic letter, which reveals so naively the poverty and sadness of the times, under the exile's attempted gayety, Col. Preston came home on the expected furlough. A spell of illness delayed his return to Richmond, and he was still at home when the news of Appomattox fell like a thunderbolt upon the little town of Lexington. For the great captain had held out until his brave men were too faint with hunger to march or fight, and then the end came. Mrs. Preston records the event with a few words of poignant anguish: —

*April 10th, 1865:* News has come that Lee's army has surrendered! We are struck dumb with astonishment! Why then all these four years of suffering — of separations — of horror — of blood — of havoc — of awful bereavement! Why these ruined homes — these broken family circles — these scenes of terror that must scathe the brain of those who witnessed them till their



dying day! Why is our dear Willy in his uncoffined grave? Why poor Frank to go through life with one arm? Is it wholly and forever in vain? *God only knows!*

For three months after the surrender, these notes were kept up in a fragmentary way; but the story of reconstruction has no place here. A brilliant Southern orator voiced the sentiment of his people when he said, "And after war came reconstruction — as after death the judgment!"

The chapters of war-times may close with the last page of the diary: —

*July 4th, 1865:* The Confederacy disowns forever as sacred the Fourth of July. I never saw a quieter day. Martial law is proclaimed.

*July 10th:* It seems scarcely worth while to continue my jottings. I have so few items to note. A week ago four of our servants were dismissed. Mr. P. thought it best to change, so he sent them away. Anakee has lived with him 25 years; he was grieved to give her up, and she wanted to stay. Old Uncle Young manifested no pleasure at the idea of freedom. It is astonishing how little it seems to affect them; they seem depressed rather than elated.

## CHAPTER IX

### POST BELLUM DAYS

WHEN General Lee surrendered at Appomattox, and the weary and exhausted and half-clad and half-fed men came home, the Southern people felt for a few weeks that life was over. But this thing that looked like death was only a swoon. The instinct of self-preservation, still more the higher instinct of care for wives and children, sent our men in a few weeks (in some instances after a single day's rest) to the fields to dig, or into the woods to hew lumber, or into whatever vocation offered bread and meat.

Honest work begets hope and courage, and to these were added a glow of pride in the effort we had made for independence. It had failed. But we had done our best, and if the men could have forgotten what a splendid best it had been, the women of the South would have kept that memory alive. Our pride in the four years' record was finely expressed by General Toombs, in answer to some unwary enemy who was beginning to say, "The reason we whipped you, General"— "Whipped us!" interrupted the ex-Confederate in a voice of thunder, "Whipped us? Why, we simply wore ourselves out whipping you!"

I suppose poverty was never so honorable before in the history of the world, as in the ex-Confederacy of 1865. For six months after the surrender, anything that had cost money was looked upon with suspicion. Where had that money come from? Was it clean money? For the true ex-Confederate had not a dollar to bless himself with. In this connection I may be allowed to tell a little story that shines like Portia's candle in this naughty world. Only a few weeks after the surrender, Mr. Samuel Shoemaker of Maryland, an ardent supporter of the Union, a friend of Lincoln, and a man conspicuous for his anti-secession sentiments, was in the law office of Mr. Peter V. Daniel of Richmond, on some business connected with the reëstablishment of the Adams Express Company's line. While he was there, an old lady came in to speak to Mr. Daniel;<sup>1</sup> she was dressed (I have her word for it) in a cotton gown, grown, spun, woven, dyed, and made up on her own plantation; her bonnet was woven of wheat straw from her own fields, dyed in the plantation pot, and scantily trimmed with ribbon that had served the whole term of the Confederacy. Her white hands were covered with cotton gloves, knitted by the light of blazing pine knots. She brought Mr. Daniel a handsome piece of old family silver, and asked if he could raise her enough money on it to take her out to Kentucky, where she hoped to find something left of a handsome estate.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Cocke, Colonel Preston's only sister.

Mr. Daniel promised to get the amount necessary, but before the lady left his office, Mr. Shoemaker had introduced himself, and with as much deference as if he had been seeking help, instead of offering it, begged Mrs. Cocke to accept a berth on his own line of steamers, running from Norfolk to Baltimore. There could be no mistaking the spirit in which the offer was made, and the great-granddaughter of Sir John Randolph did not find it hard to accept such graciously offered kindness. But Mr. Shoemaker's kindness did not stop here. In Baltimore he brought his lovely wife and his elegant turnout, and took this Confederate dame, just as she had left the plantation, to drive in Druid Hill Park!

Years afterward, Mrs. Shoemaker was asked how she felt driving among the fashionables with such a conspicuously dressed companion. "My dear," she answered rebukingly, "do you think we did not know her for a lady?" Our F. F. V. left Baltimore with a letter to a Louisville banker, authorizing him to furnish Mrs. Cocke with any funds she might need, on Mr. Shoemaker's account!

But my pen has flown the track. Peace brought its compensation even to the sorest hearts, in the return of the dear exiles from danger and privation, and to Mrs. Preston it brought the added joy of again opening communication with her father and the other members of her family in the North. She was relieved to find that they cherished no resentment against her, or even against her Confede-

rate colonel. From the time that Mrs. Preston paid her first visit to them after the war, in the fall of 1865, till the day of her death, no shadow ever came between her and those loving hearts whose pleasure it was to lavish affectionate kindness upon her.

It is no part of this writer's task to tell the story of Lexington's two great schools, the Virginia Military Institute and Washington College (now Washington and Lee University), which were left by the war, the one in blackened ruins, the other stripped of income and crippled in furnishings. But Mrs. Preston's whole Lexington life was bound up with these two educational institutions. For thirteen years her father had served Washington College as president; while the Virginia Military Institute had been first suggested and then brought into being by her husband, who was the first professor appointed on its faculty. Naturally their interests formed a large part of her life.

Both of these schools re-opened in the fall of 1865, with much larger faculties and many more students than ever before in their history, and little Lexington "boomed" with the rush of seven or eight hundred young men through her streets.

The great event of that period of our lives was the coming one summer afternoon of a rather dusty and tired traveler, on a gray horse, up the long main street of the village. His figure was erect and soldierly, and he rode his fine horse with an

ease and grace which are out of date now, in these days of the jockey lilt; but the noble face wore a look of sadness so infinite, so majestic, that all hearts bowed before it. So the great hero of a Surrender came among us, making an epoch in the history of Lexington.

Nearly twenty years later, Mrs. Preston published some reminiscences of General Lee, as she had learned to know him during his five years' presidency of Washington College. Part of this paper, by the "Century's" courtesy, I am allowed to quote in this chapter.

It would not be easy for one who had not been in the midst of it, to realize the intense enthusiasm that existed among the Southern people, at the conclusion of the war, for General Lee. Throughout the four years of conflict, Stonewall Jackson's peculiar personality, idiosyncrasies, and daring exploits inspired in the minds especially of the soldiers, with whom naturally he came into more intimate relations, an indescribable feeling of chivalrous devotion that bordered upon something higher than enthusiasm.

But nothing could exceed the veneration and love, the trust and absolute loyalty which people and soldiery alike manifested for General Lee. There was even an affectionateness (if I may be allowed the term) existing on the part of his men to him, which is rare, even in the case of the most adored leader. Cromwell's Ironsides would march into the breach, and die at his bidding. Washington's Continentals were content to starve and perish, inspired by the unselfish patriotism of their chief. Napoleon's Grenadiers never ceased to feel the electric power of his name. Wellington's troops rushed

upon death, proud to be the sharers of their leader's glory. But none of these great commanders captivated and held the hearts of their men, as did the grand soldier who, possessing the calm dignity of Washington, united with a warmer heart and a far more gracious manner, was able to impress himself personally upon every one under him.

His character was perfectly poised: none ever saw his equilibrium disturbed, — his blood and breeding were such as gave to him the highest tone as a man and a gentleman. His air instinctively commanded reverence, and yet his simplicity was of such a crystalline clearness that one could not choose but yield up to him all the fealty of one's soul.

But it was after the war had closed, and he became the hero of the Lost Cause, that the affection of his people seemed more than ever a consecrated one. In the flush of success and victory, in the pride and pomp of action, the South gave him its fullest confidence and reverence. But when it saw him yield his sword, and bow to the inevitable fiat of war with princely nobility, with exalted self-respect, with undaunted endurance, and with the one desire to make the best of the desperate circumstances in which he and his people were involved, the whole heart of the South broke itself over him in love, pride, and benediction.

The name given to General Lee universally in the army, "Ole Mars Robert," is an evidence of the tenderness of affection with which he was regarded. And after defeat came, all this feeling was intensified by the added one of sympathy. Nowhere could he move abroad without being greeted with such demonstrations of love and interest as always touched his generous and gracious heart.

Living near him as I did from 1865 till his death in 1870, I was a frequent spectator of many little instances and scenes which illustrate this feeling, and also serve to bring out the finer points of his character in a way that no stately biography would condescend to do. It may be worth while to focalize some of these side lights, in order to indicate some of the less known characteristics of this princely man.

A brief period only had passed, after the surrender at Appomattox, when offers of homes began to be pressed upon him. His family being an English one, he had relatives in England, among titled people, who insisted upon his coming and sharing for a time the ease and luxury of their homes; but he positively refused to expatriate himself. "No," said he, "I will never forsake my people in their extremity; what they endure, I will endure; and I am ready to break with them my last crust." And he refused to leave Virginia. Many homes were pressed upon him in his native State; but as my sister (Mrs. E. R. Cocke) said, when he accepted her offer of a plantation house on her own estate, "he chose the most unpretending one"! With furniture from her own house she fitted up for him and his family a plain but comfortable home at "Derwent," Powhatan County. And here he gathered for the first time since the war his own family. "Never shall I forget," she said, "his unaffected gratitude, and his gracious acceptance of this simple home I and my sons had prepared for him. The Derwent house was only two miles from my own, and our great country gardens readily supplied the wants of the new residents. As I saw the beautiful simplicity with which these trifling supplies were received, it seemed impossible for me to realize that this was the man upon whom the fate of the South had hung — that



this was the man for whom thousands were ready to rush to death — that this was the man before whom the hearts of all the Southern Confederacy bowed in reverence.”

“I remember” (she said) “his riding over on Traveller one day shortly after coming to Derwent, to a neighboring country store, which was also the postoffice: the desire of the people, black and white, to see General Lee, was intense, for this was but a few weeks after the surrender. He walked quietly into the store, and was engaged with its proprietor in talk about the prospect of the crops, and such like things, when the room began to be crowded by the country people, intent upon catching a glimpse of the great Commander. He seemed not to observe them at first, but turning round, and noticing the press of people, he said, ‘Ah, Mr. Palmer, pardon me for keeping you talking about corn and tobacco so long; I see I am detaining you from many customers.’ There was nothing to indicate the slightest consciousness that the crowd had pressed in to see him.”

I well remember the first visit paid to Mrs. Lee on their taking possession of the president’s house at Washington College, in Lexington. There were many visitors in the room, who had all come with a sort of exalted reverence to pay their respects to the General. When we rose to take leave, my little son, who accompanied me, could not find his cap. What was my surprise to hear Mrs. Lee interrupt the General in his talk — not to ask him to summon a servant to do her errand, but to say, “Robert, Herbert Preston has left his cap in the back parlor; will you go and get it for him?”

We were not used to hear the leader of armies bidden to do such errands as that!

At one of the first commencements at which General

Lee presided, after he became president of the college, the hall was filled with an immense crowd, to whom he was still an object of central interest. During the progress of the exercises, a little boy of four years old became separated from his parents, and went wandering up one of the aisles in search of them. The General noticed the child's confusion, and gaining his eye, beckoned to him to come to him on the platform, where he sat, surrounded by many of the brilliant men of the Confederacy. The tender signal was irresistible to the child; he instantly made his way to the feet of the General, sat down there, and leaned his head against his knee, looking up in his face with child-like trust; apparently thoroughly comforted. Resting thus, he fell asleep, with his protector's arm around him; and when the time came for the General to take his part in the prescribed ceremonies, I recall how touched we all were as we saw him do it without rising from his seat, because to rise would have been to awaken the confiding little sleeper. His love for children was more remarkable than that of any man I ever knew. He possessed the royal attribute of never forgetting faces or names; and not a boy in our streets ever took off his cap to salute him as he passed by on Traveller, or not a little girl curtsied to him on the sidewalk, that he did not for a moment check his rein, and give them an answering salute, invariably naming them.

This capacity for ever after recalling a name he had once heard, was peculiar. One of the college professors told me that in riding out with him one day, they passed an old mill, at the door of which stood the German miller, with the most barbarous of German names, waiting, with the hope of receiving a hand-shake from the General, under whom he had served. His wish was grati-

fied, and the old man was made infinitely proud and happy. Not long after, the professor was again passing the mill with General Lee, when at the door the miller again presented himself. The professor by no effort of memory could recover the man's name, though he had been passing his mill for years; and he felt mortified that when the General should ask him, he should have to confess his total oblivion of the name. To his surprise, the General rode straight to the door, and with a cheerful, "Good morning, Mr. F——," shook hands cordially with the gratified old man.

Mrs. Preston might have given an instance of this wonderful memory of General Lee from her family history. A young stepdaughter of hers who had spoken to General Lee only once, being then named to him along with other children of the family, was one day walking in a long column of girls from Miss Baldwin's Seminary, in Staunton, Va., when General Lee passed on the other side of the street. He was on his way from Washington to Lexington, and was just about to take the stage for his night ride to that place, when he saw this child across the street, and singling her out from forty-nine comrades, — who must all have looked very much alike to a stranger, — he crossed the muddy street, and calling her by name, said he was going to Lexington, and would be glad to take any message to her father and mother. The little maid was too much overwhelmed with the honor done her to remember afterwards whether she had said a word in reply. But we will continue Mrs. Preston's reminiscences: —

The General told me once of an amusing scene he encountered in one of his rides, in which children played a part. A few miles out of Lexington, he was overtaken by a thunderstorm, and sought refuge in the house of a gentleman whom he knew. When he entered, he found that Mr. W. and his wife were absent; and a group of children, girls and boys, were playing marbles on the parlor carpet. They all knew him, and started up at once to make him welcome. But the attractions of the game were too powerful for their politeness, and as the General begged them not to stop their playing for him, they went on with their game. In a little while an altercation arose. "Now, Mary," said Bob, "I call that cheating; you did n't do fair." "Take that back," cried Tom, "you shan't say my sister cheats!" "But she did," answered Bob, with sullen persistence, "and I'll say it again." With that Tom rose in his wrath, and collared Bob; and Mary, trying to separate the combatants, burst into tears, and cried out, "O General Lee, please don't let them fight!" "My good fellows," said the General, coming up, and grasping each by the shoulder, "this will never do; there is some better way to settle it!" But in vain he tried to separate the little wrestlers. "I argued," he said, "I remonstrated, I commanded; but they were like two fierce mastiffs, and never in all my military service had I to own myself so absolutely defeated as here. I retired beaten from the field, and let the little fellows fight it out."

He had the gentlest possible way of giving counsel and of administering rebuke. I remember hearing him say once, in a presence where such a testimony was worth more than a dozen temperance lectures, "Men need no stimulant; it is something I am persuaded

they can do without. When I went into the field at the beginning of the war, a good lady friend of mine gave me two sealed bottles of superb French brandy. I carried them with me through the entire war, and when I met my friend again, after hostilities had closed, I gave her back both her bottles of brandy, with the seals unbroken. It may have been some comfort to know that I had them in case of sudden emergency; but the moment never came when I needed to use them."

As a man, physically, intellectually, morally, and socially, we people of the South think his equal was never seen. He was a superb specimen of manly beauty, grace, and elegance. His military life gave no precise stiffness to his manner; there was about him a stately dignity, a calm poise, absolute self-possession with entire absence of self-consciousness, and a beautiful consideration for all about him which made a combination not to be surpassed. His tall, erect figure, his fine coloring, his sparkling hazel eye, his perfect white teeth (for he had never used tobacco), his engaging smile, his chivalry of bearing, the musical sweetness of his perfectly true voice, were attributes never to be forgotten by those who had once met him. His domestic life was an ideally beautiful one; his devotion to his invalid wife, who for many years was a martyr to gout, was touching to see. He would have her conveyed, himself on horseback at the side of her carriage, to our various medicinal springs in Virginia. I recall one instance in which he preceded her by a few days, in order that he might have an apparatus prepared under his skilful engineering, by means of which her invalid chair could be placed upon a little platform, and slowly lowered into the bath, in order that the descent and ascent of steps might be avoided. His tenderness to his children, especially

his daughters, was mingled with a delicate courtesy which one never sees now-a-days, a courtesy which recalled the *preux chevalier* of knightly days. He had a pretty way of addressing his daughters in the presence of other people with the prefix of "Miss," — "Where is my little Miss Mildred?" he would say, on coming in at dusk from walk or ride; "she is my light-bearer; the house is never dark when she is in it!"

Several thousand people shared with Mrs. Preston this privilege of living in the same community with General Lee; not a few of these have recorded their acquaintance with him; but as we are presently to ask how our poet felt when she gazed for the first time upon Mt. Blanc, so it seems proper to set forth her impressions of that nobler piece of God's handiwork, a Christian Hero. And let me add as a postscript to her own record, an anecdote which I have heard her tell so often that I can repeat her very words.

One stormy winter twilight, too bad an evening, we thought, for anybody to be abroad, our door-bell rang, and General Lee and Miss Agnes were shown into the library, where the family were gathered. Before many minutes had passed General Lee asked for my two little boys (six and four), *by name*, as he always did. He was told that they had been ill with croup for several days, and were not allowed to cross the nursery threshold. The next afternoon, in worse weather, if possible, than that of the day before, General Lee again rang our door-bell, bringing in his hand a basket of nuts for one little invalid, and a picture of a dog for the other! "Can you conceivê," Mrs. Preston would ask, with a

dewy look in her eyes, "how one who carried on his heart the sorrows of a whole people, who daily received *and answered* letters from all over the South, could remember my little prisoners?"

Lexington was full of interesting people, during those first years after the war. One of them was Commodore Matthew F. Maury, who was connected with the Virginia Military Institute. A sweet invalid wife, and several sons and daughters, made this warm-hearted old man a charming home in one of the houses built for the military professors, on the border of the handsome parade ground. (One of these daughters was so beautiful that she was asked by a well-known painter to sit for his picture of Guinevere!) The commodore himself was full of gay *bonhomie*; he was radiantly happy at being able once more to collect his family about him, and gratified by the generous appreciation which left him free to finish his important geographical books, without taking up any regular class work. Although not the heroic figure in the world's eye that Lee was, or Jackson, Maury had, in his own line, achieved world-wide fame, and when coaxed into showing his honors, his ex-Confederate coat would blaze with royal decorations.

But, like General Lee, he lived among us with the simplicity and good-natured neighborliness of the humblest citizen, and drew all hearts to him by a child-like gentleness and cordiality. He was working very hard, with his daughters' help, over the books of geography that afterwards delighted

readers of all ages ; but, like General Lee again, he had sympathies to spare for all.

On one occasion, when the Preston home lay under the gloom of recent sorrow, the dear thoughtful old commodore sent a special messenger to insist that the youngest daughter should come to him for a week's visit. He evidently felt that the young thing needed cheering, and he had set himself the task. She regretted afterwards that she did not accept the kind invitation, and so learn to know more intimately the "great pioneer of meteorological science."

Mrs. Preston had become much attached to this rare old man ; and when he lay on his death-bed, in the last battle for life, prolonged through four months of weariness and pain, she was deeply moved at the daily accounts of his patience and courage and unwavering faith. Two incidents of his last days especially touched her poetic heart, and I recall distinctly the broken voice and tearful eyes with which she repeated them to me : one was his enjoyment, up to the last day of his life, of the gleaming beauty of one of the planets. "Draw back the curtain," he said, as his voice grew fainter, "and let me gaze upon him a little longer : I think that one of the first requests that I will make, after I get to heaven, will be that I may be permitted to visit that planet !"

The other incident Mrs. Preston herself gave to the world in one of her best known poems. Mrs. Maury had asked her husband if she might bury him in beautiful Hollywood, the Confederate



Valhalla of Richmond, Virginia. "As you please, my dear," said the nature-lover, "but do not carry me through the Pass until the ivy and laurel are in bloom, and you can cover my bier with their beauty." And while the burial service was being read over the body, lying in state in the library of the Virginia Military Institute, Mrs. Preston, who was not able to venture across her threshold at the time, walked up and down a sunny, covered porch, with mind and heart aglow, and when we came back from the vault where the temporary resting-place was to be, she read us in a voice quivering with emotion, "Through the Pass." The whole poem of eleven verses had been forged out at white heat during that hour of solitude!

#### THROUGH THE PASS.

"Home, — bear me home, at last," — he said,  
 "And lay me where my dead are lying,  
 But not while skies are overspread,  
 And mournful wintry winds are sighing.

"Wait till the royal march of Spring  
 Carpets your mountain fastness over, —  
 Till chattering birds are on the wing,  
 And buzzing bees are in the clover.

"Wait till the laurel bursts its buds,  
 And creeping ivy flings its graces  
 About the lichened rocks, and floods  
 Of sunshine fill the shady places.

"Then, when the sky, the air, the grass,  
 Sweet Nature all, is glad and tender,  
 Then bear me through 'The Goshen Pass'  
 Amid its flush of May-day splendor."

So *will* we bear him ! Human heart  
To the warm earth's drew never nearer,  
And never stooped she to impart  
Lessons to one who held them dearer.

Stars lit new pages for him ; seas  
Revealed the depths their waves were screening ;  
The ebbs gave up their masteries,  
The tidal flows confessed their meaning.

Of Ocean paths the tangled clew  
He taught the nations to unravel ;  
And mapped the track where safely through  
The lightning-footed thought might travel.

And yet unflattered by the store  
Of these supreamer revelations,  
Who bowed more reverently before  
The lowliest of earth's fair creations ?

What sage of all the ages past  
Ambered in Plutarch's limpid story,  
Upon the age he served, has cast  
A radiance touched with worthier glory ?

His noble living for the ends  
God set him (duty underlying  
Each thought, word, action) naught transcends  
In lustre, save his nobler dying.

Do homage, sky, and air, and grass,  
All things he cherished sweet and tender,  
As through our gorgeous mountain pass  
We bear him in the May-day splendor !

Twice, in the ten years that followed the war, death entered the home of which the stepmother was the centre, and the initiated find in her poems mementos set up like exquisitely carved stones, to mark these sorrows which she shared with her husband.

But Mrs. Preston's days were filled, not with the noble companionship of heroes, not with pampered sorrows, not even with the thrill of her creative art; and if the story of her life teaches a special lesson, it is that the best *entourage* for such a singer is a home, and a family demanding constant, unselfish devotion. This is a chapter made up, like our grandmothers' quilts, of scraps; and it will end with scraps from two little note-books (they do not pretend to be journals), one marked 1868, the other 1870.

*Monday, April 6th, 1868.* Copied a sonnet for *Land We Love*. Wrote to Bro. W. and had the Benton Taylors, Dr. Madison, and Mr. Massie to tea.

*Tuesday, 7th:* Rainy day, raw and cold. E. read "On the Heights" to me this afternoon. Wrote to Mrs. B., an old lady of 90, who had made a donation of books to our black Sunday School.

*Wednesday, 8th:* Put down matting in the spare chamber. Received the wall paper.

*Thursday, April 9th:* Covering chairs with new damask. Rainy day. E. read "On the Heights," a German novel, to me for an hour or so, while I worked.

*Friday, 10th:* Still renovating chairs; have fixed five.

*Sunday, April 12th:* The old negro I went to see on Saturday died a short time after I was there. I spoke to him about Christ; he assented, but was too weak to talk. I did not dream he was so near death.

*Thursday, 16th:* Rain — rain! Very busy putting down matting in the dining room, and getting it cleaned. Very thoroughly tired to-night. Can't work as I used to, without tiring out. No garden made.

*Friday, 17th*: Fine, clear day; not warm. Fruit generally killed, it is thought. Peach trees in bloom. Busy darning and sewing.

*Saturday, April 18th*: Tired with this abominable house-cleaning. Working at it until three o'clock. A fine day, though too cool without fire. Men digging about the trees in the yard.

*Tuesday, 21st*: It still rains. Sent off "The Graves of Tennessee" to the S. H. Journal. Read a little; wrote a part of a critique of "On the Heights." Cleared in the evening. . . .

*Wednesday, 22d*: A beautiful day; a dozen people invited to tea; busy all day making cake, ices, &c., and chicken salad *without* any celery, or even cabbage! Yet *very* good! (mem.)

*Tuesday, 23d*: Finished and sent to Gen. Hill my criticism of "On the Heights;" 7 pp. letter paper. Went at night to hear an Englishman read Dickens' "Christmas Carol;" very much entertained; the first reading I ever heard. Gentlemen to tea.

*Friday, 24th*: Raw, but clear. Bro. E. came up this morning; took him to hear "Twelfth Night" read; passably good; though never having heard "readings," I'm no judge. Eyes paining in consequence of yesterday's work. Digging garden vigorously — that is, the men are!

*Saturday, April 25th*: (Mr. P.'s birthday!) Had the garden generally planted to-day. Still cool and disagreeable. How ungracious a season is our American spring! Gentlemen to tea. Mr. P. quite unwell.

*Monday, 27th*: Mended and put down the stair carpet; finished my room couch. A day of manual labor. Very tired. Fires still in all the rooms; gentlemen to tea.

*Tuesday, 28th*: A fair day; covered pillow for my

couch. More pain in my back than I have had for months. Wrote (lying on my back) May Queen verses at the request of a lady of Williamsburg; two pieces, 21 verses.

*Wednesday, April 29th*: Rain all night; gloomy, sloppy day. Copied and sent off Miss C.'s verses. Letter from Mrs. Jackson; still pain in my back; glued some chairs, notwithstanding.

*Thursday, 30th*: Out hunting a cook to-day; not successful. Fine warm day—the first without fire all day. . . .

*Friday, May 1st*: Lovely day; no fire in my room all day. Varnished a parcel of furniture to cover up the wear and tear of the winter. Sewed all the afternoon—longer than I have done for a good while.

*Saturday, May 2d*: Hard rain in the afternoon; sewed half the day; Prof. Joynes to tea; pleasant talk about books: discussed "On the Heights," "Norwood," German life, &c.

*Monday, 4th*: Rain; busy sewing. Out in the afternoon at Gen. Lee's and Mrs. Monroe's.

*Tuesday, 5th*: Rainy till towards noon; without a cook.

*Thursday, 7th*: Had P.'s room cleaned; nothing but hard work all day.

*Friday, 8th*: House-cleaning still; varnished the hall oilcloth myself! Nothing but work all day. Yesterday copied before breakfast 8 or 10 verses, written after I went to bed last night, for a May queen. Cold; fires again.

*Saturday, May 9th*: The record must still be work. No cook yet. Very cold this morning. A celebration of the Confederate Dead to-day, instead of May 10th; decking graves, &c.

*Monday, 11th*: All day housecleaning; still no cook. Fine day; foliage pretty well out; too cool to sit without fires.

*Wednesday, 13th*: Rain. More than a month since I began housecleaning; got two or three rooms still to do. Chew! how tired I get of it! Got an old woman for a cook, with a child eight years old. Eleven black people to cook for here to-night, and I got supper almost entirely myself.

*Friday, May 15th*: I make entries of the most trivial things that fill up my day. Years hence it may interest me (if I live) to know how I filled up my hours. Four gentlemen here to tea; one of them remained all night.

*Tuesday, May 19th*: Cold this morning. My birthday! Sewing and working. Beautiful day. Wrote letters.

As will be seen from the foregoing passages, these little note-books are mostly filled with records of weather, records of health, and family records, now wholly unimportant; also with daily records of company — company — company — which flowed through her days in a never-ending stream; and also with tender memories of the past, brought up by constantly recurring anniversaries. It is evident that Mrs. Preston had no public in her mind when she made these records of trivialities. Indeed they do not give quite a fair picture of the brave, unselfish toiler; for the entries were evidently made at the end of her day's work (almost always *overwork*), and shows signs of bodily weariness, brain fag, and consequent depression.

Her children got no such impression of her during those years: she was always ready to aid their schemes, and to encourage their activities. But making all allowance for her tendency to write in a minor strain, it is evident that a sort of reaction had set in after the intense life of war-times, and that Mrs. Preston's sensitive spirit was saddened by it. It was not strange that her husband should have lost the buoyancy of youth; he was nearly ten years her senior, and had passed the milestone marked "threescore." He had lost three splendid sons in the prime of young manhood; the sacred hope of Southern independence, to which they had been sacrificed, was lost; the precious truth *that they did not die in vain*, which the South has now recovered, was not for him, in whose ears the dirge of defeat was still sounding. The old Confederate uttered no complaint, no moan, no word of unavailing regret; but his head grew white, his brow furrowed, his eye sad, and his long silences were not broken except by grave and serious speech. Later this sadness was much lightened, and with her husband's returning cheerfulness, Mrs. Preston regained a brighter tone.

The journal for 1869 cannot be found, and the entries for 1870 begin late in January: but only such extracts will be given as seem to contain some personal revelation of character, or such touches of background as may throw that character into relief.

*Monday, January 24th, 1870:* Copied two poems. I wonder if it is worth while, in the least, for me to try

to gather together these waifs and estrays of the past years! They seem very indifferent to me, as I read them. The one I copied to-day was written more than twenty years ago!

*Tuesday, 25th*: Copying and revising poetry for my prospective book. Walked with Mr. P. in the evening. Read to Mr. P. one of Robertson's sermons. They are finely written in many respects, but not satisfying. They do not go deep enough to meet the appetite of Presbyterians; not strong enough meat.

*Wednesday, 26th*: Went to sit awhile with Mrs. Lee in the morning. Copied two pieces in the evening. Entertained two visitors.

*Friday, 28th*: Revising. Mr. P. rejects my little dramatic piece of Vashti. Copied *Dies Irae* and *Stabat Mater*.

*Saturday, 29th*: Mending clothes. Dull, cloudy weather. Only able to copy a few verses to-day. . . .

*Monday, 31st*: Not very well. A long literary call from Col. Johnston. Accomplished nothing about my writing. Col. Johnston brought me a volume of MS. poetry to criticise.

*Friday, February 4th*: Finished copying Michael. I wonder if it is worth my work! Working as I do in such odd-and-end style, I wonder any of it has sense in it. All kinds of interruptions — housekeeping — children — callers, &c. And I writing just in the midst of it. Surely it is the pursuit of literature under pressure of difficulties. Sent home Keble's Life to-day. How sweet the impression such a life leaves on one!

*February 10th*: Hunted from among my old letters all I could find of my dear father's, and made some extracts for Uncle D. X.'s life of him; now in progress. Copied a piece — "The By-gone" — for my book. . . .



Received a letter from a lady in Arkansas, asking me to write a piece of poetry on an incident she sent me. I sat down, and within two hours after receiving her request, wrote "The Vision of the Snow."

*February 15th*: Received from Roberts Bros. two new books: Morris' "Earthly Paradise," two parts, and a book by Leigh Hunt. When I turn over the leaves of books of poetry, I am discouraged from all thought of publishing my own. Now here is Morris: what a mine of freshness and richness! What business have I to be throwing upon the current my poor weak dawdling? . . .

*Feb. 16th*: Revised in forenoon; several visitors in the afternoon. Had a long delightful talk with Miss E. about England and English authors.

*Feb. 19th*: Still — still correcting; am nearly through with copying; only two or three more pieces. I am very glad to have them preserved, even in this revised way, should I never publish them.

*Feb. 21st*: Revised a little. Some of my pieces ("Jephthah" for instance) seem quite poor to me. I wonder if others will see as little merit in them as I do!

*Feb. 28th*: Over my pieces still; copied and arranged; I have between 70 and 80 ready, — such as they are. Am not at all satisfied with "Jephthah" — it seems to me so very tame and spiritless. No letters this morning; the Misses Maury here to-day.

*March 1st*: I have to-day *finished* my book — i. e., all but two or three little pieces which I can't get copies of. How glad I am it is done! I got right tired. And how thankful I am that my eyes held out till I was through! I have just sewed it together, and now I wish it was published! But it has helped the winter through very nicely, and given zest to it. I desire to be thankful.

*March 11th*: Finished reading my MSS. Surely I am doing my literary work differently from Sam Rogers, who, in connection with a friend, read over his *Italy* 100 times! Not a soul has read over mine once. I have read it about twice — hardly that much — at least not more. I will now put it up and send it to Mr. H. B. I have accomplished most of this writing since November. Surely I have not wasted much time! I am tired, tired! Company to tea.

*March 12th*: Sent off my MSS. to-day. Had a nice long letter from Paul H. Hayne. . . . To show that I did something besides being literary, let me say I patched a pair of trousers!

*March 13th*: Wrote two letters to-day, a thing I rarely do on Sunday, to my nephew, who to-day I hope connects himself with the Church, and to his parents, congratulating them on so sweet a fact. The last Sunday letter I wrote was to Miss E. W., who died a fortnight ago. Sister says it was comforting to her.

*March 18th*: How fast the days fly and how little I have accomplished in them! Here is almost the end of another week. The snow has almost wholly disappeared, and it is milder, though still cold. I feel as if I was like the artist Haydon's father, who always in his journal noted the points of the wind, no matter what he neglected to say. I always note the weather! Copied "The Quenched Brand" to-day, and wrote a letter or two. Pain in my eyes to-day and yesterday, more than usual.

*March 24th*: After my little housekeeping, an hour or so of correcting. In the afternoon, went over and bade General Lee good-by. He looks very badly; is going to Savannah for his health. From Gen. Lee's to Mrs. Harris' — Mrs. Campbell's — Dr. Kirkpatrick's —

and Dr. Pendleton's. More visits than I have made for many a day.

*March 31st:* Rainy day. Sick with cold. Not able to speak above my breath. Read Robertson's life till my eyes ached. What mists of doubt enveloped him! What a strange theology! I can't unravel it at all. He was morbid about everything. Much must be put down to his sensitive nerves.

*April 5th:* Patched this morning for G. In the afternoon Mr. P. read me a book of the Iliad (Bryant's translation), and the same book in Lord Derby's translation, and we compared them verbally, to the advantage of Bryant's. Both the work of very old men; Bryant 74. Getting better of my cold. No word about my MSS. Hope they may not be lost!

*April 6th:* Still not able to go about the house much. Wrote to Mrs. Jackson, to Mr. Hayne, and to Major V. about my missing MSS. Mr. Pratt here to tea. Mr. Preston delivered his address on Jackson's Christian character, by request, before the Y. M. C. A. of Washington College.

*April 7th:* Had stair carpet taken up, and stairs cleaned. Mr. W. came in the afternoon and stayed to tea; and till bedtime; had a pleasant talk with him on literature and art.

*April 9th:* Mended clothes all forenoon. Mr. P. & J. & G. went out duck shooting, though it has been raining all night, and is dreary-looking. Treated myself to the luxury of reading almost all afternoon; Taine's Rome; how rich his picturesque style is! A little like Ruskin, but more natural and real. I was amused with his "Pulpy Graces." He uses words with telling effect. The translation is so good, it reads like an original.

*April 12th:* Fixed Mr. P.'s study to-day; am tired

to-night in consequence ; which proves that I am growing old, as I can't do things which I used to do with impunity. Toned down Michael, which I will have to copy over. Shortened it wherever I could.

*April 30th*: A very beautiful day ; trees in full blossom ; the orchard lovely with bloom. Had the house photographed this morning. Re-wrote "The Daughter of the Gileadite" finally. Finished up last corrections ; have only the Dedication to write (compose) and the name to fix, and the index, and my book is ready to send to the printer — *such as it is*. Mr. P. and J. out hunting. M. W. here to dinner. Received three books from Roberts.

*May 16th*: Beautiful weather. Wrote (impromptu) a *Dedication* for my book, and spent ever so much time in vain trying to find a name for it — i. e., for my book. "Poems" is too general, and I don't know that they *are* poems. Rode on horseback with Mr. P. in the afternoon, out to the farm ; a nice ride ; sun very hot.

*June 21st*: Not very well, and in a sort of bad humor all day — without reason ! Cutting out and fitting clothes for the children all forenoon. Have turned the dining-room servant into the kitchen for the present. How ungracious these servants are ! So unwilling to help and do their best on a pinch. Proof as usual. Miss Exall here to tea. She brought me a note from her sister in Italy, containing some flowers gathered from Elizabeth Browning's grave in Florence. She had asked her to get them for me.

*June 25th*: A poor profitless week ! So little done, and that all in such a wrong spirit. Will it ever be otherwise ! Shopping this morning. Corrected two pages of proof. *Very deaf to-day*.

*August 3d*: The anniversary of my wedding day! Thirteen years ago. How fast the time flies! Can I believe it so long? What experiences I have passed through in this period — what scenes I have witnessed! God be thanked I have my husband and children still. . . . Made 22 gallons of blackberry wine this morning. Went over in the evening to ask about Mrs. A. She is living — that is all. This night will probably be her last. Yet how little we heed the solemnity of having a neighbor dying so near us! Company here all evening, and no mention of this deathbed.

*August 4th*: Ellie's wedding day! Sixteen years in heaven!

*August 27th*: To me the event of the day is the receiving my book,<sup>1</sup> beautifully printed and bound, just according to my wish. The dream of many years is at length realized, and I have now before me a collection of such verses as I have thought it worth while to keep. I am thankful — I hope, that my eyes have held out to let me do this work. And now — what do I wish in regard to it? Is it to feed my ambition that I have written it? Or is this *my* way of speaking some such tender truths as may take hold of and comfort some heart? May this latter be the truth! It is a matter of real satisfaction that I have been able to accomplish what so long ago I had desired, yet hardly hoped to see carried out. May God bless the book! It contains many grains of religious truth; if He will use it to impress such truth, it would be better than any praise earth could bestow. I *know* this; I would desire to *feel* it. Wrote to Miss Exall, and Lippincott. Gen. Edwin Lee buried to-day.

*August 30th*: Put up 23 bottles of ketchup; that has

<sup>1</sup> *Old Song and New*, Lippincott & Co.

been the work of my day. At prayer-meeting; *heard* the best part of what was said; I never hear a sentence of the prayers. If I go on as I have for the last six months, I will soon be as deaf as my poor dear mother was. Well! What was good enough for her, *I* surely must not find fault with!

*September 17th*: Went out and hunted a cook. Made a cake. Mended clothes. Wrote to John R. Thompson. Mr. P. out hunting. A very breezy day, and I in a tempestuous humor — O me!

*Sept. 20th*: Left Lexington with Julia, in the boat, at five o'clock, Mr. P. and the children coming down to the landing with us. Mr. P. and Phebe rode down the canal two miles on the tow path. A lovely evening. We sat on deck till late. Mr. John Miller talked very agreeably, and gave me some new readings of Old Testament passages, with comments. The finger of autumn here and there upon the leaves. The carriage broke down with us on our way to the boat. I remarked to Julia that it was an ominous beginning to my journey.

(Written later; and I had untoward happenings all the time I was gone!)

*Philadelphia, October 13th*: Heard to-day with great sorrow of Gen. Lee's death.

*Oct. 14th*: A letter from home telling me of *ten* of the household being taken down with sudden sickness! Am filled with alarm. Something they had eaten, they think; they know not what. Most of them were better when Mr. P. wrote. O if I could go home at once! If Sunday did not intervene! I would go to-morrow.

*Oct. 20th*: My visit to Philadelphia is over. I dare say if I could have foreseen the sickness and death of the little child of this household, and the alarm about my own home, I would not have come. Yet I have God's

mercy through it all. I have had a respite from the wear of housekeeping ; have seen and sympathized with my friends ; and although I have crossed but one threshold since I came, not even returning the calls made me, (on account of the death just alluded to), yet I have seen pictures and shops and pretty things, and refreshed my eyes with a *look* at gayly dressed promenaders, and equipages, &c. Now I am just ready to start back *all alone*. I dread going by myself, but can't be content to wait even a day or two for company which I could have by waiting. I am too anxious to get home again. It is a dismal, rainy day, and I start at 12 to-night, to travel all night alone. But I trust the kind Providence that has kept harm from me and mine may take care of me and bring me safely to my beloved ones.

*Saturday, 22d* : Got to Lexington without trouble before five o'clock this afternoon ; met Mr. P. and G. opposite the Institute ; they were coming on horseback to meet the stage, hardly expecting I could be at home to-day. How glad they were ! It is worth while to go away from home, to be so welcomed back ! Mr. P. says I shall never go away from him any more. All pretty well.

*October 23d* : The churches are all heavily draped with black for General Lee. The whole front of the College and Institute are draped too.

*October 29th* : After finishing morning work, went over to see Mrs. Lee. Found her sitting up (she has been quite sick for ten days). She talked tenderly and beautifully of the General. Said, "He was so tired; God saw he had need of rest." "It was best," she said, "that *she* should bear the loneliness instead of him." "When she thought of the change, the release, it seemed selfish to grieve."

*November 7th*: Wrote a little poem about General Lee, called "Gone Forward." Began it after eleven o'clock, and finished it before dinner, "standing on one foot," as Horace says. I don't know whether it is good or not. Writing it made the cold perspiration break out over me, which is a token that I was "i' the vein."

This "little poem about General Lee," written in an hour or two, "standing on one foot," may be given here, that the reader may judge whether or not our poet was "i' the vein."

## GONE FORWARD.

## 1.

Yes, "Let the tent be struck!" Victorious morning  
 Through every crevice flashes in a day  
 Magnificent beyond all earth's adorning:  
 The night is over; wherefore should he stay?  
 And wherefore should our voices choke to say,  
 "The General has gone forward"?

## 2.

Life's foughten field not once beheld surrender;  
 But with superb endurance, present, past,  
 Our pure Commander, lofty, simple, tender,  
 Through good, through ill, held his high purpose fast,  
 Wearing his armor spotless, — till at last  
 Death gave the final *Forward*.

## 3.

All hearts grew sudden palsied: yet what said he  
 Thus summoned? — "Let the tent be struck!" — For when  
 Did call of duty fail to find him ready  
 Nobly to do his work in sight of men,  
 For God's and for his country's sake — and then,  
 To watch, wait, or go forward?



## 4.

We will not weep, — we dare not ! Such a story  
 As his large life writes on the century's years,  
 Should crowd our bosom with a flush of glory,  
 That manhood's type, supremest that appears  
 To-day he shows the ages. Nay, no tears  
 Because he has gone forward !

## 5.

Gone forward ? Whither ? Where the marshall'd legions,  
 Christ's well-worn soldiers, from their conflicts cease ;  
 Where Faith's true Red-Cross knights repose in regions  
 Thick-studded with the calm, white tents of peace, —  
 Thither, right joyful to accept release,  
 The General has gone forward !

*December 3d*: Received from Roberts (Boston) 13 books to-day ; that makes 15 I have gotten this week. Surely my little critiques amount to something ! This is better than making puddings, and so much more agreeable.

*December 9th*: Busy all afternoon with putting up parlor stove, and fixing the iron fire-place in my room. A horrid dirty job ; feel like a plasterer or bricklayer. The fixture in my room does not do, so it will have to be done over again. Too tired in the afternoon to go out ; and in a bad humor !

*December 15th*: "Pottering" about, mending things, &c. Wrote to Mrs. Jackson and Agnes J. Finished "Chastelard." It is abominable in its sensuality and irreligion. But Swinburne was a mere boy when he wrote it. A letter from John R. Thompson telling me of a notice in the London "Saturday Review" of "Old Song and New," very favorable, considering how unamiable this journal usually is.

*December 20th*: Got the copy of the "Saturday

(London) Review," which contains a short notice of "Old Song and New." Very fair, though it says I wrote "Greek Stofies" after reading Lowell's "Rhæcus" and "Tales of Miletus." I have never known until tonight that Lowell wrote "Rhæcus," and I wrote "The Flight of Arethusa" before I ever heard of Lord Lytton's book.

*Saturday, December 31st:* The last entry of the year! It has been a year of mercies; no serious sickness in the household (except John's), no death, no calamity. Where is my gratitude? What have I accomplished? Gone through the daily round of my small duties, how wearily and reluctantly and discontentedly often, and got my book out—this is about all! Absent one month in Philadelphia. Well, here is the minute record of daily doings. It may interest me or my children hereafter. Whatever it is, it is now *closed*, and may God forgive the year's sins and shortcomings—Amen! My eyes have been better this year than since '63; my rheumatism almost entirely relieved, and my hearing *worse* than it ever has been. Do not hear much of general conversation, especially of the Prestons, who all *whisper!*

The *future* I desire to leave wholly (where it is) in God's hands.

In closing this chapter, which forms a sort of postscript to the war journal, and seeks to gather up items of interest attaching to the people and affairs of that time, mention must be made of the republication of "Beechenbrook," in 1866, by Kelly & Piet, of Baltimore. There is nothing of special interest connected with this edition of the war poem (of which seven or eight thousand

copies were sold), except the enthusiasm shown in a pile of old letters, found in Mrs. Preston's desk, written from all parts of the South, thanking her for voicing the sorrow and patriotism of her people. It is astonishing to see how many readers those fifty copies (which had escaped the fire) had had, even before the republication of 1866. But it had been copied over and over, by the pens of loving admirers, until the copies would almost have formed an edition.

## CHAPTER X

### LETTERS

ON one of the first days of 1868, Mrs. Preston received the following note from Paul H. Hayne, of Georgia, who was already known in the South as a writer of fine patriotic verse, and of nature poems, but who was then at the beginning of his career.

AUGUSTA, GA., Dec. 31, 1867.

MY DEAR MADAM, — For a long time past I have been one of the thousands in our section who read your poetry with sincere pleasure.

“Jackson’s Grave” is a lyric that will live, for it possesses true passion and noble music. And I think that your verses on “Poor Carlotta,” issued in the magazine published by Gen. D. H. Hill, are full of rare pathos, and a certain fiery resonance of harmony, which, as Sir Philip Sidney has it, in his “Defence of Poesie,” “stir one’s heart as with the sound of a trumpet.”

Your genius and lofty patriotism have struck me so forcibly, that I venture thus to address you, and to beg that you will honor me by accepting a copy of the enclosed poem, just published in the Baltimore “Southern Society.”

It is merely a fanciful piece; a *conceit* from beginning to end; but a true poet like yourself will comprehend the artistic purpose at once.

Believe me, dear madam, most respectfully and truly yours,

PAUL H. HAYNE.

In a few weeks Mrs. Preston answered this letter:—

LEXINGTON, VA., Feb. 14, 1868.

PAUL H. HAYNE, ESQ., *Dear Sir*,—Your most agreeable note, suggestive of the amenities that ought to be exchanged in the guild of letters, was received some time since; but owing to severe indisposition on my part, I have been unable to acknowledge it, or to tell you what a kindling of pleasure it gave me. Your name is so familiar to me, and has been for years past, as one of the South's purest and best singers, that I feel as if an introduction were a very unnecessary thing; having come into contact (as I have for so long) with you in a *mental* way. And here let me thank you for the glowing, vivid, flashing, sparkling "Fire-Pictures" you were so kind as to send me. I dare not trust myself to begin any analysis of their many and varied beauties, or my paper would soon be covered. The Cartoons are especially rich in that incisive kind of etching, which in another department of art makes Retsch so famous.

I owe you thanks for your pleasant words about myself. By to-day's mail I despatch to your address a little volume; the main poem (if such indeed it has any claim to be called) was dashed off at a few sittings, and sent to my husband during the war, merely for his entertainment, while kept far from me by military duties. I have not cared to take the trouble to improve it much beyond what it originally was, as I wrote it, *in the dark*; for my best years have been lost, through the extreme delicacy of my strained optic nerve; and as I have never aimed to be a *littérateur*, beyond the impromptu effusions that *will* come unbidden, my verses— if they have ever made any way— have elbowed it

for themselves. Don't imagine me blind, however: no eyes could *look* more reliable and serviceable; but for study and writing they are of very little use. And so, I say, I do not enter *your* arena, except for pastime, because the odds would be so against me. Pardon all this personality. I have no right to suppose that you will care to know this much about me; but I feel as if I *had* the right, under such *Miltonic* circumstances, to disclaim all title to the name of Poet, except so far as I share it with Nature's other children — birds and flowers.

Yours very truly,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

This exchange of guild courtesies was the beginning of a correspondence between the poets which was kept up for eighteen years, and proved to both of them a sweet solace on many a dark day. *Although they never met*, Mrs. Preston and Paul H. Hayne became devoted friends, and every few weeks they wrote each other pages of affectionate intimacies, enlivened with literary gossip and criticism. Mr. W. H. Hayne has kindly placed these letters of Mrs. Preston to his father at my disposal, and this chapter will be devoted to extracts from such of these letters, and others, as help to tell this story of her life, outward, and especially inward.

HOT SPRINGS, BATH CO., VA., July 11, '69.

PAUL H. HAYNE, ESQ., *Dear Sir*, — I owe you an apology for not having acknowledged the reception of your charming package of MSS. before this. But when it reached me I was on the eve of preparation for a summer sojourn at the Hot Springs (my present habitat),

and that, with the constant pressure of company, left me absolutely without leisure. Congratulate yourself, my dear sir, that you are a *man*, and are thus free from the thousand petty housewifely distractions that fill up the life of a wife and mother! I smile to myself, many a time, on reading the letters of literary correspondents, who seem to imagine that my days are devoted to literary pursuits, and that *the stylus* is my appropriate symbol: when if they could look in upon me, they would see company to breakfast, ditto to dine, ditto to tea, — they would find a row of cookery books adorning my store-room shelves — they would find me deep in the mysteries of Sally-Lund, or lemon tartlets, or orange-ice, or cream-sponge (your good wife will understand all this, if you do not!) and so my days go by. Pardon such a digression; it is necessary to my self-justification. How I sigh for such an *al fresco* life as would content itself with water from the spring, and fruit from the trees, and leave one free to devote one's energies to the getting up of intellectual dishes, in which one's better nature might develop and grow strong. But I am not going to run a tilt, with Susan Anthony as my compeer, against the existing order of things. I scorn to see a woman, who confesses even to very positive literary proclivities, turn with contempt from, or neglect the proper performance of a simple woman's household duties. Let them come first, by all her love for husband and children; by all her self-respect; and if a margin of time is left, then she may scribble *that* over, to her heart's relief.

It is very ego-ism to write this way; but when I can offer it as the daily practise of one who loves Latin and Greek, Poetry and Art, sweet culture, and all bookish atmospheres as she loves nothing else but husband, chil-

dren, God, and Nature, you will bear with all these tedious explanations as to the *why* your MSS. were not sooner acknowledged.

I am *greatly* indebted for your compliment in sending me these pieces, and I have read them all with appropriate zest. *The Wife of Brittany* has the crisp freshness of the Chaucerian verse. The old Poet *has* granted your wish, and folded about you "the hale, sun-warm atmosphere of song." If you will allow me, I will presume to indicate a couplet on page 5, which is not as fully poetic as the rest of the Canto:—

"The knight had chosen his mansion *with an eye*  
*At once* to loneliness and privacy."

Not that I could not pick out fifty in Morris' Earthly Paradise, with which to find as much fault; but this arrested my ear, and so I speak of it. *The Nest* I had already met with and admired in Appleton's; it is a dainty thing.

(The rest of the letter is missing.)

LEXINGTON, VA., August 25th. (69?)

MR. PAUL H. HAYNE, *My dear Sir*, — Your delightfully long and delightfully entertaining letter has had no acknowledgment, simply because of my overwhelming cares. My household of twenty fluctuates, but does not lessen. One party gives place to another. . . . I wonder if Mrs. Hayne envies me the 50 lb. kettles of preserves that are day by day occupying me!

You speak of powers of abstraction: my dear Sir, I have no such powers; or at least do with utter inadequacy work which has to be done, while my mind is held down by household exigencies. The other day, Mr. Brown wrote again for a promised poem for the October No. of *The Eclectië* (I hope you have sent him one), and



as he had my pledged word, I was obliged, *on the instant*, to get up something. Having a great cake to compound, I devoted accordingly my forenoon to three items of business — ordering dinner — baking my cake — and writing the promised poem. Look in the October No. for *Albrecht Durer*, and my word for it, you will find about it the aroma of the *cake* that shared my attention and affections with it!

Many thanks for Mr. Bryant's autograph letter: it was very kind of you to send it, and I shall treasure it accordingly. I must not forget to acknowledge the tender and true tribute to Dickens in Appleton; the best of all that have appeared.

You are good enough to enquire after my forthcoming volume: well, Lippincott has it in press, and will issue it about the middle of September. He has sent me the unbound sheets, and I am quite satisfied with its mechanical execution. *Old Song and New* is the title. I don't know that it is a very good one, but I had not the leisure to hunt for one that pleased me better. The book does not contain perhaps more than half of what I have written, but enough, no doubt those notable gentlemen the critics will say. I hope they will not "damn" me,

"with the comparative respect  
Which means the absolute scorn."

I will take pleasure in sending you one of the earliest copies issued. Some of my literary friends have told me that I ought by all means to have had it announced; but I confess to feeling somewhat like an acquaintance of Crabbe Robinson, who became so reduced as to be necessitated to cry "muffins" for her living, but did it in so low a voice as not to attract the least attention, fearing to be heard, as she said. So, afraid or shy of being heard, I have not cried *my muffins*. Pardon all

this about my book. It really occupies so little of my attention and time, that I question if half the guests in the house are aware that I *have* a book forthcoming.

This letter is no manner of an answer to your charmingly long one, but I do the best I can under the circumstances, barely acknowledging yours, with the hope of something better hereafter. . . . I may probably spend the fall in Philadelphia, the old home of my own family, and the abiding place still of my nearest kindred. Having no leisure now to speak of new books, I will only instance one — *D. G. Rossetti's Poems*. Have you seen them? *The Blessed Damozel* is deliciously pre-Raphaelite. You know Rossetti is more distinguished as Artist than as a poet, and is the exponent of the pre-Raphaelites even more than Millais or Holman Hunt. But I am obliged to stop for the present. Best regards to Mrs. Paul, and believe me sincerely your friend,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

LEXINGTON, VA. Sept. 13th, '69.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE, — I am in receipt of two charming letters from you; the first did not fail, notwithstanding you give your Mercury such a character for unreliability. Accept my thanks for both. I was just about to write you in reference to a little matter connected with the interests of our Southern literature, when Mrs. T. J. Jackson became my guest; but she and her little daughter have this morning left me, and I now turn to you about this matter: Within the last month I have had various letters from the Editor of *The New Eclectic* about their magazine. The proprietors are somewhat disheartened in the attempt to maintain a distinctively Southern journal, and they have asked me to use whatever influence I may have among

literary friends, writers and others, in arousing some truer interest in their undertaking. I promised them for myself contributions *gratis*, and newspaper squibs in their behalf. One of these I send you. Now I beg you will speak a good word for them in one of your Georgia papers. An extended subscription list is all they require to give permanency to the magazine, and to afford them the means of enlarging its attractions. If *it* fails, through the inertia and apathy of the Southern people, then farewell to any attempt to sustain a magazine south of Philadelphia. The T—s have been men of means (they have lost heavily lately), and during the first year of their connection with the magazine sunk \$5000. in endeavoring to maintain it. So you see they have been willing to support Southern literature at some little cost to themselves. The Editor says that the writers of the South seem apathetic.

Our friend John R. Thompson is now literary Editor of Bryant's *Evening Post*. Just think of it! *The Post*, as you need not be told, has ever been the determined opponent of Southern slavery,—Bryant being a very dignified, but at the same time a very uncompromising Abolitionist. However . . . Mr. Thompson may be able to do more for the South in that position than elsewhere.

. . . . .  
What you say about *rejection* by publishers, editors, &c. is *very* true: it ought never to dishearten a writer who knows much about the history of literature as connected with publishers. Mary Russell Mitford's *Our Village*, one of the purest and most popular of English prose sketches, and a work the proceeds of which supported her latter years, was refused by almost all the publishers in the United Kingdom, before it saw the

light. (I have lying on my desk as I write, a letter from a friend of hers, received from England a few days ago.) And to compare very small things with great, my poor little *Beechenbrook*, I was assured by a Philadelphia publisher, would not sell beyond 500 copies; he consented to put that much to press, no more, because he "could assure me it would be a losing business." It has reached the eighth edition.

You speak in a very gratifying manner of the little ballad verses in *The Riverside*. They were only a morning's work (I always work with excessive rapidity), but I am glad they pleased you. My friends tell me that my power to move the tender emotions is the most decided I possess. By the way, some gentlemen of your State applied to me the other day for a Poem to be read at the Agricultural Fair to be held at Macon in November. A poem about stock — dairies — and plows! I never was the least bucolic — nevertheless the verses were despatched, such as they are. You would be amused to see the funny themes on which I am requested to furnish poems. Are you thus beset? Or do they think my muse the milker of the Olympian Kine, instead of a rider of Pegasus? But my letter grows too long. I never received the missive you addressed me at the Hot Springs; as you wrote *Hot Sulphur* it is not probable that it will reach me, although I wrote to the proprietor at the Hot about it. We have Cold Sulphur, but not *Hot* in Virginia.

My kind regards to the "Poet's wife." Does she say to your friends as the Laureate's does to his, "I keep telling Alfred that such and such are his best poems"?

I am always glad to hear from you.

Very truly yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

P.S. — I have lying beside me Foster's Life of Savage Landor ; have you seen it? It seems to be a rich store of literary treasures.

. . . . .  
Your last letter gave me unfeigned pleasure from its length, the subjects of which it treated, and the glimpse of the inner domestic life of *The Southern Poet* — for I hold to it that you, above any other of our Southern littérateurs, deserves the name of Poet. . . .

Do you know it gives me the sincerest pleasure to know that I am not called upon to put you among the disciples of *Modern Doubt*, which is after all nothing in the world but centennial old doubt, revived, and dressed up in garb of a new cut, instead of its mummy wrappings. It amazes me to find the modern thinkers, poets, essayists, bringing forward these old difficulties, and exposing them to public view, as if they had not been lived through a thousand times long ages ago. Here we have Spinoza-ism revived in all its vagueness, just as if it was something never before heard of. I abhor this spirit of unbelief. It is nothing, it seems to me, but the unyielding pride of the human intellect, refusing utterly, as it has done from the beginning, to bow down before inspiration, and receive a God it cannot wholly fathom. Max Müller says that until men have thoroughly examined the fibre and texture of the ancient religions of the Oriental and Occidental world, they are not capable of knowing what a religion they have in Christ.

In the last New York Eclectic there is a little article from *The Spectator* on *The Literature of Modern Doubt* in which that Easter hymn of Arthur Clough is quoted,

" Christ is not risen indeed,  
Christ is not risen."

The article is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it is too

brief; but the impression it leaves on the mind is a painful one. I think the influence of Tennyson's hints of doubt (barring a few lines in *In Memoriam*), are overstated generally. Do you recall that fine passage he puts into King Arthur's lips just before his "Passing"?

"More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of—"

There is no unbelief in this! Some critics say that *The Holy Grail* is the sympathetic wail of unbelief: I don't feel it so. But you perceive I am fond of these subjects, and am running on too long upon them. But I am so grieved to see the beautiful literature of our later years so tinged with this splendid poison. Did you read a magnificent utterance of Ruskin before the Dublin Literati—in one of that fine series, I think it is, which has for years you know been delivered at "St. Stephen's Green," called "Afternoon Lectures"? It stirs one's blood to see *such* a man putting forth in that noble and manly way the tremendous truths of Christianity.

And now let me ask you—for it is a question akin still to the one I have been harping on for the last three pages,—have you read Lowell's "Cathedral"? It is a choice bit of verse, assuredly, very unique, very thoughtful, and abounding in fine isolated lines. There is a certain latitudinarianism I don't like; it is a little pantheistic. Yet when I come upon such a rich, full line as

"The soul's east window of divine surprise,"

I am obliged to put down the book until I recover my breath! Read it. *You* will understand it, as people who don't write poetry can't.

My husband and I have been delighting ourselves over a new translation of the *Iliad*—Bryant's. It reads charmingly; seems to give us the very gist of the

old Greek, without any of the tacked-on ornaments of the translator. I account for it from the fact that as Bryant is 74 years old, he feels that his fame is made, and he need add no more to it by this work. So he has kept himself wholly out of view, and seems simply intent on making the reader understand what Homer meant. It is curious to see two such *old* men — the very Ancients — as Lord Derby and Bryant, employing the last years of life in this way. Does it not appear a little humiliating that we in this nineteenth century are glad to go back for our mental stimulus and pabulum to the infancy of the race? We hail Derby's and Bryant's Homer, Lord Lytton's Odes, Conington's Virgil, and dote on Morris's lovely delicious tales of the dreamy old in which he strives —

“ to build a shadowy isle of bliss  
Midmost the beating of the steely sea.”

Pray, set your poetic, seer vision to work to discover the secret of this backward look of longing, on the part of the wide-awakes of this grand, living, moving century of ours. I don't quite comprehend it. It bespeaks dissatisfaction with the present, that is certain. Is it merely another way for the immortal cravings within us to manifest themselves?

Many thanks for your kind wishes in regard to my proposed book of miscellanies. I have taken as yet no steps toward publication, sure anyhow that I am too late for anything earlier than the fall trade. But really the poems (if so I dare name them, for it seems like taking the sacred name of poetry in vain) disappoint and dissatisfy me so much that I doubt their worthiness to be clothed in the garb of print. They have been the mere *toys* of my leisure hours; what business have I then to set them forth as *life-work*!

I see you are bringing forward for the delectation of your readers some of old Froissart's stories. How much better than the "Bad-boy" experiences which flood our child-literature! I hope you will continue to labor in so rich a mine. Greek stories, literature, &c., have an irresistible attraction for me. But I think it a most unprofitable and *unattainable* path to attempt. I wonder if you would be willing to say the *very* truth about such poems (or pieces) as the one I enclose? You will not offend me in the *slightest* if you dare to express all the discontent you may feel with it. If it is *the truth*, I'll thank the friend or the critic who says, "You aim at subjects too ambitious — quite out of your reach — keep to your little ballads like 'The Signal,' they suit your calibre best." I am sure it is wisest —

" to be content in work  
To do the thing we can — and not presume  
To fret because it's little."

. . . . .

September 9.

I despatched to you a day or two ago a copy of my book of verses — *poems*, you see, I dare not presume to call them. I count on your liking them; for, from what your correspondence as well as your writings reveal to me, I know you to be genial, responsive, sympathetic, and tolerant. You will understand that I am dropping my line, bated as above, for a kind, critical reception at your hands! Well do I know that you will deal with me in all friendliness; and when I remember that "faithful are the *wounds* of a friend," I should not — and I *do* not eschew them, if I deserve such treatment; as it is not to be doubted I in many instances do. Don't you think my book, as coming from a Southern source, merits a little notice in the *Southern Review*? And if



it does, would n't it be kind in you to prepare such a notice (for the short review department) for the January issue? It is too late, of course, for the October No. I crave true, critical handling; not the indiscriminate praise which means nothing: and so trained and judicious a critic as you are, will, I feel sure, award me my honest *pros* and *cons*. Lippincott has done his very best for me; I have nothing to complain of as to mechanical execution. I have only noticed one typographical error in the book, and a few not very important faults of punctuation.

You will observe I included the story of Althea's Brand, but took your suggestion of a deprecatory note. How very classic and Greek Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* is! The choruses are delicious indeed. But in the impromptu way in which I compose, my little narrative (for it is nothing more) was thrown off in a day's time, I think, and I know nothing of uninterrupted days. But enough of my book! Don't you see how I am presuming upon your friendly interest? By the way, have Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Poems fallen into your hands yet? They are as unique in their way as William Morris's are in his, and as different, in their exceedingly elaborate finish, as it is possible for anything to be. You know he is the father of the Pre-Raphaelites as an artist; he is thoroughly Pre-Raphaelite in his poetry. His work is identical, whether he use pen or pencil, ink or color. I see the English critics (some of them) go mad over his sonnets: but with your exquisitely pure taste, you will agree with me, that the perilous line which divides the *sensuous* and the *sensual* is sometimes almost crossed. Read the *Blessed Damozel*. Is n't it perfectly wrought out — an absolutely complete mediæval picture?

It may not be uninteresting to have the continuity of these extracts broken by the sound of another voice. Colonel Preston evidently took advantage of his wife's absence, in the fall of 1870, to say a proud word or two, on his own account, of his household singer.

LEXINGTON, VA., October 8th, 1870.

MR. HAYNE, *Dear Sir*, — I drop you a line to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter to Mrs. Preston, who has been for more than two weeks with some of her kin in Philadelphia, where she will remain a week or two longer.

Upon her return, she will doubtless express in her own words her obligations to you for your sympathetic interest in her success, and your hearty encomiums upon her volume.

Accept my personal thanks also, for what you have so handsomely said about one so dear to me.

*Laudata a laudata* — (*Poeta a poeta* —) she has reason to be proud! If you prepare a critique, let me ask you to introduce into it from your letter, the passage in which you thread together the analogies of the dews, the breezes, and the rainfall.

Since you are so kind, why may I not venture a few words out of a husband's heart? Though none can be expected to appreciate the poems as I do. For if others, of better culture than myself, recognize in them the hand of a true artist, and catch, it may be, tones of sweet music that hardly reach my hebetate ears, yet no one can share with me the delight that belongs to the knowledge that the poet is the true reflex of the *woman*. Her choice of subjects is but the explication of her nature. Yes, my little wife is as full of faith and rever-

ence as ever was any daughter of Jerusalem: the Greek hardly excelled her in love for the beautiful: she is as true and trustful as Lady Hildegarde; as simple as a ballad, and as intense as a sonnet.

Of the Hebrew story, I prefer the wailing pathos of Ruth; and of the Greek (though it is not the most classic in tone), Rhodope's Sandal. Of the shorter poems, Attainment, Nineteen, and The Dumb Poet. Do not as a critic find fault with my preferences; the first two picture with wonderful insight my two daughters, and the third is a love-blinded portrait of a husband whose only claim to so much as a foot square of Mount Parnassus is that of "tenant by the courtesy" as the lawyers call it; i. e. by right of his wife.

What will Mrs. Hayne say to all this about one's own wife? Let me beg her pardon and yours, with the more assurance as her goodness and yours have tempted me from my propriety.

With highest respect, yours truly,

J. T. L. PRESTON.

LEXINGTON, VA., Nov. 17th, 1870.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE, — I enclose you a little poem coaxed out of me by Mr. Hand Browne for the December No. of the *Eclectic*. I want you to like it. The expression of Gen. Lee (uttered in his unconsciousness) seems to me more striking than anything I can now recall from the dying lips of a great commander. *Tête d'armée* — how weak in comparison was Napoleon's utterance! And yet how wonderfully characteristic of the two generals! "Let the tent be struck" — obedience to orders — readiness for the duty of advance — the one's; self-glory, *tête d'armée* — the thought of the other. I hope you received a little picture I sent

you of the General's lying in state — if anything so simple may thus be termed. But engagements press, and I must stop at once.

Very truly yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

I have verified the expression from the lips of Mrs. Lee herself.

. . . . .

Feb. 6, 1871.

To-day General Curtis Lee has been inaugurated in his father's place, as president of the college here. He is quite his father's equal, intellectually, his friends aver, and has the same beautiful innate modesty of character. The Military Institute very reluctantly gives him up. He is about 35 ; a handsome, noticeable man. The Lee family will therefore continue to reside in Lexington. Mrs. Lee is a confirmed invalid ; for ten years she has not walked, and I recall how mournfully one day last summer, the old General said to me, " Ah, Mrs. Preston, I am afraid — I am afraid she will never walk again."

Yet a more placidly cheerful person you never saw. Her industry is proverbial : her hands are never empty of work. If there is none to be done for the household, she has some poor church, some appealing charity that keeps her fingers busy. What an example does she set to our too indolent young-lady-Confederacy !

OAKLAND, CUMBERLAND Co., VA.,

May 27th (1871 ?).

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE, — I don't know that my equilibrium is sufficiently restored to warrant me in replying to your most agreeable letter and your most flattering and charming and elaborate criticism.

*Old Song and New* has never been so honored by any extended notice, and I offer you my hearty thanks for this gentle labor of love. It was a real piece of true friendship, thus to "write me up." But you must know I think you praise me too highly; you give me credit for *genius*, which, allow me to say, I do not possess. I hardly accept DeQuincey's definition of the two words *genius* and *talent*, for I demur to his idea that the latter has no relation to the moral nature. Even though *genius* represent man's *total* nature, as *talent* does not, why, pray, cannot *talent* have a *moral* quality as well as *genius*? I claim to have a modicum of *talent*, you see, and don't intend to renounce my conviction that *talent* can express some vital meaning, though of a far lower order than *genius*.

I am reminded, in reading your special dissection of *Lady Hildegard's Wedding*, of what Turner, the English landscapist, said on reading Ruskin's philosophic rendering of his pictures, "He sees a deal more in them than I ever put there!" Let me tell you exactly how that ballad was written, and that may stand for the manner of my writing when I am most successful. (Can you endure such harping on the one string of self?) An editor wanted a Christmas poem. With no idea before my mind but that single one — a Christmas piece — and with the shortest time allowed for its production — I seized my pencil at ten o'clock one night, and almost *instantly* this picture, name, accessories, and all, *flashed* — that is the way things come to me — flashed upon my mental eye: at half-past eleven the ballad was complete, as it now stands, needing afterwards scarcely the alteration of a single word. You talk of Art: there was not in my mind the slightest idea of Art's requirements while I was writing it: nor

do I ever trammel myself with artistic rules. You may know how true this is when I tell you that I have written the last two lines of a poem first, with the positive conviction that all between the first line and the last was lying *perdu* in my mind, just *below the line of consciousness*, as Sir William defines it, and waiting to be brought out by a touch. There are times when I cannot write at all, and I ought never to take up pen but when I am "i' the vein." Do forgive all this talk about myself; I am ashamed of it, and won't transgress so hereafter. But you see your own genial and appreciative critique has brought this upon you.

. . . . .

These letters, in which it is the biographer's purpose to let Mrs. Preston tell, as far as possible, her own story for the rest of her life, do not contain any stirring events, any connection with public characters, or any new departure in her literary work.

She continued to write during almost all those years; and some of the later poems are counted among her best: during that time she followed the publication of "Old Song and New" with "Cartoons," "For Love's Sake," "Colonial Ballads," "Monographs" (a volume of travel sketches), a collection of child verse, and a short dialect story called "Aunt Dorothy." But, for biographical purposes, the years from 1872 to 1897 add nothing *new* to this story. The poet's life had developed, matured, blossomed, and borne fruit, by the time she entered upon her fifth decade, and although the consummate flower of her poetic gift continued,

unwithered, to adorn her old age, and to delight her friends and readers, yet there is little more to tell concerning it.

A few letters from each year's correspondence will be chosen, to mark the passing of time, and to show, as far as such brief records may, what thoughts and interests occupied Mrs. Preston's declining years. It cannot fail to be a somewhat pathetic setting forth of increasing infirmities, increasing loneliness, and the sadness of an intense soul, conscious of not having achieved what ambition had planned for itself.

Many a less gifted woman enjoys a more peaceful and cheerful existence than the woman poet whose life these pages seek to record; and some of us, who were grieved by the waves and billows that went over her dear head, were ready to congratulate ourselves upon mediocre gifts and commonplace lives, with sunnier days and more contented hearts. *Kismet!* the Orientals say. It is the nearest they can come to the "Even so, Father," with which *we* bow before the will of the Eternal, working in our individual lives.

And so, when the reader sometimes comes upon our letter-writer in tears, as it were, he will understand that these prefatory words are prompted by the instinct which says at such a crisis, "I beg pardon!"

There are before me as many letters to the poet Hayne as would make a volume; but we have room for only a few more extracts, enough to show the side Mrs. Preston turned to her friend, —

her ardent affection and loyalty, her generous admiration of his gifts, her sympathy in his trials, her jealousy for his fame. These, with certain letters written to other friends, will carry on the story of Mrs. Preston's life to the end.

TO PAUL H. HAYNE.

(Winter of 1871.)

Have you been burying yourself among your books? Of course you have read *Gareth and Lynette*? Now *don't* you think the limpid wine has been well drawn off, and we are getting down (just ever so little) towards the lees? Just a faint streaking of cloudiness, such as I saw when decanting my wine the other day, warning me to stop, for I was approaching the dregs. Whatever the critics may say, I stick to it I do not find one line in *Gareth* which pricks me to the soul — one sentence to stamp itself indelibly on my memory. Even the little broken song, quite in Tennyson's characteristic vein, yet falls far short of the two short lyrics in the *Last Tournament*. Ah, why *must* poets grow old? Why can't *they* be exempt from the bitter human lot, and be allowed to keep their royal youth? It would be so delicious to have such poems as *The Passing of Arthur* to read, new, every month or so.

Being sick to-day, and confined to my room, I have been interesting myself with the second volume of Dickens' Life. And what a rollicking, joyous, boyish kind of life it was! Does n't the idea of strolling about with a company of "hammertoor" players, strike you as a singular occupation for a literary man, even granting that the object to be attained was a worthy one? Fancy yourself and John R. Thompson and your friend Dr. Ticknor and E. P. Whipple and a few



others so engaged! Would n't it be funny? Don't you think the letters excessively egotistic? No broad questions discussed — no criticism — no living interest in the great movements of the hour — no allusions to other literary men. How amazingly different from Southey's letters, for example! The plots of his romances, his own comings and goings, his beginnings and endings, it seems to me this is pretty much all. And yet this ends in — Westminster Abbey! You will perceive that I have no craze about Dickens; wonderful in some respects as I must concede him to be. What a long suffering friend Foster shows himself to have been! Such references, such advisings, — he evidently *existed* to help Dickens.

Don't you like the Quaker Whittier's Quaker poem? It has some very tender, sweet touches in it.

There are very few of Mrs. Preston's letters of the years 1872-75 that have been kept, and, for some unexplained reason, only those having a domestic and family interest. Yet those were the years in which her first volume of poems, "Old Song and New," had given her a very much wider circle of readers, and had brought her pleasant intercourse with literary celebrities. Perhaps it may not be uninteresting to have glimpses of Mrs. Preston reflected in letters written to her by certain interesting people.

FROM JOHN R. THOMPSON.

110 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK,  
20 June, 1872.

DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — I have too long neglected acknowledging the receipt of your kind letter of the 23d

May, with the inestimable treasure of Stonewall Jackson's autograph. I am always over head and ears in work, and the accumulations of books and MSS. that encumbered my desk during my absence in March and April, well nigh oppressed me on my return. I have not yet brought up the sad arrears of my correspondence, and the letters that have since reached me have been mostly left to answer themselves. A letter from you is such a blessing, however, that I never fail to reproach myself for delaying the expression of my thanks for it.

We all owe you much this week, for your lovely poem of Mona Lisa, in *Lippincott's Magazine* for July, which I had the satisfaction of transferring to the columns of the Evening Post, before any other paper in New York had a chance to reproduce it. It is exceedingly difficult to put words in the mouth of Leonardo da Vinci that shall seem natural, and at the same time noble; yet you have done it *à merveille*. The poem is eminently dramatic, but nothing of grace has been sacrificed to power or intensity. I have been trying to read Browning's "Fifine at the Fair." Have you seen it? and do you think it poetry? I am beginning to rebel at the roughness and inversions and clippings of words and incomprehensibilities of much of our modern poetry, and am fain to say I do not enjoy it. It takes me back to my college days, and my struggles with the higher mathematics. I do not like calculus in verse. Did you ever hear the wicked story of the Englishwoman, who said when the Brownings were married, that it reminded her of the Athanasian Creed, not one incomprehensible, but two incomprehensibles? In trying to read Fifine, I call up Robert Browning himself, as I was accustomed to, see him in London, in 1865-66, a

perfectly conventional and companionable person, nothing of the unintelligible Sphinx about him at all, but a gentleman who dressed for dinner, and talked "right straight along," and I wonder why he cannot write so, — write for ordinary people, who don't understand sine and cosine in prosody.

I felt much obliged to you for the paper you sent me with the anecdote about Poe, which got into print without my knowledge or consent. I see that Mr. Envious Angry P. has made it the occasion of two little spiteful flings at me in the Virginia press, but I have returned good for evil, by praising his article on the Fourth of July, in Lippincott, which I thought good.

I am very sorry I could send you nothing better in return for your poems than the little translation of Carcassonne. Did you like it? The original is exquisite. My kindest regards to your husband.

Yours very truly and faithfully,

JOHN R. THOMPSON.

FROM MISS ROSSETTI.

56 EUSTON SQUARE, LONDON, N. W., ENGLAND,  
21st May, 1872.

DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — My sister Christina is too ill to have the pleasure of thanking you in her own hand for your very kind letter and gift, which arrived within a very short time of each other. Waifs across the Atlantic always give her peculiar pleasure, and so sympathising a reader is already an unseen friend. May I add for myself also the expression of strong American sympathies,

And remain, yours faithfully,

MARIA FRANCESCA ROSSETTI.

FROM MISS JEAN INGELOW.

15 HOLLAND STREET,  
KENSINGTON, LONDON, W. (1872 ?)

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — I received your very kind note with much pleasure, and I thank you very cordially for it, and for the deeply interesting volume of poems you have sent me. It is indeed not in my nature to be ungrateful for these acknowledgments of friendship, but I hope you will pardon me, and not misunderstand, if I add that I often feel a pang of something very like self-reproach, when I consider that I am unable to meet them all truly "half way." You, who are an author, must have often felt this: people read what you have written, and feel that they understand you, while you feel that you have no such clue to the meaning of their lives. When your book of poems came, I felt that I could meet *you* half way. I understand and appreciate many of those poems, and feel at one with their writer. Thank you very much for it, and for the kind things you have written.

I am just returned from a short stay at Venice. I wished to see that lovely part of the world in the spring, and watch the washing of that blue sea which does not go down. On coming home, I found your letter. Please tell your children that I know a boy who is determined to find a fairy's vest, and he says when he has got it, he shall give it to me! I send you a photograph lately taken,  
And I am, dear madam, very sincerely yours,

JEAN INGELOW.

FROM MISS ANNA WARNER.

1.

SAYBROOK, CONN., January 24th, 1873.

MY DEAR MADAM, — I have received your very kind letter, and since that, the beautiful book, though I have

been unable as yet to do more than begin my acquaintanceship with its pages. In our intensely busy life, books — and letters too — must sometimes wait a little. I have to beg your forgiveness now, for my tardy acknowledgment. But I thank you very truly for all your words and messages of friendship. It is wonderfully pleasant to find unknown friends in unexpected places; and to hear how they came to be friends, and that we have in any way given help or pleasure to them. For though it is after all really the Lord's doing, and we have been but agents, it is none the less sweet for that.

I am glad you have seen our beautiful Island, though it does not show for what it is, until you are fairly among its rocks. *Then*, we think it may compare with anything; and we have enjoyed so much and suffered so much there, that every inch of ground seems precious. But we are not at the Island this winter. We are trying salt air, and a change of scene in a very different region, seeking a little refitting from the wear of overwork. If we are at home the next time you come to West Point, I hope you will not "overlook" the Island, in one sense, but will come to see us, and the views we love so well.

I wish I could better tell you how we appreciate the words of your letter, and how truly I am, dear Mrs. Preston,

Very gratefully yours,

ANNA WARNER.

FROM MISS ANNA WARNER.

2.

SAYBROOK, CONN., Feb. 25th, 1873.

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — I cannot send you anything that even artistically is fit to stand "side-by-side" with the exquisite photograph of Jean Ingelow (if your

copy is like ours), but I send you the best I have. My sister's cartes, I am sorry to say, were all left in the Highlands; but you shall have one of them another time. Thank you for your kind letter, and words of help. It is a great help to those who *live* by their work, to think that the fruits of it are not for themselves alone. Thank you, too, for the magazine. Do you know the origin of the "Woodpecker Legend"? Only a few nights before the magazine came, a friend showed me a versification of the same story, by Phœbe Cary; and I thought I should like to trace it back to its first beginning. Is it possibly a German legend?

I have been dipping into "Old Song and New" (I like to read some books that way), and finding there, too, friends in unexpected places. "The Young Ruler's Question" first came to our hands three years ago, in small pamphlet form, but with no name or hint of author. We liked it very much; and wondered and questioned who had written it. Very pleasant it was to find the answer in your book. May I ask whether the "Vision of the Snow" has any real story connected with it? Forgive me the question, if I should not ask, but I read the lines with such a thrill of pleasure, that I wanted to know all about them if I might.

And will you sometime send us *your* photograph, dear Mrs. Preston? I should like to have it very much.

I am very truly your friend,

ANNA WARNER.

This seems to be the place to tell briefly the story of Sandringham. Mrs. Preston used to give it as an instance of the *caprice* of that goddess whose favors go for fame: you shall have the record from the little diary of 1872:—

*Jan'y 8th*: Lippincott's Editor has written asking some popular poem from me; so I have idled away the morning trying to find a subject. Was completely baffled, and gave it up.

*Jan'y 9th*: I was looking over an English paper sent me by Miss Exall, when it occurred to me to write a poem called "Sandringham." With utmost ease I spun out nine or ten verses, then a guest came and I gave up the rest of the day to him.

*Jan'y 10th*: Fixed a hat for A.; wrote to Mr. P.; corrected proof of some of my hymns; finished, copied, and sent off "Sandringham" to Lippincott.

*Jan'y 13th*: Letter from John R. Thompson—very flattering, and ten copies of "Albion" with "Sandringham" in it.

(The poem alluded to, as will be seen, was written at the time of the illness of the Prince of Wales.)

#### SANDRINGHAM.

Even here, within Sir Walter's Old Dominion,  
 Among Virginian valleys shut away,  
 Meeting, we questioned of the last opinion, —  
 "What tidings come from Sandringham to-day?"

Midst the wild rush of our tumultuous cities,  
 Whose billowy tides plunge seething on their way,  
 The throb that stirs all hearts, was inmost pity's —  
 "Hope scarcely breathes at Sandringham to-day."

Along the ice-chained waters of St. Lawrence,  
 From fur-wrapped sledge — on crowded street and quay,  
 A flood of eager askings poured their torrents,  
 "What latest word from Sandringham to-day?"

On the lone outposts of our Southern borders,  
 Where watch-fires keep the scalping knife at bay,

There mingled strangely with the morning "orders"  
The call, "Some news from Sandringham to-day!"

Where sits the golden queen of the Pacific,  
Glad wives with broken voices paused to say,  
"Sweet Princess!" (while their brows grew beatific),  
"God bless her! — *Hope* at Sandringham to-day!"

Out o'er the Occident's wide reach of ocean,  
Wherever vessels crossed each other's way,  
The trumpet blared abroad the strong emotion,  
"Hoy! — *Life or death* at Sandringham to-day?"

From Hoogly's mouth to Kyber-Pass went flashing  
The quick inquiry. Where Australia's spray  
Closed o'er dropped anchors, through the breakers dashing,  
Sailors cried, "What of Sandringham to-day?"

The diamond delver, reeking under torrid  
Colonial suns that poured their blinding ray,  
Sighed as he raised aloft his burning forehead,  
"Spare, Lord, the life at Sandringham to-day!"

The same sweet yearning of responsive pity  
Went up all whither Christian people pray;  
And Continental city asked of city,  
"What bulletin from Sandringham to-day?"

In every English Home — by Scottish ingle —  
At Ireland's hearths — on lone Welsh mountains grey,  
All hearts now with the girdling gladness tingle,  
"There's life — hope — health — at Sandringham to-day!"

*Is faith lost in the human?* — Are ye able,  
Cold cynics, in your scorn to rend away  
The marvellous strands of that electric cable  
That links the world with Sandringham to-day?

*March 29th*: This morning I received from the Editor of the "Cosmopolitan," London, a paper containing a paragraph very flattering to me; viz. that H. R. H. the



Princess of Wales had written a letter to the Editor, thanking him for my poem of Sandringham! He had published it. A feather in my cap! Yet it required no more effort to write it than to write a letter. I did it almost impromptu. Little Herbert said, as if he thought my head might be turned, "Yes, but *she did n't know you were deaf!*"

*April 6th*: Was told a week or two ago that Mr. Gladstone, on the floor of Parliament, had alluded to my poem of Sandringham: yet I can't get a sight of the paper ("The World") and nobody has taken the trouble to verify the matter, or send me a copy. *I surely don't nurse my fame.* Nor does anybody do it for me! Not one notice have I seen copied from "The Cosmopolitan." How this notice of my poem by the Princess of Wales would have elated me once! Now it is too late for enthusiasms!

*May 9th*: Had a letter from Editor of "Cosmopolitan," London, in which he says he had been dining with the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and she had asked him for a copy of Sandringham; to have it struck off on note paper, that she might circulate it among her friends!

"Too late for enthusiasms!" This note of sadness is rarely absent now from Mrs. Preston's correspondence, where she spoke out of her heart; though she continued to wear a cheerful countenance, and in fact enjoyed a great deal of life from day to day. She often reproached herself for forgetting her many blessings (and she had many to be thankful for) in the daily fret and jar. But everybody knows how much more aggressive trials are than blessings.

It has been said in an earlier chapter that this

eager, ambitious, conscientious woman made grave mistakes in the ordering of her life, thereby missing the happy serenity that a less vehement person might have found in her circumstances. But she made them from an honest desire to neglect no duty. The trouble was with her mental perspective.

She owned frankly that she was a poor manager of servants; and yet she *would* have her house as clean and well ordered, her table as abundant and dainty as if she had a staff of those shining creatures one sees in the picture called "The Angels in the Kitchen." But it was accomplished at a deplorable loss of nervous force to the high-strung, nervous nature. *And nobody could make her see these matters in a different light.*

All her letters of this date show that Mrs. Preston's increasing bodily infirmities, her deafness, her failing eyesight, joined with her unreasonably keen anxiety about the health of her husband (who was ten years her senior), and her domestic cares, were steadily sapping her cheerfulness and vitality. Even now, one looks back upon it with pain. But in one of her own sonnets, the poet says, —

"Pain is no longer pain when it is past,"

and with quiet thankfulness one remembers that for her pain is "past."

Let it be emphasized once more that while this melancholy strain sounds throughout the rest of her life in all that she writes, Mrs. Preston was still keenly enjoying love and friendship and nature and literature and the comforts of religious hope.

There are some other letters in my hand, written after "Old Song and New" had appeared; some of them after this first volume had been followed by "Cartoons," and although their dates run a little in advance of our narrative it seems best to put them together here.

FROM LONGFELLOW.

1.

CAMBRIDGE, November 23, 1875.

DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — I hasten to thank you for your kind letter, and your beautiful "Cartoons."

If "His Aftermath" were not written about me, I should praise it cordially, as a charming poem. As it is, I can only thank you for it, and say that it has touched me deeply.

Of the "Cartoons" I can speak more freely. They are not only full of beauty, but full of insight and thought and feeling.

Accept my hearty congratulations on your achieving *such a success*, and believe me, with thanks and good wishes,

Yours very truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

P. S. I am making a large collection of "Poems of Places," all the world over. Will you permit me to insert in it "The Reapers of Landisfarne," "Bacharach Wine," "The Count's Sowing," and "Lady Roberta's Harvest"?

This is for the present a secret.

FROM LONGFELLOW.

2.

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 16th, 1875.

DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — In your beautiful poem of "The Reapers of Landisfarne," should you not say Lin-

disfarne? That is the name of the Holy Island on the coast of Northumberland. So it is written by Scott, and by the best authorities within my reach. Is there also a Landisfarne? If not, may I change the spelling in using the poem?

With many thanks for your letter, and your kind granting of my request,

Yours very truly,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

FROM WHITTIER.

AMESBURY, 11th Month, 27, 1875.

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — Thy beautiful book has duly reached me, with thy kind letter. I have read the volume with surprise and pleasure. It is a rare exemplification of poetic growth. I think it will gain thee friends and admirers wherever it goes. I wish I could have seen it sooner, as I should have added one or two of its poems to my "Songs of Three Centuries," a collection of English lyrics. As it is, I have thy hymn, "I would be ready, Lord," and "A Bird's Ministry."

I read with pleasure my friend Paul H. Hayne's dedication of his last volume to thee. It is a tribute well deserved, and is beautiful in itself.

Take my best thanks for thy thinking of me in connection with thy new book, and believe me truly thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Thanks for the picture of thy old Virginia mansion. I wish thee had added one of thyself.

FROM THE REV. H. C. ALEXANDER, D. D.

HAMPTON SIDNEY, VA., Nov. 14th, 1876.

KIND BENEFACTOR, — Was it not odd that I should have been reading your account of Madame Récamier in

the Southern Magazine the very day I received your present, and should have been wishing I could see the forthcoming volume of your "Cartoons," of which I had read somewhere in the papers, and which was associated with thoughts of the French beauty by the words "Roberts Brothers." The very next post brought me your valued letter, and the little treasure of poems. I need hardly say that I have devoured the book, cover and all. Most of it I have read over and over, and much of it I had already by heart. I am not sure that it does not contain more of uniform and symmetrical merit than any of your previous collections. Certain am I that it is "totus te atque rotundus." The title, the distribution of pieces, the dedication, the opening and closing poems, in short, everything calling for feminine tact and feminine taste, is as it should be. In your former volumes, I have been inclined to prefer, on the whole, the lyrical parts. The truth is, I own to a passion for this species of literature. Burns and Scott among the canny folk, and wicked, lovely old Herrick (together with his compeers Suckling, Carew, Crashaw, and that ilk) among the Angles, are prime favorites of mine. I like Béranger much more than I do Corneille or Racine, and Hafiz a little more than Firdusi. (*Sotto voce*: I know but one song of Hafiz, and can interpret only one word of that, the word gul — meaning "rose.")

In the case before us, I am at a loss to decide between "The Life of the Old Masters" or "The Life of To-day." Good poetry improves like wine. No man *straightway* desireth the new. Several of the shorter poems in "Cartoons" were dear acquaintances; notably, "Gone Forward," "The Shade of the Trees," "Sandringham," "Through the Pass," "Agnes," "Letting Go of Hands," and "Harvested;" and the tender riddles

several of them offer with such exquisite delicacy, were plain to me. Nevertheless, "I pause in doubt" (as Tischendorf says). I congratulate you on the admirable success with which you have made the ateliers of old Venice and Rome and Florence to live and breathe again with their haunting presences and ancient memories. "Mona Lisa" deserves perhaps her place of honor, and ought certainly to have been well *hung*. The "Maestro" seems to have caught a weird touch or two from the prose of Poe or Hawthorne. "Sebastian" gave me a better idea of himself than I ever had before. "Donna Margherita" is powerfully rendered. It should please Browning. The same is true, possibly in a less degree, of "Poussin." "St. Sebald's" called up some of the most delightful of all my recollections: Nuremberg — Dürer — Sachs — the castle; the gateways; the perfect wall; the hollow red tiles; the *eye-shaped* windows in each roof; the jutting gable ends; the costumes and *ensemble* of the middle ages.

"Emigravit" I knew before. It is among your best. "Murillo's Trance" is exceedingly fine, especially as it nears and reaches the climax. I was struck by "The Shadow." "Tintoretto's Last Painting" carried me at once to the Lagoon and the Doge's palace, and set me down again before that gigantic canvas, with its innumerable figures and fathomless perspective. The *idea* of this piece is a touching one, and the execution appropriate. Tintoretto would disappoint you as to color and refinement. With all his immense strength and inventiveness, he would shock you with a sense of rudeness, by the side of Titian, Palma Vecchio, and Paulo Veronese. I am aware that you know all this, but "seeing is believing." "Woman's Art" I knew before (did n't I?), and prized it highly. The two most remarkable of your

Art pieces strike me as being your "Vittoria" and "In the Sistine." These are the two highest subjects, and you have risen to the occasion. The dramatic force displayed in the former is only equalled by its discerning knowledge. The latter is, I think, possibly the strongest thing you have done in this line. The description of Angelo's work (of which I have seen little or nothing) is masterly. The view of his great rival is more engaging than any I have seen; and the close is fitting, where divine maternal beauty wins the contest over masculine corrugations and sinew. As to the Legends, I am not over-scrupulous, and enjoyed them highly. "Bede" is very happy. "St. Martin's Temptation" is a *chef d'œuvre*, and it has been more than once paraphrased in one of my sermons. "Bacharach Wine" is rich and mellow. "The Legend of the Woodpecker" is amazingly quaint, and otherwise good. "The Leaves of Healing" is pretty. "The Royallest Gift" is a boon to Christian poesy. But the gem of the lot is "Dorothea's Roses," — ah! that is fragrant and beautiful as the dewy flowers themselves. It is, if I mistake not, the most beautiful thing in the whole volume. Of the Caricatures of "To-day," besides those I mentioned, "In an Eastern Bazaar" is itself a little *bizarre*, and was already photographed in my memory. It is *sui-generis*, and as full of tropic color as the canvas of him who complained of too much shadow. "Pio Nono" soliloquizes very "timeously" as the Scots express it. But I would have to name them all — indeed I would! Every one is a jewel. The most *musical* thing in the book is "Under the Trees;" and nobody else has exactly hit the tone in referring to Jackson's dying words. I thanked you for "Agnes" when it appeared. "She was all that to me" and to everybody. I did not miss the allusion in "Har-

vested" or in "Letting Go." "Prophets of Doubt" is just and apt, and rich with contemporary learning. "The Grandest Deed" is a noble commentary on what Christ says of penitents and angels. "By and By" is lovely — and in a sense higher than that of the boarding schools. The allusion in "Smitten" escapes me. Do you know I regard the first stanza of "Dead Days" as the most profoundly poetic (in the Leigh Hunt sense) of any I ever read of yours? It has an Elizabethan flavor. The poem as a whole is one of your very finest, were I a judge. But it is fairly Sunday morning. Good-night, and a benison.

You know you didn't mean that in earnest about women's books. Who indeed but they? Men are so coarse. I greatly admire the range and wealth of your vocabulary. Such words as "Deaved" come in so well. There is small praise in saying there is not a false line in the whole of it: though I question the authority of your pronunciation in one or two instances. Two ladies have exulted with me in the joy of these poems. One of them my own dear mother. . . .

Regards to the Colonel; your obliged friend,

H. C. ALEXANDER.

FROM MISS JEAN INGELOW.

15 HOLLAND STREET, Dec. 15.

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — Thank you very much for your kind letter, and the interesting volume which followed it in a few hours. I have read it with peculiar pleasure; it is so fresh and fervent. I like your opening lines very much, and among others I thought "His Name" the most powerful, and "The Blemished Offering" the most complete. "Mona Lisa's Picture" I think very charming, but I am not at all able to pass



a critical judgment, for I often find when I have selected my favorite pieces from any work that better critics prefer the others.

We have had several delightful volumes from America lately ; and I hope Americans will rather preserve their own individuality than take the exact line of the Old World culture.

Thanking you again for your kind words and your welcome gift,

I am very sincerely yours,

JEAN INGELOW.

FROM JOHN BURROUGHS.

1.

ESOPUS, N. Y., October 15, 1879.

MY DEAR MADAM, — Over two months ago, my publishers, Houghton, Osgood & Co., forwarded me a copy of the *Richmond Standard*, containing your notice of my last book, "Locusts and Wild Honey." I charged myself to write and thank you at once, but find I have not done so yet. I now hasten to repair the neglect. Your name was not unknown to me, and I assure you I appreciate the good opinion of so competent a critic as yourself. Your notice was discriminating and to the point. I have tired a little of this comparison with Thoreau, which comes so handy to most of the critics. It does injustice to us both. There is a wider or sharper difference, I think, than even you point out. Thoreau's aim was mainly ethical ; he preached always ; he was a priest, an anchorite ; he gave the facts of Nature a moral twist ; I like him, and owe him much, but hope I do not lean upon him. My own aim, so far as I have one, is purely artistic. I will paint the thing as it is, with such prismatic hues of the heart or the imagination as I can throw around it, but I will have no moral or anything

else between me and the fact described. I must have a pure artistic result. Gilbert White, on the other hand, aims mainly at the scientific; he has a spell, a charm; but his aim is to add to scientific knowledge, &c. You will pardon me for turning critic, and comparing myself with those illustrious names; but you book reviewers have set the example; I only want to stand on my own pedestal, and not on that of Thoreau or Gilbert White.

Thanking you again for your kindly notice,

I am cordially yours,

JOHN BURROUGHS.

FROM JOHN BURROUGHS

2.

WEST PARK, N. Y., March 19, 1887.

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — It gives me much pleasure to be remembered by you in this way, and to know that my books have such a friend and champion in you. I very frequently see your name, and I never fail to read the poem, or the prose piece to which it is attached, having found out long ago that it is a name which always stands for fine and conscientious literary work. I am reading your book with great satisfaction. You give one a real taste of those old lands, often the very flavor. You saw much more of it than ever I have, but I am hoping to go again one of these days, and to wander as far as Greece. The trouble with me over there is that I soon get sated; there is so much to be seen and to be *felt*, and one is so eager for it all, that before long I find my capacity for enjoyment quite gone. If I go again, I must learn to hold myself in check somewhat. Of course I was pleased to read Miss Kingsley's words, and thank you for transcribing them

for me. Your *Colonial Ballads* I shall be glad to see, though I have no such claim upon your kindness. Let me thank you for the book in advance.

Very sincerely yours,

JOHN BURROUGHS.

This last letter from Mr. Burroughs is put in here as a pendant to the first; in point of fact, it was written ten years later, and its allusions are to Mrs. Preston's book of travel sketches, "A Handful of Monographs," and to her last published volume of poems, "Colonial Ballads and Other Verse," both published in the eighties.

Mrs. Preston may have had trials of the flesh, trials by servants, and trials from her own unreasonable countrymen: but without doubt she was cheered along her way by letters from some very charming correspondents. This one from Miss Mildred Lee, General R. E. Lee's youngest daughter, was but one of many such favors.

FROM MISS MILDRED LEE.

CHÂTEAU DE LA BASSE-MOTTE,  
BRITTANY, FRANCE, July 28.

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — I was in Oxford a few weeks ago, and walking in "Addison's Walk," cut this little piece of box for you. That delicious shady walk, with the meadow on one side, and Magdalen gardens on the other! How I wish you had been there with me, to tell me about all the famous men who must once have gazed on the same scene, — you who know everything, and forget nothing. Custis writes you are with

Elizabeth on a visit, but before this can cross the ocean, you will have had time to do so many things, and probably will be at home. Ah! how often my thoughts are there, in that quiet valley among the mountains! . . . Do give my best love to all my dear friends there, and tell them I so often think of them.

I was in London during the Jubilee season, when royal coaches in scarlet livery, carrying kings and queens of every nation, clime, and *color*, were dashing through the crowded streets. I met Mary there, and saw something of London society: which after all is as unsatisfactory as fashionable society in other places. I left London ten days ago, and am here in the heart of Britany in an old Chateau surrounded by moat and char-mille! Peasants in white caps and wooden shoes — Royalists whose grandparents were guillotined, and who are now plotting against the republic — descendants of leaders of the Vendean wars — all come and go before my eyes, like shadows in a dream!

General de Charette, who married Antoinette Polk from Tennessee, lives here, and is a great hero among the old noblesse; so I see a most interesting phase of French life. His uncle was the Baron de C. of the first war of La Vendée, and his father distinguished himself in the second. Mrs. Polk and her daughter, who once stayed with me in Lexington, are also here. At eight in the morning, a maid brings me a cup of tea, and two slices of toast. Then I get up, and read and write by the open window until 12, when we all meet at breakfast, with its several courses. Then we sit on the lawn, talking and working until 5 o'clock tea; after which we walk or drive, coming in to an 8 o'clock dinner. After dinner, cards, music, "la conversation."

Thus the days slip by in this easy, pleasant fashion. I am reading lives of Anne de Bretagne, Bertrand de Guesclin, and trying to freshen up my knowledge of French history. Then think what a prolonged French lesson I am taking, hearing people chatter, chatter from morning till night. I confess I am painfully silent, except in my mother-tongue!

How are the Pendletons? Do give them my love. But if I began asking after people I shall never end! I am delighted the "Harry Lees" won! I hope, dear Mrs. Preston, that you are much better than when I left. My dearest love to you and Col. Preston, and to Herbert.

Ever yours affectionately,

MILDRED LEE.

For many years Mrs. Preston's English friend, Miss Exall, wrote to her regularly, unconsciously taking the place of a "special London correspondent," and sending her "dear Mrs. Preston" all the liveliest bits of English literary gossip she could gather for her entertainment. One wonders if she exacted a promise that those letters should be destroyed! For there is not one of them to be found.

The letter with which this chapter closes, will show what another friend, an "inveterate" traveler, did for the Lexington invalid in the way of correspondence. Without looking at the name signed, many readers will recognize the voice of one who for our delight spent his vacations in "Sunny Spain" and among the Isles of Greece, as well as in more northern latitudes.

FROM PROF. J. A. HARRISON.

AVIGNON, FRANCE, Aug. 4, 1877.

MY DEAR MRS. PRESTON, — Have n't I just bought a pair of new Seven League Boots? I expect you'll think so. My last letter dated from Greece, and this from France! Well, but that was a month ago, and in a month one's hair grows white with experience. When I return I'll tell you all about the modern Anarcharis. This letter I'll devote to Avignon, all be-jeweled as it is with lovely and lordly memories. The faces of Petrarch and Laura are carved like cameos all over the old place. I could n't help stopping here on my way to Paris, and peeping into its antique churches and palaces. To describe how I got here from Athens, would require a volume as long as Murray, and as big as Doomsday. Suffice it to say that the train from Marseilles landed me here last night after four hours' charming travelling through Provence and Languedoc, following the winding and "arrowy" Rhône through mazes of olives and almonds, vineyards and mulberries. With what a brilliant caress the roses hang over the hedges here, and bloom right in your face! What dainty little vine-covered stations we passed, with women in quaint caps standing in front, and holding lanterns as we flew by in the gathering dusk! What fantastic walled and turreted towns we came to, standing grey by the silver Rhone, as if just awake from a sleep of ages! And then the innumerable black gowned priests, white-and-blue bloused children, bright, handsome Provençal faces, and vineyards and vineyards again! A glorious sunset hung rich and low over fertile Languedoc as our train sped on, suffusing the sky with a blush as if from its own myriad roses, warming up all the grand grey cliffs and distances, and adding to one of the most perfect

landscapes just that touch of mysterious idealization to make it hang about one's memory like a perfume. There was a fat priest in with me, who almost guillotined himself in the window looking and looking. Then he 'd lapse into the abysses of a gigantic carpet-bag, and haul out an enormous lunch. Then there 'd be praying out of a large black book, and crossing, and guillotining again. Then another priest, and a monstrous chattering for an hour. Finally, when it was too dark to see the approach to the city, we arrived at Avignon. My hotel is itself a curiosity. Something between a dungeon, a palace, a pavilion, and a monastery. Bright and early (nine o'clock or so), I got up and breakfasted, bent on exploring the old pontifical town, and finding out what I could of the rascalities of Petrarch and Laura. I vow I'll never read Petrarch's sonnets again, — no, not for twenty Lauras! Full of enthusiasm (and breakfast) I smilingly accosted mine host, and inquired after the Eglise des Cordeliers, where Laura's ashes repose. He looked puzzled, and then — “Oh! She be no more dare, she been take up!” My face lengthened at least a yard: “Laura taken up? Good heavens! This will never do — Laura taken up indeed!” I felt insulted; Vaucluse, too, 17 miles away by carriage, and quite inaccessible. Was ever pilgrim so damped and humiliated? It's like going to church to pray, and finding your patron saint stolen. I put it all, however, to Petrarch's abominable door — wretched scribbler! Think of my wading through his fat sonnets, and through miles and miles of Italian — and Laura “taken up”! It's well that Avignon is as lovely as it is, or I might immortalize myself by doing what Erodistus did on the night Alexander the Great was born. Avignon is lovely. I went out to walk, and am just returned.

It is walled and battlemented and bastioned to one's heart's delight, and is all clustered about a magnificent cliff which has been carved into terraces, and made gorgeous with a Louis Quatorze garden. The views from this garden, up and down the valley of the Rhone, towards the Alps, and over the city — are fairylike. Mont Blanc, though 100 miles away, buried in light and mist, may sometimes be seen. Ponds full of black and white ducks, swans and cygnets — a splendid grotto and fountain — great beds where the sunlight has blossomed into exquisite flowers — the fine old Cathedral, and Palace of the Popes — are some of the ornaments of this beautiful sight; and far below run the ancient mediæval walls, and there is a flashing up of bright water from the Rhône, and a glorious expanse of manifold fields illimitable. Avignon realizes perfectly one's ideal of a real old mediæval city. The Cathedral bell is sweeter than anything you ever heard; the lustrous, lazy sunlight hangs about the old square, with the true sleepiness of the Dark Ages; the streets are Gothic in their quaint tortuosity, and rise and sink in flights of marble steps; the inns might have entertained Montaigne; the huge elms sleep along the river, and mutter musically in a sort of poetic vacuity. There is nothing new except the soldiers in their red breeches, and the newsboys with their strange cries of "La République Française." It's delightful once in a while to be in such a time-flavored old place — to sink oneself in its sweet reverie — to partake for a moment of its inaccessibility, and forget the fast and furious present. I stop every now and then at such places, just to catch a whiff of the placid past, and to strengthen myself for a new whirl of railways, steamboats, and omnibuses. Petrarch may go to the crows, and Laura too, "taken up"



though she may be — Avignon is still here — a lovely, grave old place, steeped in historic associations, fallen asleep by the beautiful Rhône, though still talking so beautifully to us as it sleeps. Well, it is nearly time for me to start. The train leaves at 3.18 for Lyons and Paris. I hope you and the Colonel have had a pleasant summer. Mine has of course been very varied — a great deal of sea, with strips of land every once in a while. Do remember me kindly to all my friends, the Leas particularly. Just think of my not having had yet one line from America!

Faithfully your friend,

JAMES A. HARRISON.

## CHAPTER XI

### LAST LETTERS

IN looking for records of the year 1875, it is interesting to see what goal our poet set before herself for that year's running. *Not* the appearance of a new volume of poems, though "Cartoons" was in preparation, and, as a matter of fact, did appear before the year was out; but on the fly-leaf of one of Mrs. Preston's tiny year-books (they are about four inches long and two wide) one finds this quotation from Ben Jonson's "Penshurst":—

"What praise was heaped  
On thy good lady, then, who therein reaped  
The just reward of her high housewifery;  
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh  
When she was far: and not a room but dressed  
As if it had expected such a guest!"

This motto being set for the year, it is not surprising to find daily records of the usual jellies and jams, pickle and sausage making, and house-cleaning galore. The diary even boasts of "painting the hearth with my own hands," as if the little white fingers did not deserve a rap over the knuckles for doing what any one of the lady's three servants could have done as well.

But under rare Ben's housewifery lines, on the note-book's fly-leaf, there is a brief quotation from "Browne of 1649": —

"By her song those fairest hands  
Were comforted in working."

And so it was with the days of that year. Besides 360 letters, 46 book notices, putting together the poems for "Cartoons," correcting proof for that volume, writing for children's papers and for various occasions, Mrs. Preston keeps record of nineteen poems: among them "Inasmuch?" "Comforted," "Kingsley," "Beda Venerabilis," "Tintoretto," "Aftermath," and "Bacharach Wine." The joy of creating no doubt "comforted" the hand for hearth-painting!

But extracts from letters of this period will now continue the story.

TO E. P. A.

LEXINGTON, May 5th, 1877.

I must send you if but one line, that much at least, before the week closes. I have been and still am quite unwell. I had to take to my back yesterday. Let this among other things suffice as apology for not writing. . . . We formed a Woman's Foreign Missionary Association this week. I am the president. We merely pledge ourselves for a certain sum every month. I hope it will accomplish something. . . . Times are as hard as ever. Our garden is not yet half dug; you see how backward we are. Your father thanks you for your sweet birthday letter; he says "Monuments of anti-quity" are not expected to make replies. Kisses to the babies — especially to my Maggie — God bless you and yours. Ever affec. — M. J. P.

HOME, Friday (waiting for the folks  
to come to breakfast).

DEAREST E., — Before I plunge *in medias res* for the day, here's a line. I have pickles to make among other matters, so will be very busy to-day. . . . Alas! I did n't get my note finished before breakfast, and since that, to this hour (5 P. M.) I have been on the go incessantly, till I am tired out. I have boiled jelly, pared peaches for preserves, and put up twenty or thirty lbs. of sweet pickle: am not quite through yet, as I have a kettle on the stove this minute. I have a woman in Alice's place, who does not do a thing right if she can possibly find the wrong way. To-day she snatched up my kettle (she is as slow as a snail except when she is doing something wrong) while I was turning round, after I had boiled down my peach syrup, and poured into it a bucket full (actually) of cold water. Imagine my trouble, with my 30 lbs. of fruit! This is the way I get on. . . .

The drought has become alarming: ice is giving out all over the town; ours will only last about a week longer; water is scarce; vegetables are exhausted; we have only potatoes and tomatoes. We hope for the hunters home to-morrow; they have only killed one deer; it is such a disappointment; the dogs could not trail because of the drought. The dead leaves are strewn all over the yard; I have to have them raked up.

Love to all.

Ever your loving,

M. J. P.

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Lexington Presbyterian Church, alluded to in the first of these extracts, was proposed and organized

by Mrs. Preston herself, and its success was one of the sweetest satisfactions of her life. She lived to see it undertake the support of two missionaries on the foreign field; and although for many years before her removal from Lexington, ill health prevented her from attending the meetings, she contributed generously to its treasury as long as she lived, and the mention of it never failed to rouse her interest. It would be a mistake to leave unnoticed this deep interest of Mrs. Preston's whole life in the Church's great commission to evangelize the world. It was a rather uncommon interest in the days when she was young; but her father's zeal in the cause was doubtless her first incentive, and later on she had dear friends in the foreign service.

"A Bird's Ministry" was suggested by an incident that came in one of those strangely thin, foreign-looking letters, which her children remember feeling so much curiosity about. They were from the Rev. Mr. Loenthall, a devoted missionary of Peshawur, India, and only want of space obliges Mrs. Preston's biographer to leave them out of the pages devoted to her memory. It touches one to find among Mrs. Preston's papers, in a record of what she counted her failures in life, that she set down for her comfort and encouragement the opportunity she had once made of interesting two children in the work of Foreign Missions: one of these children became a preacher of the Gospel, and wherever he went as pastor, a lively concern for the Foreign Mission work manifested itself;

the other, who had more than one opportunity of organizing children's missionary societies, Mrs. Preston was pleased to think had also been serviceable to the great cause. *This* the humble Christian counted as the most valuable thing she had ever done in her life!

TO E. P. A.

Thursday: Half-hour before  
dinner. (1876?)

DEAREST E., — Does anybody ever write you such slovenly, ill-conditioned letters as I do? Now here is a half hour which I can crowd a letter into — shall this be done? or would you rather wait until some future day when sufficient leisure offers to allow of something respectable; something in the Madame de Sévigné style — at least something worthy the eye of that charming letter-writer of my acquaintance — Mrs. A.? No, I think you'd rather have the hurried scratch just now — so here it is.

After I wrote last, I went down to Brother Eben's to see Julia, and bid her and the boys good-bye; had a nice little visit, my two boys being with me. Never before were there so many of my father's descendants together. Tom and his family have been here for some days, and we have a right noisy household. Little Frank Junkin, too, is staying here. But I feel lonely — as I gave up my big boy on Tuesday for Hampden Sidney. What a reduced family we shall be this winter — I dread to think of it.

I am entirely upset about my domestic arrangements. . . . Zue was dismissed by Mr. P. two days ago, and I have no cook and don't know where to find one. She became so insufferably insolent, finishing by ordering

me out of the kitchen, that Mr. P. sent her right off — although I was willing “to eat dirt” and keep her in face of her insults to me, because the dismissing of her was doing such despite to myself. I have a very disagreeable, impudent, raw country girl in Emma’s place — so life is not just as pleasant, under present aspects, as it might be, to me.

Lexington is all gone or going to the Exposition; Gen. Smith is all agog about taking the cadets.

TO MISS GLASGOW.

Saturday, Jan. 6th, '77.

MY DEAR REBECCA, — I this morning received your note, and although my eyes have been in such a condition lately that I have had to give up using them, I must answer you even while their aching is a continual protest. I am sorry I cannot send you the book to read for which you ask — I sent it off to a distant friend. But I will leave at the P. O. for you, hoping you may get the package, a couple of other books. One, “My Little Love,” is just published this autumn, and is Marian Harland’s last. It may interest you to know that the “little love” was her own child Alice, who died aged eleven, two or three years ago. Many of the circumstances are true — and indeed I suppose the major part of the story — for the child was just what she describes “Ailsie” to have been. *Yesterdays with Authors* is not new, but it is quite entertaining. If it could be arranged so that I could send books to the P. O. for you, I would be very glad to supply your wants; tell me if I can so deposit them, and you so return them.

You must not be too sorrowful, dear friend, over the dear one gone. She lived *longer than the promise* — and was tired and wanted to go. It is vain to try to

talk down heartaches, I know, and perhaps the deepest sympathy is that which says nothing.

K. has a houseful and a heartfelt — I daresay she is as happy as she can be teaching her children; give her my love. My G., who is a student at Hampden Sidney, has been home for Christmas, and has just gone again. We are very much of a stripped household now; I had a letter from J. the other day: she is overborne with the work of the Missionary Society, that so absorbs her I am afraid she will wear out her health. My brother G. and part of his family are going to Europe in the spring. Mr. Preston expected to go too, and take me for a Continental trip, but he has had to give it up, greatly to my regret and disappointment.

But my eyes ache so that I *must* stop — A Happy New Year to you all.

Ever your affectionate friend,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

TO MISS GLASGOW.

LEXINGTON, VA., Nov. 28th, 1877.

MY DEAR REBECCA, — I was glad to get your pleasant letter the other day; it lifted me away from the engrossing present into the far past — how far, how far away it seems, that past of which you write! I can with difficulty compel myself to believe that more than twenty years sever me from it! I have to look at my tall boys to realize its truth.

My poor dear husband has just passed through — not quite *through* yet — the most serious illness of his life. For a month I have been watching and nursing him. He is up and about now, but far from being restored: and I still feel anxious. Our happiness always has a possible shadow behind it.



I send you Kingsley's Life — I don't know that I could give you a truer proof of my desire to gratify you, for I have positively *refused* to lend it to my most intimate friends in Lexington when they have asked for it — so constantly have I had books injured by careless handling, and this book I specially prize. You will take care of it, I know — so I send it, and you will enjoy the letters from Mrs. Kingsley to me — they show such tender, devoted love to her husband.

J. came near meeting Mrs. Kingsley when in England, but missed her, to my extreme regret.

She (J.) had a charming summer abroad: and is as busy now as ever with her large missionary work.

But I suffer still with my old trouble of delicate sight, and have written more than I ought. Love to K. and M.

Ever affectionately yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

TO THE HAYNES.

LEXINGTON, VA., Dec. 26th (1877).

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE, — I was no little surprised and delighted at your munificent remembrance of us — Mr. P. and myself — on Xmas Day. Your package arrived safely and duly, and how shall I thank you for your tender and loving thought of us? In the first place, accept, dear Mrs. Hayne, my husband's thanks for your unexpected remembrance of him. What right had he to suppose that you thought him worth a Xmas greeting? dear old man that he is! And how rich you have made me with the exquisitely put up edition of *Maud!* Dear Mrs. Hayne, it was very kind and sweet of you! and I do thank you ever and ever so much. I wish I could *kiss you* my thanks this morning. Your present too, dear Mr. Hayne, is very acceptable and

well-chosen. I read everything I get hold of about Charles Lamb, and this volume is entirely new to me: so when I delight myself over its pages, I will think of you as I turn them. — And I — shame on me! — have sent you nothing but good wishes and kind thoughts! Well, I have been such an invalid, that I have been obliged to let the season slip by without being able to do anything to celebrate it. My husband and my boys went out hunting yesterday, and I passed the entire day on my sofa, reading Elizabeth Barrett's Letters to R. H. Horne, in which employment I found great delight. Mildred Lee was here the other day, and we were talking of Mrs. Browning. She told me she had been to Casa Guidi, and she had asked two *accomplished* English girls of her acquaintance to go with her to visit Mrs. Browning's grave. "Mrs. Browning — Mrs. Browning," they replied — "*who* is Mrs. Browning?" "Your English poet," Mildred answered, in much surprise at their ignorance. "Well, if she was *English*, how then came she to be buried here in *Florence*? and how in the name of wonder did *you* ever hear of her away in America and know that she was buried here?" Their astonishment was boundless. Mildred says, by the way, that the want of general culture in well born and accomplished and highly educated young English people is wonderful. They will play exquisitely, and speak two or three languages, and yet hardly know who Tennyson is. A friend of mine from Lexington, now living abroad, says the same thing. She says there is nothing so stupidly ignorant of things in general as the young English girls she meets in her travels.

I have been enjoying some fine photographs looked at through a *Graphiscope* — sent me by my brother from Munich, the other day. The only peculiarity about

the large glass is that it magnifies without in the slightest altering the fineness of the picture.

How lovely your verses to Whittier were! *Ne nimis* was your motto, and well you carried it out. That was a pretty tribute to the old Poet in the "Literary World." Did you see some verses in the last "Galaxy" by our cousin here, Col. Preston Johnson? He brought them to me, to "touch up," and I gave them the requisite *smoothing*.

. . . . .

You are very kind to trouble yourself about any poems (?) of mine — and to inquire for matter for such an anthology as the beautiful one in progress of formation by Mr. Longfellow. I'm afraid the South will not cut any great figure in Poems of Places; barring yourself, Timrod, and a few occasional singers, here and there, where are *our* Poets? Our women singers are scarcer still; I won't hurt my own feelings by trying to count them on one hand!

Well, as to anything I have written on Place, I have carefully weeded out *names*, generally, in putting verses into book form. I could not command *printed* copies of the two or three trifles I send you. These may be quite too insignificant to use — but we have, as I said, outside of yourself and Timrod, not much choice.

In "Old Song and New" I have marked two or three pieces which were written with reference to *Place*, substituting the titles they ought to have had. If you think Mr. Longfellow would care to look at these, you will please send him the copy I despatched by mail to you to-day. I almost hope no war poems will be admitted into this collection. I cannot think that such a piece as "The Mausoleum" could commend itself to Mr. Longfellow, but since you have forwarded a copy, I enclose a corrected one.

I am ambitious that the poor South should have some representation in these volumes as creditable to itself as possible — and I know no one as well qualified as you are, to suggest subjects. May I hear from you after you know what Mr. Longfellow's wish is, in regard to the admission of war poems?

Is n't the Series a beautiful one? The reader is taken by the hand by the Poet himself, and conducted, as it were, over the earth on a poetic tour — the Poet his cicerone, and the Anthology, a sort of divine Guide-Book. Verily we are a pampered people, these days! Not even put to the trouble of making decisions in regard to what is best. Like the dwellers on the banks of the Amazon of whom Humboldt writes, whose lives were never vexed by having to *decide questions*, and whose faces consequently wore no wrinkles even in old age. We ought to be placid, I'm sure, helped on all sides by choosers whose ability it can never enter our minds to question.

. . . . .

(I never of my own accord could have written a poem to be read on a public occasion of the sort indicated by the enclosure, but I was requested to stand up for Virginia, so I dashed off these verses in two or three hours — about two, I think.)

I received your very kind letter, and also the printed extract. How very thoughtful you were to send me something to encourage me — I know Mr. Price, the writer, but he is absurd to contrast not *compare* me with George Eliot. However, he is very guarded and only does it in the matter of Christian faith, and “that is the gift of God.”

Written at the request of the Poe Memorial Association of New York, and read at their “Fes-tival” in the Academy of Music, April 23.

## AT LAST.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON, OF VIRGINIA.

If he were here to night — the strange, rare poet,  
 Whose Sphinx-like face no jestings could beguile —  
 To meet the award at last, and feel and know it  
 Securely his — how grand would be his smile !

How would the waves of wordless grief, that ever  
 His haughty soul had swept through surging years,  
 Sink to a mystic calm, till he would cover  
 His proud pale face to hide the happy tears !

Is there no token of a ghostly presence ?  
 No weird-like waning of the festal show ?  
 No galleried corner shorn of iridescence,  
 Where those " Orestean eyes " might flash their glow ?

Who knows the secrets of that strange existence —  
 That world within a world — how far, how near ;  
 Like thought for closeness, like a star for distance —  
 Who knows ? The conscious essence may be here.

If from its viewless bonds the soul has power  
 To free itself for some ethereal flight,  
 How strange to think the compensating hour  
 For all the tragic Past, may be to-night !

To feel that, where the galling scoffs and curses  
 Of Fate fell heaviest on his blasted track,  
 There, Fame herself the spite of Fate reverses, —  
 Might almost win the restless spirit back.

Though the stern Tuscan, exiled, desolated,  
 Lies mid Ravenna's marshes far away,  
 At Santa Croce still his stone is fêted,  
 And Florence piles her violets there to-day !

Though broken-hearted the sad singer perished,  
 With woe outworn, amid the convent's gloom,

Yet how pathetic are the memories cherished,  
When Rome keeps Tasso's birthday at his tomb!

So, though our poet sank beneath life's burden,  
Benumbed and reckless through the crush of fate;  
And though, as comes so oft, the yearned-for guerdon,  
No longer yearned for, since it comes too late, —

*He is avenged to-night!* No blur is shrouding  
The flame his genius feeds: the wise, and brave,  
And good, and young, and beautiful are crowding  
Around to scatter heart's-ease o'er his grave!

And his Virginia, like a tender mother  
Who breathes above her errant boy no blame,  
Stoops now to kiss his pallid lips, and smother  
In pride her sorrow, as she names his name.

Could he have only seen in vatic vision  
The gorgeous pageant present to our eyes,  
His soul had known one glimpse of joy elysian:  
Can we call no man happy till he dies?

LEXINGTON, VA., Dec. 1st, '81.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE, — I feel as if I owed you various letters, inasmuch as yours have been so long and mine so short. But between illness and house-repairing and the work other people put upon me who have no claim to an iota of my service, I am well nigh done out. Dear Mr. Hayne, does every literary fledgeling who writes a poem or a book, send you the MS. and ask you to put it in shape for the press? Does everybody who wants to get a story published in *Scribner* or *Harper* write and request you to arrange the terms for them? Does every poetling who writes a jingle insist that you shall prepare such book notices as will make it sell forthwith? Do the people who translate send you their MS. to revise? Does everybody ask you for

special poems for this, that, and the other public (or private) affair? Well, they do me! I am tormented by this sort of thing to such a degree that I have to set all manner of work aside, to answer these letters or do these *jobs!* Here lies a voluminous MS. — a translation — from a man I have never seen and never expect to see, requesting me to revise it for the press — as he wants it handsomely illustrated! I have n't read a page of it yet, and if I don't do this, he will be offended. Invariably I find this is the case. If I decline, saying my eyes won't bear it, or my health, they are forthwith angry. A lady in Kentucky sends me a MS. the merest doggerel, and asks me to *sell* it for her, make arrangements with the publishers, sell the 7 photographs she has taken to illustrate it, and send all to her! She is evidently outdone with me that I don't do it. Here lies a book from a woman in Old Virginia begging me to procure her such patronage for it through *writing it up*, that it will sell in Maryland!

The method chosen for carrying on the story of these later years of Mrs. Preston's life, namely, by stringing together certain letters written during that period, has perhaps this grave fault: that it leaves out many important phases of the poet's life, which as a letter-writer she takes for granted, and does not chatter about.

For instance; she was first of all not a poet, critic, literary woman, housemistress, nor even friend, — though she was all of these to a high degree, — but she was first of all *a wife*. That made the warp and woof of her days; these other avocations were but fringes or embroideries on the garment of her life.

Yet, when she turns aside to write a letter, naturally she speaks of other matters than conjugal love and companionship. So that an acute critic complains to me, in looking over these pages, that Mrs. Preston's husband seems to disappear out of her life after the war.

As a matter of fact, the two grew more and more dependent upon each other as the years went by: they were rarely separated for a day; and when in 1882 Colonel Preston resigned his place as Professor of Latin and English at the Virginia Military Institute, the husband and wife were more inseparable than ever.

This matter of resigning his professorship was most characteristic of the man: he had just reached what he called "the birthday of the limitation," the threescore years and ten; and though he was in full possession of his faculties of mind and body, having almost the sight and hearing of a young man, will and memory strong, perception keen, the whole man practically intact, he yet insisted upon resigning his place, rather than leave it to others to find him less efficient than a younger man!

As events proved, his course was the best; not for the reason that moved him at the time, but because his wife's infirmities, her failing health, her failing eyesight, her increasing deafness, made his constant companionship more and more necessary to her.

Every summer, from 1874 to 1888, Colonel and Mrs. Preston spent several months at McDonogh



School, twelve miles from Baltimore, in the home of Colonel Allan, who had married the only daughter left to the Preston household, two having been taken away by death. This stepdaughter of Mrs. Preston was only nine years old at the time of her father's second marriage; she had known no other mother, and was in all respects as Mrs. Preston's own child. McDonogh School was established in 1873 on a foundation left by John McDonogh, the New Orleans millionaire, for the education of poor boys of good character from the city of Baltimore. Colonel William Allan (who had been a member of Stonewall Jackson's staff, and chief ordnance officer of the Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia) was called from the chair of applied mathematics in Washington and Lee University in 1873, to create and preside over this school.

When Colonel and Mrs. Preston first visited McDonogh in the summer of 1874, they found fifty boys quartered in the upper stories of the fine old mansion, on what had been the "Foxleigh" estate; and the beautiful fields and woods and streams of this eight hundred acre farm was devoted to their agricultural training, and to their healthy enjoyment; while a frame annex to the main house provided them with dining hall and class-rooms.

McDonogh School was from the first — and still is — a place of unique interest; and henceforth, as long as they lived, these two old lovers spent the happiest days of their years (so they constantly said) under the noble trees and on the wide portico of this delightful place.

Colonel Preston had been all his life more interested in the education of boys than in anything else ; and here he saw fifty — an hundred — presently an hundred and fifty boys brought under influences which rarely failed to make healthy, happy, upright, successful men of them.

“I have been a schoolmaster for almost half a century,” Colonel Preston used to say to his daughter, “but I have never seen such splendid management and training and teaching in my life, as your boys get here from Colonel Allan, Mr. Lyle, and Mrs. Young.”

An old McDonogh boy spoke to me only yesterday of the vivid picture his memory had held for more than twenty years of Colonel Preston ; of seeing his erect figure, dressed in the Confederate gray he always wore, striding over the McDonogh hills at daylight, his trousers stuffed in his boots cavalry fashion, and in his hand a posy of wild flowers for the old sweetheart’s breakfast plate. It was gratifying to find that he remembered, too, the Sunday morning talks which the old Christian delighted to give the boys at “eleven o’clock chapel,” when he stood before them, Bible in hand, to speak of the greatest theme of time or eternity, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“We leave all worries behind us, great and small, when we come to McDonogh,” Mrs. Preston would say ; and those of us who are left remember with quiet thankfulness the deep draughts of peace and happiness which she and her husband took there.

One of the pleasures of McDonogh to the Prestons was the friendship of Mrs. Josepha Young, its lady matron, whose beauty and wit and warm-heartedness gave them unfailing delight year by year. She became as dear to them as their own people, and the old cavalier declared it was a luxury to be in the house with such a pretty woman!

It was during these years, when the husband and wife were seldom seen apart, that a merry Lexington woman said, "Dear me! Mrs. Preston, I believe you think you could not be happy in Heaven without the Colonel!" And the wife answered earnestly, "Indeed I know I could not!" This suggested the sonnet, —

WE TWO.

Ah, painful sweet! how can I take it in!  
 That somewhere in the illimitable blue  
 Of God's pure space, which men call heaven, we two  
 Again shall find each other, and begin  
 The infinite life of love, a life akin  
 To angels' — only angels never knew  
 The ecstasy of blessedness that drew  
 Us to each other, even in this world of sin.  
 Yea, find each other! The remotest star  
 Of all the galaxies would hold in vain  
 Our souls apart, that have been heretofore  
 As closely interchangeable as are  
 One mind and spirit: oh, joy that aches to pain,  
 To be together — we two — forever more!

In our Valley of Virginia climate, we think the most delightful days of the year come with what we call "Indian summer." The winter may have set in early; storms may have wrecked the land-

scape ; frost may have blighted all the flowers ; but we count upon a few halcyon days, at least, in late November, when the air is so soft, the sky so blue, the sunshine so sweet, that mere existence is a joy.

It was so with this poet's life : her winter *did* set in rather early, the storms were not wanting, and the cruel frosts of failing health, loss of sight and of hearing, and other less biting, yet sharp trials marred the fair garden of her life. But late in her autumn there came a season of rare and unalloyed pleasure, an Indian summer of delight such as she declared she had never known before.

This was the summer of 1884, which Mrs. Preston spent abroad with her husband, her oldest son, her sister, and, for part of the time, with her brothers (Mr. George Junkin and Dr. William F. Junkin) and their families.

Rarely has a traveler taken abroad such accurate knowledge of the places she was to see as Mrs. Preston did. "Don't show me," she would say again and again to the guide, "let me find that grave — or bust — or picture — myself." And she would become the guide of the party, leading them — to their astonishment — straight to the desired spot. Her whole life seemed to have been a preparation for that one golden summer, and she enjoyed it to the full.

With her son (a young M. D.) to take charge of the party and relieve his father of all care, and a sister to minister to all her wants, Mrs. Preston could not possibly have traveled in greater comfort and ease and light-heartedness and enjoyment than

she did. Except for the ill health and feeble eyesight which she had long borne, not a cloud shadowed the tour from beginning to end; not a day failed to bring its tribute of interest and pleasure; everything was seen *couleur de rose*, nothing disappointed, and for the rest of her life Mrs. Preston's memories of that summer sweetened existence for her.

The first of the letters which are to end the story of her life, will be selected from those written on her "blind slate," while she was abroad.

TO THE HAYNES.

WINDERMERE LAKE,  
BOWESS, CROWN HOTEL, June 28, 1884.

From Chester we came to the Lake Country, and have been here all the week. Oh, the heavenly beauty of these lakes! I don't wonder that poets congregated here. We are on Windermere, the largest and most beautiful. I will not attempt to tell you of its velvety shores — its "scaurs" — its dales. It is redolent all over with the memories of Wordsworth, Southey, Kit North (whose summer cottage is within walking distance of our hotel), Hartley Coleridge, Harriet Martineau, Dr. Arnold, and a host of others. Furness Abbey, the second grandest ruin in England, is about three hours away, and two days ago we all went there by steamer and train. Such a day! Heavenly in beauty, unequalled in the emotions it excited. Think of my gathering moss from the stone effigy of a Knight of the Crusades — so indicated by his crossed legs. We dined in the hotel built over the abbot's house — the old mossy foundations being visible all round. The abbey is immense and indescribable; such stone carvings, such

perfect arches — such clustered pillars — such a stretch of nave! I felt annihilated with the wonder of the whole thing. I enclose Mrs. Hayne some flowers gathered under the very foundations, and an ivy leaf pulled from beneath. It is splendidly draped with ivy.

But yesterday was perhaps a day nearer my heart. We went by steamer to Ambleside — Wordsworth's Ambleside — Southey's; and such hills, such greenery, I never expect to see again. Then we took carriage and drove to Grasmere Lake, a lovely little gem. I stopped to see where Mrs. Hemans had domiciled, where Miss Martineau dwelt, and after lunching at Grasmere Hotel, sought out the church. I walked to Wordsworth's grave without being directed, and on reading his name alone on his stone, and *Mary Wordsworth* on his wife's, I am free to confess to a rush of tears.

Dora Quillinan, his daughter's, and dear old Dorothy, whom Coleridge, you know, pronounced the grandest woman he had ever known. Suddenly turning, I read the name of poor Hartley Coleridge, and again I felt my eyes overflow.

. . . . .  
(Later.)

I have dreamed of poor Amy Robsart among the walls of Kenilworth, and sat in Shakespeare's chair in the house in which he was born, and roved over grand Christ College and the galleries of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and drunk my fill of London wonders.

To-day we have explored every recess in Westminster Abbey — surely there never was such a pile erected to the glory and genius of — man! I had been all over Holyrood a few weeks ago, and how strange it seemed to stand beside poor Mary Queen of Scots' tomb in Henry VII.'s chapel! I was at service on Sunday to

hear Canon Farrar, at St. Margaret's, where Milton and Cromwell were married, and where Sir Walter Raleigh is buried. Every inch of this English ground is historic — every foot is instinct with immortal dust. I have been going blind almost over the grand collections in the National Gallery. Raphaels — Murillos — Rembrandts — Rubens — Cuyps — Veroneses — Velasquez — Sir Joshua — Landseers — Turners — and a hundred others. Alas! for all Ruskin says about Turner! half of the Turner gallery is filled with incoherent splashes — many are absolutely grotesque. What a wonderful city this London is — five millions of people — a perpetual stream of seething humanity. (One of the most interesting portions of Westminster Abbey is the "Jerusalem Chamber," so rich in historic and sacred associations. A few days ago the new version of the Old Testament was completed at its green-baise-covered-tressel table.) But I dare not try to jot a hundredth part of the things that have interested us all.

. . . . .  
ON LAKE LEMAN, Aug. 20.

As I steam down this lovely lake, my dear friend, I take out my blind slate and scribble you a few lines, here on deck with Madame de Staël's Coppet in sight. How historic every step in this old land is! We have had the most charming and enchanting tour thro' Switzerland — entering it at Schaufhausen in the north, going straight through to Chamouny and Geneva. How shall I speak of our visit to "La Chute du Rhin"! It was delicious beyond question. From there we went (our party of six — my Philadelphia brother and his wife being still in England, making a tour of the cathedral cities) to the Lake of the Four Cantons, stopping for several days at Lucerne, one of the most enchanting

places I ever saw. These palatial hotels exceed anything I conceived of the luxury of travel; we have nothing like them in America—they are like palaces indeed, and one finds them in most of the great cities, on a princely scale. From Lucerne we made the ascent of Rhigi—and *dined* at a six-story Hotel on Rhigi-Culm! Oh, the Alps upon Alps we saw from Rhigi's top! I dare not torment you with anything like descriptions, and I spare you my emotions. Nothing could exceed the exhilaration of our journey through Switzerland, mostly *en voiture*, which gave us command of our own movements and time; though we found it a most expensive mode of travel.

We visited Hospenthal, high among the Alps—Fiesch—went through the St. Gothard Pass—and through Furka Pass, dining one day 8000 feet up the Alps; went into ecstasies at the Rhône Glacier, which is only inferior in grandeur to Mt. Blanc, and far superior to the Mer de Glace; passed over the Tête Noir, the most dangerous pass in Switzerland, and thence to Chamouny at the foot of Mt. Blanc. Mt. Blanc! I will not touch it! I could not make you see it thro' my lines, and you have read a thousand descriptions of it. I kept repeating over to myself Coleridge's hymn—realizing *now* its truth and splendor, as well as that of “thy bald, awful frown, oh sovran Blanc!”

Nothing on this marred earth can exceed in heavenly heights of sublimity this monarch among the mountains. Its immaculate purity makes it seem wholly heavenly,—belonging to the sky and not to earth. Geneva attracts us specially, as it is as old as Julius Cæsar; I went all over Calvin's haunts yesterday, and as a good Presbyterian who believes in his Institutes, I sat in his venerable chair beneath his pulpit in his old cathedral



(a fine one), and then we sought out the house in which he lived and died. The cathedral is Protestant, belonging to the French Church. In a day or two we expect to go to Paris, that "heaven of good Americans"! but I don't expect to enjoy it as I did London. I don't care much about France, and am not enthused by French emotions. We will take a little more touring in England before we set sail, going to the Isle of Wight, and in October we expect to be back in Lexington; which little sleepy place will seem very humdrum, I fear, after our exciting summer.

TO THE SAME.

LEXINGTON, Oct. 20.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — It was extremely kind of you to write me so that your letter should welcome me as soon as I crossed my doorstep ten days ago or less. It made me realize that I was on my native heath again to see your familiar handwriting even while I did not dare read a line for myself.

. . . . .

My Golden Summer is over and gone, and I'll never have such another, as I surely never had such a one before. It was splendid from first to last, even including the sea-sickness. I would willingly take it over again and start back next week, if I could go with the same choice party, — husband, son, sister, brothers, and sisters-in-law; such a delicious set as we had! I can't remember from what point I sent you my last scribble, but our tour thro' Switzerland was the crowning delight of our summer. . . . My picture gallery of memory is hung henceforth with glorious frescoes which blindness cannot blot or cause to fade. We declined all society while abroad, not being willing to forego sight-seeing. I did

not look up my Kingsley friends, tho' I had a pressing invitation to visit them, but I am not one of those people who like to thrust their personality upon strangers.

. . . . .  
Nov. 9.

I cannot answer your letter to-day. I write mainly to ask for Mr. Philip Marston's address, as I would like to tell him why I did not come to see him, when I was so near his house in London. When you write to him please tell him how I appreciate his kind mention of me in his letter to you. I hope his *Wind Voices* is making him still more popular than he already is. What a pathetic sketch of him that was, which appeared last spring in the Boston Literary World from the pen of Mrs. Moulton! Such an accumulation of woes on one head I scarcely ever heard of. I would have been glad to see the poem you speak of as drawing forth such encomiums from your literary friends; you know I can read nothing myself, but I could have it read to me. You are a marvel of a man to go on working under the pressure of ill-health. When there comes to me the "malice of circumstance," as Swinburne calls it, I succumb at once, proving that as I faint "in the day of adversity, my strength is small." I send your son a bunch of London Literary Worlds, in one of which he will find his own name, marred, however, by a fling at Americans, which English literary people can't help giving. I did see such funny specimens of English democracy when I was abroad; I could make you laugh by the hour, and wonder too, by telling you of sights I witnessed at Hyde Park and in the Albert Memorial Chapel and St. George's Chapel, but I have no room for more.

Ever yours,

M. J. P.

The correspondence with Mr. Hayne, which had for almost twenty years brightened Mrs. Preston's life, comforting and enriching it as shadows lengthened, and friends were called away from her side, is now seen to be drawing to a close: the last letter may be given to show how strong and tender this friendship was, till the great Silence fell between the two.

TO MRS. HAYNE.

LEXINGTON, VA. June 24, '86.

MY DEAR MRS. HAYNE, — I think it is kind above everything in you to have written to me when your hands were so full of anxiety and work. I got your postal announcing your departure to Macon, and had not known of your return until your letter came yesterday; I thought much of you during your absence, and wondered how Mr. Hayne was standing all the excitement he would be destined to encounter. It could hardly be wondered at that after such a drain upon his mental and physical energies, he should have had somewhat of a relapse on getting home. But it discouraged me very much, nevertheless, that there should be any such giving in as you speak of. I do trust that there has been no return of his trouble, and that it is nothing more than the reaction after so much movement and excitement; it must have been exceedingly gratifying to be so warmly and affectionately received by the people of his own adopted State. I think no poet in America has ever received a greater number of ovations than your husband; the recognition of him as the Laureate of the South, and as the best Nature poet in America, has been grudgingly delayed, but surely it has fully come at last; and there must be to him a satisfaction in it inex-

pressible, that at last his merits have wrung from North and South the acknowledgment they should gracefully and spontaneously have yielded long ago. But there the truth stands, *the recognition has come*, the poet has been crowned, and everywhere he is acknowledged. This fact must be some compensation to lighten the weary hours of sickness: he has reached the goal towards which he set his life, even if he should now drop his pen from his hand, and write no more. Let us thank God for this, and feel that his hand-to-hand, stout struggle with destiny has been a successful one, and that nothing henceforth can take him down from the pedestal on which he stands!

And how much of all this, my dear Mrs. Hayne, is due to you! If you had not been the brave-hearted woman you are, the struggle might not have been so manfully maintained; I am sure Mr. Hayne feels this, and is willing to share with you half his fame: it is you who have helped to make a shrine of Copse Hill; and you as well as he deserved to have your name engraven on the silver service received at Macon.

I hope you will be able to keep all visitors away from Mr. Hayne, until he entirely recovers, and gains a little strength again. But I need not warn you to do this, for have you not been the guardian angel who has always stood between him and the rough side of life?

How bitterly I regret the failure of all my endeavors to have you pay me a visit three years ago; to think that we should be friends so long, and yet never have met! And that we should meet now seems so unlikely. But we cannot have things our way in this world; as Jean Ingelow says in her last letter to me, "I shall hope to meet, know, and love you in the world beyond." Will that have to content us? Or shall we hope to meet

and know each other this side? If the meeting does not come soon, I fear I shall be too blind to see you. . . .

The answer to this letter came in the handwriting of a stranger: the poet whom Mrs. Preston had delighted to call the Southern Laureate, had entered into rest.

But new friends came into the life thus bereft, one especially, who, like Mr. Hayne, was never to see Mrs. Preston face to face, but whose sweet letters, full of enthusiastic admiration and affection, made bright many an otherwise sad and dull hour.

There came in the mail one day of the year 1883 a tender, appreciative letter from a reader away up in Maine, whose heart had been comforted in sorrow by Mrs. Preston's sweet song. The letter was promptly answered, and a correspondence sprang into existence which proved an infinite solace to Mrs. Preston as long as she lived.

This unseen friend, "S. G.," was herself a woman of wide culture and decided poetic talent; Mrs. Preston used to say that her charming letters stood well a comparison with Madame de Sévigné's.

A letter or two from Mrs. Preston to "S. G.," belonging to each of these latter periods of her remaining years, will perhaps give the story of those years in the simplest and most vivid way. There is little more, as has been said, that can interest the reader in the record of this life: the infirmities of old age bore heavily upon the sensitive spirit, and the sunset of life was not free from clouds. But there was much, on the other hand, to call for

thanksgiving and rejoicing; when her own home was broken up, the homes of her children and step-children were opened to her with loving welcome, and in the home of her eldest son, where she spent her last five years, she had everything done for her comfort and happiness that love and duty could compass.

One of the pile of letters (which this friend from Maine has kindly put at the disposal of Mrs. Preston's biographer) has been given earlier in this chapter, in the record of travel; the first extract now given goes back a year, to September, 1883.

TO S. G.

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA, Sept. 9th, 1883.

What angel prompted you, my dear unseen friend, to write me the lovely letter I received from you a few days ago? I had just gotten home from my summer jauntings, to find it awaiting me here, and only the day before I left the house of the friend I was visiting, it had required all her Christian tact and skill to raise my depressed and discouraged spirits. "My work is done," I had said. "The Master has taken away all power of doing anything further out of my hands. I can only be a burden to others." Here she stopped me with — "Does God exact day labor, light denied?" But I was not consoled.

By way of explanation let me say, that for nearly two years I have been under the care of distinguished oculists for eyes that have been overstrained for many years — since I was 24 years old. I injured them by over-use after a severe illness, and they have never been in a normal condition since. For 7 or 8 years I never read a book or wrote a letter. Then I gradually re-

turned to a partial use of them, but overtaxing them two years since fatally, as I fear, I have been condemned to the use of the grooved apparatus used by the blind, as the only means of conveying my thoughts to correspondents, and am cut off from all literary work. For that period I have not seen even a chapter in the Bible. I am just back from consulting one of the best specialists, and he has given me small encouragement. He said guardedly that my condition "did not *necessarily* promise blindness." I at least am left with that terrible fear before me.

Do excuse so long an exordium — it was needful to explain why your letter came at a moment when I needed something to lighten the gloom of my despair. When you tell me that my small writings have helped and consoled you in sorrow, surely I myself may draw some comfort therefrom! I have never given myself up to literature as my life work, being too busy a wife, mother, friend, &c., for that luxury. I have been for many years the mistress of too large a household to be able to command the wide margins of leisure that go to the making of a literary life.

Have you ever read the Dedication to my volume of verse, "Old Song and New"? There, in a sonnet's breadth, is an account of the way I have always written. And to think that the poems that *would* have utterance, and that were crowded mainly into some little interval not at the moment filled with other more imperative things, should have helped *you* away in Maine! That — *that* is a consolation to me now, in my enforced hours of idleness, when heart, health, and spirits all fail me. I must say that I am not blind now, but have the apprehension scaring me. I lie hours sometimes on my sofa, not able to do anything, not even *thinking* in my

despondency, only "eating my own heart." Yet I have husband and sons left me — a sweet home, and friends ready to soothe. Am I not unreasonable — unchristian? Yea, surely, "Can God suffice for heaven and not for earth?"

Therefore I thank you for your letter, which my husband read to me with wet eyes, and then turned and kissed me for the testimony it furnished.

. . . . .  
May 15, 1886.

Your touching and pretty picture came to me on Easter, so that I had your kindness present before my mind. It is a lovely picture, executed with so much artistic taste, and I thank both you and your friend for it; its motto is indeed one that commends itself to every Christian heart. If "I hold, and I am held," then I need have no fear for the tumultuous dash of this world's currents. So you see I thank you for the motto, which I will try to make my own from this Easter till next Easter, if I should live to see it. It was very sweet of you to think of me in this way; how many kind friends I have whom I have never seen, who remember me in a similar manner! I wish I could send you some of Jean Ingelow's pleasant letters, or some of the still more delightful ones of Mrs. Kingsley and her daughter Rose, or some most agreeable society ones from the blind English poet, Philip Bourke Marston; now if you were my neighbor I would hand them all over to you. I am not fortunate in having literary people around me, technically so called, but I have plenty of professional and cultivated ones; for this little town of ours, of two or three thousand inhabitants, has been a college town for a hundred years, and of course that gives its character to the people, for we have a university and a college



besides here, — a military one, the “West Point of the South,” and military movements are quite a feature among us, and have been for more than forty years.

I hope you will have a pleasant summer in your Maine home, and that you will not suffer from the heat, as we do in more Southern latitudes. We were very much surprised in going abroad two years ago, to find so many respectable people in the second cabin going back to Europe; my husband, who went among them a good deal, asked them why they were going back, as that seemed the wrong turn for foreigners of that class; many of them said they were going merely to escape the heats of the American summer. I feel even now like wishing I was a second class passenger on one of the great steamers of the White Star Line, if only thereby I might escape “the heats of the American summer!” One of my brothers with his family, from Charleston, S. C., took a cottage in the Adirondacks, and was there the entire summer; every time they wrote us of their enjoyable coolness, I grew envious. Like Thoreau, I think I would like to have an experience of the “Maine Woods.”

I and my beloved little amanuensis have been occupying ourselves lately in weeding out from several books of mine, and collecting from portfolios, etc., and gathering from magazines, such poems as I call religious, with a view to putting them in one volume. Whether they will ever go to press, I do not know, but it seems to me there is vitality enough in them to give them a circulation among Christian readers.

Have you read Stedman’s “Poets of America”? I think it very inferior to his “Victorian Poets,” and I do not fall in at all with much of his criticism; think of his devoting forty or fifty pages to Walt Whitman! Have you read Henry Drummond’s book, “Natural Law in

the Spiritual World " ? It is very suggestive and exalting.

In the fall of 1889 Mrs. Preston's widowed step-daughter came back with her children to make her home in Lexington, only a stone's throw from the Preston homestead.

"Let it console you, my dear," the stepmother said, "to think what a comfort you and your children are going to be to your father and myself, for the rest of our lives."

"The rest of our lives!" How closely the veil hangs over the future to the very end! Before six months had passed, Colonel Preston's family knew that it was only a question of weeks, when he should leave forever the beloved hills of his boyhood's and manhood's home.

It was a clear and peaceful sunset to a life spent in God's service. For weeks before the end came, the dying man lay on a couch which was placed on a covered upper porch, and gazed in silence — a serene and radiant silence — at the beauty of earth and sky. He was too weak for much conversation; and by gentle signs we knew that he wished to be left alone — alone with God.

When he did speak, his manner was not only cheerful, it was often merry; and many a smile kept company with our restrained tears, at his witty speech.

But for the most part he held his peace; now and then reading from God's Word, which lay beside him; and now and then from the life of Dr.

Archibald Alexander, which was always laid with his Bible.

Only a few days before his death he rallied, — by a determined effort of will, his doctor said, — called his children and grandchildren together to a family breakfast, and *himself conducted family worship*. His oldest grandson's oldest child was only a baby in arms, but the great-grandfather insisted upon her presence at this service. "Never mind if the darling is restless," he said; "I want her to share the blessing I am going to ask from our covenant-keeping God upon me and mine."

The oldest son of the family, a minister of the Gospel, read the selected chapter; the dying patriarch made a glorious confession of faith, rendered praise for all the goodness and mercy that had crowned his days, humbly acknowledged his sins; and said he felt no rapture in view of death; only adoring gratitude for God's goodness in saving such a worthless sinner, and a perfect assurance that all would be well with him through eternity, because he belonged to Christ.

We sang, with voices full of emotion, "O God of Bethel, by whose hand," and the old saint made a prayer that seemed to echo back to us from the gates of Heaven; then he kissed each one, and went back to his couch on the porch, hardly to speak again on earth.

A few days and nights more of waiting, and then Mrs. Preston's correspondents received this little card: —

"Entered into rest, July 15, at his home in

Lexington, Va., Colonel John T. L. Preston, after many months of weary illness, through which he bore himself with the noblest Christian resignation."

Next we find a dictated page, thanking "S. G." for her loving sympathy, and nothing more until the beginning of the next year.

TO S. G.

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA, Jan. 13, 1891.

MY DEAR MISS G., —I have your kind, sympathetic note, written at Christmas, and I thank you for the Christmas prayer which you tell me you offered up for me; may your prayers be accepted for yourself and for me.

My heart thanks you likewise for the sympathy you express in my grievous loss, but since that mournful mid-summer desolation, other trials still have come upon me. I was obliged to give up my lovely home of thirty years, and break up a thousand holy associations connected with it; it is to be sold, and even now its grounds are being divided into building lots. This tearing up of such sacred ties proved too much of an added sorrow, and resulted in a spell of nervous illness, which has laid me on my back ever since; even now I cannot walk, although I am better, and slowly improving, I hope. I was to have taken a house in Baltimore, and my large library and furniture were all packed, waiting transportation in the fall, but I am unequal to housekeeping now, and probably shall never have a home of my own again, but will spend what remains to me of my pilgrimage with my son, who is a physician there. I am with kind friends here, and have no expectation of being able to be

moved before spring. You may well imagine that time drags heavily with me often, unable as I am to use my eyes; but I have had a long and happy life, and I dare not murmur at the sad Providences that have beset me during this last year. If they only have the effect of fitting me for the home of many mansions, from which we shall go out no more forever, why should I complain, or fill my heart with vain regrets? You tell me that you have known what it is to bury your dearest, and break up your earthly home, so that in some measure you can sympathize with me. To us who mourn our departed, and our lost treasures, earth seems a sad and dreary place; but then how many happy homes and happy hearts there are left in it for all! So it becomes us to say with our dear Elizabeth Browning, —

“Through dearth and death, through fire and frost,  
With emptied arms and treasure lost,  
We praise thee, while the days go on.”

I can send you but a brief note to-day, but it will suffice to tell you that I appreciate your kind remembrance of me. So with all good wishes for your health and happiness through the coming year, believe me, my dear Miss G., most affectionately yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

## CHAPTER XII

### LAST DAYS

THE two years following her husband's death, Mrs. Preston spent in the home of her stepdaughter, in Lexington, Va. She had suffered a slight shock of paralysis (although her letters do not call it by that name) in the first sad months of her great bereavement, and she never walked again, except to take a few steps across the floor with a crutch or cane, and leaning on a strong arm. But her wheel chair was rolled out to the wide porch every good day, summer and winter, and during pleasant weather most of the day was thus spent in the open air.

She became, of course, the centre of this household. Each member of the family took turns in reading aloud to her (through the long ear trumpet which her increasing deafness now made entirely necessary), and we used to tell her that she equaled a juggler with his balls, in being able to keep the thread of three or four different books at once. A sweet girl amanuensis came to her for several hours every morning, and this kept her in touch with her widely scattered family and kindred, while a steady stream of visitors, her neighbors and friends, enlivened her days.

In the last weeks of 1892, Mrs. Preston made the dreaded journey to Baltimore, with the help of her two sons and her maid, and from that time until her death she was domesticated in the family of her oldest son, Dr. George J. Preston of Baltimore. In her letters from Baltimore she boasts very prettily of the gifts and accomplishments of her charming Leipsic daughter-in-law, and of her two grandchildren, "cherubs beautiful enough to have been models for Raphael — a constant source of enjoyment to me."

Mrs. Preston became the centre of this Baltimore home, as she had been of the Lexington one, and every member of the family brought to her invalid's chair whatever could interest and please her. She would not see strangers, but there were enough old friends and kinsfolk in the city to give her many sweet hours of sociability, and her second son, Herbert, who was practicing law in Baltimore, devoted himself to her in daily ministry.

Her only sister, her brothers and their families, made constant journeys to Baltimore to see her. Rarely has one member of a family been the object of such tender solicitude, such unceasing attention, such affectionate demonstration.

And one of the sweetest and brightest blessings of her life God had kept for these declining years. In an earlier chapter of this volume, the reader found a letter (dated Lexington, Va.) to Mrs. Preston's dear friend, Professor E. F. McCay, alluding to the birth of a little daughter, whom Mr. McCay had named for Mrs. Preston's mother,

“Julia Junkin.” How unexpectedly crossed are the paths by which our Heavenly Father leads us! This friendship struck root first in Easton, Penn., grew apace while the Junkins lived in Germantown, was tenderly cherished during the quarter of a century that Mrs. Preston lived in Virginia, while Mr. McCay was engaged in educational work in Georgia; but its sweetest blossom flowered into beauty during those years of decline in Baltimore, when the “Julia Junkin” of the Lexington letter brought the fragrance of her sweet presence into the sad old life, and became the daily companion, amanuensis, and comforter of her father’s dearest friend.

A few more letters written from the Baltimore home will end the story of Mrs. Preston’s life.

TO A. DEF.

819 NORTH CHARLES STREET.

MY DARLING A., — Am I answering your kind letter too soon? I was so glad to get it, for letters here in my new surroundings come like the voice of a friend to one in a strange land. My surroundings are all so different from what they have been, that I feel very much as if I were transplanted to another sphere. In my old room at Elizabeth Allan’s, I looked out upon a range of most beautiful mountains, of great stretches of woodland and green pastures. Here my large airy room faces brick walls and housetops, and when I sit at the library windows, I only see throngs of passers-by, all of whom are strangers to me. But I have my compensations, and am only too thankful that I am surrounded by my sons and daughter and little grandchildren, all of which circum-



stances are naturally to me a great delight. It is an inexpressible comfort to feel that I have my doctor beside me all the time, and I can call upon him any moment. And then the children are a source of constant amusement to me, for they spend a great deal of time, when they are not out of doors, in my room. They are very merry little things, and it is not easy to be low-spirited or morose or despairing in their presence. They both have the prettiest curly red heads, and very white complexions. The red heads are pretty now, as they fit like birds about my room, but I should be sorry to have them red-headed when they grow up. George is a beautiful child, very gentle and docile; Margaret is fuller of life, with a very bright face and invariably the mistress in their plays and quarrels. Yet it is pretty to see her go up and kiss her brother when she has made him cry. E. has seen a great deal of the world, and has had a very varied life. Last night she was describing her life in an old Bohemian castle, built in twelve hundred. To hear her was like reading a page of a mediæval romance. She is one of the busiest people I know; G.'s trouble is that he says she never sits five minutes with her hands before her doing nothing. She is a very systematic and neat housekeeper, and attends carefully to all details.

J. tells me that she has been hearing the missionary Paton, whom the New Hebrides cannibals did not eat up, tell his experiences and it was a great treat. I have not had anything read to me lately except papers and magazines, and I feel as if a great deal of literature had swept by me. I feel too old to be greatly interested in the new writers, — I leave them for the next generation. I have so large a correspondence that I have to dictate four or five letters every day to keep even with it, and

this is somewhat unprofitable. As to health I am about as usual; I do not walk any better, nor has the battery been of much benefit. So you see, my dear, I have need of patience, for it has not yet had its perfect work. Many strangers have called to see me, but I have made E. receive them for me. Conceive of me as being invited to dinners and receptions! Now tell me all about yourself—how you are occupying your time—what books you are reading, and what pictures you are painting. And now, my dear, I must say good-by: God bless you; with love to Z. and C., ever yours affectionately,

M. J. P.

TO S. G.

Nov. 13, 1893.

MY DEAR MISS G.,—You see that I am not able to write with mine own hand, but a dear friend takes my place, hence this letter. I had no idea till I looked at the postmark, that your letter was received so long ago, but I spent the summer with my son's family at a pretty cottage in Howard Co., Md., and so was not where I could answer your letter, but it was a delightful one, as I realized by having my friend just read it over to me. Where we were was a pretty wooded place, and we had various friends to visit us, but I was so much of an invalid all summer as not to be able to walk about except with the help of my waiting woman.

I don't love town life; as I sit here at the library window, this rainy day, and watch the people plodding along under their umbrellas, I feel as if city life was intensely dreary. I thank you for giving me a pleasant picture of your summer, and I was interested in all you told me about your sea trips. I have Celia Thaxter's books, and like all she writes. She sent me her photograph some time ago, and what a good earnest face it

is! She has made the Isles of Shoals quite classic. Some of our household were at the Fair, and I have hardly a friend who was n't there.

I am glad you told me about the little book concerning Lady Stanley, as I am interested in everything that relates to the Stanleys. The Tait books are interesting but sad. I have dabbled very little in literature this summer, and have had to decline all invitations to write, on account of my nervousness. Pray God, my dear friend, that you may never know what this nervous prostration is. It is worse than any physical pain, and I do not seem to grow much better of it. It depresses me painfully and renders me indifferent to almost everything. Some of my friends press novels upon me, but they have become in a measure distasteful, and don't amuse me, and although I might see many visitors, I feel quite unfitted for the faces of strangers, and limit myself to a small circle of friends.

Tell me about your Princeton friend when you write, did she ever recover? I was interested in what you told me of her, especially her beautiful acquiescent spirit. I cannot pretend to give you an answer to your long, delightful letter, but then remember under what limitations I write. I enclose a bit of Philip Marston's writing; poor fellow, I always think of him with sadness. And now, my dear friend, write to me whenever you find it a Christian charity to comfort a poor invalid, for your letters are always delightful to me; and believe me yours as ever,

M. J. P.

TO A. D. F.

819 N. CHARLES ST., NOV. 20, '93.

MY DARLING A., — You won't believe me when I tell you how much I enjoyed your last letter, because I have

not answered it; for the reason that while I was in the country during the summer, I had no amanuensis, and so my correspondence was largely curtailed. I hope you had an enjoyable summer. It was very agreeable to me to be with G.'s family in their country cottage, but it did not make any sensible change in my physical condition, and I am not able to walk a bit better than I did six months ago; but I am trying to reconcile myself to the fact that at my age I am not to look for recuperation, since the bottom of the hill is so near. And I repeat to myself with a full consciousness of its truth, that verse from Gray's *Elegy*, —

“For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey  
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned —  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?”

How much it takes to wean us from this beautiful world, which is yet so full of sorrow and suffering! I am ashamed to think how I cling to it, notwithstanding all the warnings I have had to be ready to leave it; but I don't think there ever was anybody who shrank from death more than I. It has “held me in bondage” all my life. I think if I had the assurance of readiness, I would not be so tormented with fear; but I will not write in a sombre mood, or you will not welcome my letter. But my dear, you will never know how tortured I am with nervousness; the sword of Damocles suspended by a hair is over my head. You know from experience what the fear of paralysis is, though it never with you took hold of the spiritual side of your nature, as it has with me. If I could be persuaded that all my doubts and fears arose from physical causes, I could bear them. Have you any sympathy with such troubles, from any experience of your own?

It was a great relief to me to hear brother G. say in one of his letters, that he did not allow his numbness to give him any worry, he was perfectly willing to leave it all in God's hands. Did J. tell you that the latest word from them is, that they may go to Cairo? I was glad to know that they had a thought of dipping into the Orient; it is what I have been urging them to do, during their last two or three trips. Europe has got to be such a beaten track with them! . . . I hope you have fair access to new books; how they do pour from the press! I often wonder what Solomon would say if he could come back to earth, as he complained of the multiplication of books even in those old days; but I believe you never tire of new books. I am heartily sick of novels, and won't allow them to be read to me, though now and then they compel me to listen to a story by a new writer. But I am spinning out my uninteresting letter. Give my best love to them all, and remember that I am always delighted to hear from you.

Always your loving friend,

M. J. P.

TO S. G.

819 N. CHARLES ST., Oct. 22, '94.

MY DEAR KIND FRIEND, — I am suffering to-day so much from nervous exhaustion, that it is anything but the right thing to attempt even a note to you, but I may get worse and not be able to acknowledge your goodness, so I will do it while my friend is here beside me, to write for me. How shall I thank you for all your thoughtful kindness in taking so much trouble; what trouble you *did* take, in collecting these memorials from so many different sources, and how greatly obliged am I that you should be willing to take all this trouble! But

much as I appreciate all of this, and feel your great goodness in doing it for me, its value is greatly outweighed by the gift of the little book about Lady Augusta Stanley. I have always taken a great interest in Lady Augusta, and these reminiscences have only stimulated it. I thank you for the good the brochure has done me, even though it is meagre to a fault. What is said is so to the point, and shows Lady Stanley to have been such an admirable character, that one feels grievously disappointed that these memorials are all so brief. The author might have given us so much more, and such a beautiful character deserves to be set before the world in large proportions of splendid womanhood. After having it read to me, I sent over to the library for my copy of the Life of the Prince Consort, hoping that there I might find something more about her twenty years of life with the Queen. I did find a good deal about Lady Augusta Bruce, but no dealing with details, only added testimony to her beautiful unselfishness, and ever constant helpfulness. I had stood at her grave in Westminster Abbey, and realized how much the Dean had lost, in losing her. Their effigies lie side by side in a little chapel, with their hands folded and their eyes turned heavenward.

TO S. G.

819 N. CHARLES ST., May 22, '96.

MY DEAR MISS G., — My dear friend Mrs. B., has been absent at Atlantic City, so that my letters have greatly accumulated, and as nervous prostration has almost made an end of me, and I am not able even to dictate much, I have asked her to copy part of a letter which she has just sent off to Mrs. Dodge, which tells of a visit from Miss Kingsley, as it is just what I would have repeated to you.

It is only two weeks till our appointed time arrives for going to Mt. Top, where we spent four months last summer, and though I shudder at the thought of going 188 miles down into Virginia, I trust I may get there alive. The Dr.'s family go with me. As I cannot carry my amanuensis with me, I will not be able to communicate with you this summer, for I am so blind now as not to be able to write my own name. I hope you are comfortably settled at your home; lest you should not be, I will send this to N. God bless and keep you safe. Pray for me that if this is to be my last summer, I may go to that home from whence there is no more any going out. Always affectionately yours,

M. J. P.

EXTRACT FROM THE LETTER TO MRS. DODGE.

I want to tell you of an unexpected pleasure that came to me last week, just in the midst of our hottest spell of weather. You have probably seen by the papers that Miss Rose Kingsley has been visiting in America. She has been searching for me, but only knew that I had left Lexington, and did not know that I was in Baltimore. She has a cousin living here, a graduate of Girton College, Oxford, who is married to a Baltimorean and has a beautiful home on the edge of the city. Miss Kingsley was invited by the ladies' literary club, "the Arundel," to read a paper on Art before them. My daughter-in-law, who is one of the founders of the club, met her there, and when Miss Kingsley heard who she was, she expressed great pleasure at finding me.

My daughter arranged to give her a luncheon, but when she and the Doctor called on her to invite her, they found her with engagements five deep. They were only able to arrange that she should take some cake and

wine with us between two afternoon receptions. I had a delightful interview with her, she was so cordial that I felt as if I had known her all my life. She kissed me repeatedly on both cheeks and forehead, and told me how bitterly she and her mother regretted not seeing us when we were at Leamington. They had been guests of the Queen at Hampton Court a short time before, and so missed us. She was most profuse in her thanks for the little acts of literary service I had at various times rendered her, and you may be sure we held delightful converse over a photograph which her mother had sent me several years ago. I have piles of the most beautiful letters Mrs. Kingsley wrote me, for sixteen years; indeed until her death, about two years ago. I would have been willing to have had an additional attack of nervous prostration rather than not have seen Miss Kingsley. We had much talk of the beautiful, ideal life at Eversley as given in her mother's classic Memoir, and she told me that the present Lord Tennyson had said to her that in writing his father's life, he had set that book before him as a model, but he said it was with a despairing feeling, as he felt he could never equal it. She produced a fine impression here, so charming and cordial was she. I thought you would enjoy hearing of her, hence this rather long talk.

In March the friend in Maine received the following note:—

March 27, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS G.,—It is with a sad heart that I return you the little book to-day, and send you this hurried line to say that your dear friend, Mrs. Preston, is slipping from us. Every breath seems to be her last. She was stricken with paralysis on Wednesday last, and



has never regained her consciousness. She is very quiet and has been merely breathing for three days. We thank God for her unconsciousness, and rejoice to think of the great surprise awaiting her ; she, who never could feel herself worthy to be called *His child*. How soon her doubts are to be set at rest ! Dear old saint ! I hate to think of the future without her, though her most loving friend could not desire for her a longer life. You will see the notice in the papers, but I could not bear you to hear it only in that way.

In great haste, yours,

J. M. B.

Two days after this was written, on Sunday, March 29, 1897, after almost a week of unconsciousness, Mrs. Preston exchanged time for eternity — the shadows of earth for the dawn of heaven.

We could not have asked for her — she could not have asked for herself — a more blessedly gentle departure. Her best beloved were beside her day and night while the fitful breath lasted, — the two devoted sons, the sweet daughter-in-law who had cared for her so tenderly ; her two precious grandchildren ; her only sister, and two young girls from her Lexington home, to whom also she had been a dearly loved “grandmother,” while the “J.” of her love did not leave her until she had put a handful of violets upon her breast, as she lay in rapt calm in her coffin.

In the last of her letters to “S. G.” she had spoken of sending her a little poem, and she asked that her friend’s friend should pray that its sentiments might become the true feelings of the

writer's heart. This poem, "Euthanasia," with a word or two as to its birth, may fitly end the story of the poet's life.

A few years before Mrs. Preston's death, her stepdaughter (then visiting her in Baltimore) came to her side in the fireglow of a wintry twilight, and sitting close to her chair, that she might put her lips to the invalid's ear, and dispense with the ear trumpet, said, "Mamma, I have something sweet to tell you; my friend Mrs. Hunt spent last evening reading aloud to her family; she was as well and comfortable as usual; she kissed each one good-night, with her accustomed fondness, and went to her own room; this morning they went to her bedside to find her gone, leaving a beautiful smile on the cold lips!"

The old Christian's tears glistened in the firelight. "Oh, my dear," she said, "pray that my going, which cannot be far off, may be like that!"

It was in that very evening's twilight that she picked up her blind slate and wrote, —

#### EUTHANASIA.

With faces the dearest in sight,  
 With a kiss on the lips I love best,  
 To whisper a tender "Good-night,"  
 And pass to my pillow of rest.

To kneel, all my service complete,  
 All duties accomplished — and then  
 To finish my orisons sweet  
 With a trustful and joyous "Amen."

And softly, when slumber was deep,  
 Unwarned by a shadow before,

On a halcyon billow of sleep  
To float to the Thitherward shore.

Without a farewell or a tear,  
A sob or a flutter of breath,  
Unharm'd by the phantom of Fear,  
To glide through the darkness of death!

Just so would I choose to depart,  
Just so let the summons be given;  
A quiver — a pause of the heart —  
A vision of angels — then Heaven!

Her prayers — and ours — were answered. Just  
so gently, so painlessly, she went home.

## APPENDIX



## APPENDIX

### MARGARET J. PRESTON

#### AN APPRECIATION

BY JAMES A. HARRISON, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

THE old Valley of Virginia is a very delightful spot to be born in or to live in: it is one of the picture-places of the ancient Commonwealth, and whoever has the good fortune to have followed with childish or with aging eyes its mountain trails and its shimmering waters, is already half a poet — of infinite mood and memory, if not of actual metre and stanza. As the great vale sweeps down to Harper's Ferry from the green heights of the Alleghanies, full of their memories of "the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe" and of the Revolutionary times, it leaves behind many a cleft and gorge and lateral fissure in its sides, wherein nestle antique little towns and hamlets that hover about a spire, or a manse, or cling lichenlike to the mountain slopes. Here a rushing mill-wheel crushes a mountain torrent into millions of sparkling jewels, mingling the beautiful with the prosaic utilitarian grinding of wheat; yonder an old-time tavern and smithy remind the traveler of the time when Lord Fairfax and Surveyor Washington used to stage it in "chariots," with easy relay-distances of ten or twelve miles, up and down the Valley, in the times of the Indian wars; and away on the mountain

side one describes some "Mount Airy," or "Greenway Court," or plantation house of lordly name and lineage that announces the fact that the lower valley is peopled with the descendants of the gentry of colonial "Tide-water Virginia."

Everywhere through this charmed region of great elevations and verdure-clad peaks and mountain ranges one meets with towns of old English name, — Winchester, Woodstock, Staunton, — some of them strung together on the silver cord of the Shenandoah, others lying in the golden bowl of yellow wheat fields, and all of them filled with Old Virginia homes and hospitalities that have become proverbial for good cheer and heartiest welcome.

In the greenest of these valleys  
By good angels tenanted,

lies the little town of Lexington, named in honor of the Revolutionary Lexington, and now about one hundred and twenty-five years old. "The rude forefathers of the hamlet" sleep in its ivied and moss-covered cemetery, which looks out on a scene of beauty seldom surpassed in the old or the new country. For four generations and more a sturdy Scotch-Irish population, full of Macs and clan names found in Scottish history, have lived and labored in this picturesque region, descendants of the Covenanters, firm believers in Knox and Calvin, fine colonial and Revolutionary stock who drifted up the valley after they had landed in Philadelphia and meandered through Pennsylvania and Maryland, finding in these beautiful uplands a reminiscence of green Erin and bonnie Scotland. Everywhere they established their farms and homes, built kirk and manse, erected mill and hostelry, bringing along the parson and the schoolmaster, bell and book; till soon the whole valley

rang with the hum of hammer and anvil, church bell and hymn, spelling book and "Thursday meetin'." Communities clustered together; a Lutheran population of post-Revolutionary origin came to mingle its curious Dutch blood and its queerer nomenclature with that of the Celts, and the valley, about 1850, at the close of the Mexican War, began to blossom like the rose.

As early as 1784, Lexington began to flutter educational wings and feel the spirit of progress astir in its breast. One of the learned Grahams established an academy near the town; this academy, in the wave of patriotic enthusiasm that swept over the region in '76-'96, came to be rechristened "Liberty Hall;" and the eyes of the good and great Washington being attracted to the fact, he left to the Hall in his will, fifty shares of James River and Kanawha Canal stock which had been presented to him by the State of Virginia.

This stock became the nest-egg of "Washington College," which after the death of General Robert E. Lee, its first post-bellum president, clasped its name in a golden link with that of Lee, who had married the granddaughter of Martha Custis, and developed into the present "Washington and Lee University."

Thus had one of the great educational institutions of Virginia and of the South grown up in a night — but in a night of a hundred years.

Another one also came to be located in Lexington: the Virginia Military Institute, a foundation laid in 1839 by General Francis H. Smith, an old West-Pointer, and Major J. T. L. Preston (afterwards colonel on Stonewall Jackson's staff), husband of the subject of this sketch.

These two institutions would mark any place with distinction, but all the more a little mountain town of



three thousand inhabitants, inaccessible in the older days except by canal-boat or stage ride of twenty miles. There were times, just after the war, when men of national reputation like Lee, and Maury, and Preston Johnston, and Joynes, and Brooke, and Smith held chairs of physics and literature, mathematics and modern languages in these twin institutions; there were times in Lexington, not many decades ago, when nearly a thousand young men frequented its Institute and its University and made the little town a lively and interesting place to dwell in. A gracious hospitality distinguished the place; scions of the first families settled there and built delightful homes; churches and schools added themselves to the growing needs of the place; the old Franklin Debating Society and Library drew the men together to read, discuss current questions, and hear lectures from eminent specialists; and the College Debating Societies had their discussions, their magazines, their celebrations through the year, to garnish and embroider the dull edges of collegiate life.

And then the Commencements! prolonged between "Institute Hill" and "College Campus," sometimes for a clear six weeks: balls, field sports, boat races, addresses, dress parades, camp scenes, parties, receptions, entertainments of all sorts; an unceasing inflow of strangers and outflow of diplomaed and graduated or "flunked and flustered" students and cadets. The town has gone through this annual whirl since 1784, doubled since 1840; and superadded to all this, it has become since 1871 the Mecca of all Southern pilgrims; for here in the beautiful ivied chapel of the University lie the sacred remains of Robert Edward Lee and his family; here is Lee House, where he lived and died, and here is the lovely gray stone Lee Memorial Church, from whose

vestry he had just come when he sank to rise no more; and here, at the other end of the town, is the old Presbyterian Cemetery, where a great bronze statue of Stonewall Jackson surmounts his grave, and where lies John Letcher, war governor of Virginia, surrounded by a host of Confederate dead.

Such were the surroundings in which Margaret J. Preston passed the happiest days of her life, from 1848 to 1892. More delightful surroundings for a sensitive literary nature like hers could not have been imagined: a nature delighting in fine landscape scenes, impressionable to a degree to all the varying moods and whimsies of a mountain environment, and thrilling with Eolian music at the touch of beauty.

In other respects, too, this fortunate woman was most fortunately placed: her father, the Rev. Dr. Junkin, was a distinguished Presbyterian minister who had been president of Miami University, Ohio, and Lafayette College, Easton, Penn., now president of Washington College; and soon she was to marry Major John T. L. Preston, a scion of one of the most high-born Virginia families, jointly with General Francis H. Smith, founder of the Virginia Military Institute, professor of Latin and modern languages in this institution, and intimate friend and (later) aide-de-camp to Stonewall Jackson.

Her social position and surroundings were thus of the most influential and refined: nothing was lacking to make her supremely happy, and an abundance of this world's goods added its share to the other blessings with which Providence had environed her.

Major (afterwards Colonel) Preston was a typical Virginia gentleman of the olden times: urbane, cultured, affable, aristocratic, straight as an arrow, passionately fond of dogs and horses and hunting, a great reader,

stern and unyielding to wrong, proud as Lucifer in matters of personal honor, a genealogist of the first water, with a pedigree stretching far into Merrie England, every leaf and branch of which he had at his finger-ends; he possessed a tender, noble nature that enwrapped his rugged qualities as the Tuscan grape entwines and festoons the towering elm.

His union with such a nature as Margaret J. Preston's (just turned of thirty) was indeed an ideal one: strength and sweetness, power and gentleness, pride and humility, poetry and prose combined in this marriage as they did in that of the Brownings. Colonel Preston was a fine lecturer, handling many subjects with a keen and polished style, teaching effectively large classes of young men at the Institute, a devoted Sunday-school teacher, and a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church. Two of his sons became distinguished doctors of divinity in this faith, and the atmosphere of the Preston household was that of Christian peace and repose.

In his early boyhood years in Richmond, Va., Colonel Preston had been an intimate friend of Edgar Allan Poe, and as Mrs. Preston told the writer, "learned his Horace out of the same book." The following account, taken from Ingram's "Life of Poe," recounts the friendship:—

Although I was several years Poe's junior, we sat together at the same form for a year or more at a classical school in Richmond, Virginia. Our master was John Clarke, of Trinity College, Dublin. At that time his school was one of highest repute in the metropolis. Master Clarke was a hot-tempered, pedantic, bachelor Irishman; but a Latinist of the first order, according to the style of scholarship of that date, he unquestionably was. I have often heard my mother amuse herself by repeating his pompous assurance that in his school her boy should be taught only the pure Latin of the Augustan

age! It is due to his memory to say, that if her boy was not grounded in his rudiments, it was not the fault of his teacher. What else we were taught, I have forgotten; but my drilling in Latin, even to its minutæ, is clear to my view as if lying on the surface of yesterday.

Edgar Poe might have been at this time fifteen or sixteen, he being one of the oldest boys in the school, and I one of the youngest. His power and accomplishments captivated me, and something in me, or in him, made him take a fancy to me. In the simple school athletics of those days, when a gymnasium had not been heard of, he was *facile princeps*. He was a swift runner, a wonderful leaper, and what was more rare, a boxer with some slight training. I remember, too, that he would allow the strongest boy in the school to strike him with full force in the chest. He taught me the secret, and I imitated him, after my measure. It was to inflate the lungs to the uttermost, and at the moment of receiving the blow to exhale the air. It looked surprising, and was, indeed, a little rough; but with a good breast-bone, and some resolution, it was not difficult to stand it. For swimming he was noted, being in many of his athletic proclivities surprisingly like Byron in his youth. There was no one among the schoolboys who would so dare in the midst of the rapids of the James River. I recall one of his races. A challenge to a foot race had been passed between the two classical schools of the city: we selected Poe as our champion. The race came off one bright May morning at sunrise, in the Capitol Square. Historical truth compels me to add that on this occasion our school was beaten, and we had to pay up our small bets. Poe ran well, but his competitor was a long-legged, Indian-looking fellow, who would have outstripped Atalanta without the help of the golden apples. Ah, how many of those young racers on Capitol Square that fair May morning and how many of the crowd that so eagerly looked on, are very still now!

In our Latin exercises in the school Poe was among the first — not first without dispute. We had competitors who fairly disputed the palm. Especially one — Nat Howard — after-

wards known as one of the ripest scholars in Virginia, and distinguished also as a profound lawyer. If Howard was less brilliant than Poe, he was far more studious; for even then the germs of waywardness were developing in the nascent poet, and even then no inconsiderable portion of his time was given to versifying. But if I put Howard as a Latinist on a level with Poe, I do him full justice. One exercise of the school was a favorite with Poe: it was what was called "capping verses." The practice is so absolutely obsolete now, at least in our country, that the term may require explanation.

Before the close of school, all the Latinists, without regard to age or respective advancement in the language, were drawn up in a line for "capping verses;" just as, in old-fashioned schools, all scholars had to take their place in the spelling-line before dismissal. At the head of the line stood the best scholar, who gave from memory some verse of Latin poetry to be "capped;" that is, he challenged all the line to give from memory another verse beginning with the same letter. Whoever was able to do this, took the place of the leader; and in his turn propounded another verse to be capped in like manner. This we called "simple capping." "Double capping" was more difficult, inasmuch as the responding verse must both begin and end with the same letters as the propounded verse. To give an example, and at the same time to illustrate how a memory, like a sieve, may let through what is valuable, and yet retain in its reticulations a worthless speck, I recall a capping which, while I have forgotten ten thousand things that would have been serviceable if remembered, comes back to me with distinctness after the lapse of so many years.

Nat Howard stood at the head of the line, and gave out for double capping a verse beginning with *d* and ending with *m*. It passed Edgar Poe, it passed other good scholars, as well it might, until it reached me, a tyro, away down the line. To the surprise of everybody, and not less to my own, there popped into my mind the line of Virgil:—

Ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim!

And with pride and amazement I saw myself where I never was before and never was afterwards, — above Nat Howard and Edgar Poe.

The practice looks absurd, and so it would be now. True, it stored the memory with many good quotations for ready use. But after the fashion of Master Clarke — a fashion brought from Trinity — this “capping verses” was much in vogue, and Edgar Poe was an expert at it.

He was very fond of the Odes of Horace, and repeated them so often in my hearing that I learned by sound the words of many, before I understood their meaning. In the lilting rhythm of the Sapphics and Iambics, his ear, as yet untutored in more complicated harmonies, took special delight. Two odes, in particular, have been humming in my ear all my life since, set to the tune of his recitation : —

*Jam satis terris nivis atque dirae  
Grandinis misit Pater et rubente,*

and —

*Non ebur neque aureum  
Mea renidet in domo lacunar.*

When I think of his boyhood, his career, and his fate, the poet whose lines I first learned from his musical lips, supplies me with his epitaph : —

*Ille, mordaci velut icta ferro  
Pinus, aut impulsa cupressus Euro,  
Procidit late, posuitque collum in  
Pulvere Teucro !*

I remember that Poe was also a very fine French scholar. Yet with all his superiorities, he was not the master spirit, nor even the favorite of the school. I assign, from my recollection, this place to Howard. Poe, as I recall my impressions now, was self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious, and though of generous impulses, not steadily kind, or even amiable : and so what he would exact was refused to him. I add another thing which had its influence, I am sure.

At the time of which I speak, Richmond was one of the most aristocratic cities on this side the Atlantic. I hasten to say that this is not so now. Aristocracy, like capping verses, has fallen into desuetude — perhaps for the same reason : times having changed, other things pay better. Richmond was certainly then very English, and very aristocratic. A school is of its nature democratic ; but still boys will unconsciously bear about the odor of their fathers' notions, good or bad. Of Edgar Poe it was known that his parents had been players, and that he was dependent upon the bounty that is bestowed upon an adopted son. All this had the effect of making the boys decline his leadership ; and on looking back on it since, I fancy it gave him a fierceness he would otherwise not have had. . . .

Not a little of Poe's time in school, and out of it, was occupied with writing verses. As we sat together, he would show them to me, and even sometimes ask my opinion, and now and then my assistance. I recall at this moment his consulting me about one particular line, as to whether the word "groat" would properly rhyme with "not." It would not surprise me now if I should be able, by looking over his juvenile poems, to identify that very line. As it is my only chance for poetic fame, I must, I think, undertake the search.

My boyish admiration was so great for my schoolfellow's genius, that I requested his permission to carry his portfolio home for the inspection of my mother. If her enthusiasm was less than mine, her judgment did not hesitate to praise the verses very highly ; and her criticism might well gratify the boyish poet ; for she was a lady who, to a natural love for literature inherited from her father, Edmund Randolph, had added the most thorough and careful culture obtained by the most extensive reading of the English classics, — the established mode of female education in those days. Here, then, you have the first critic to whom were submitted the verses of our world-famed poet. Her warm appreciation of the boy's genius and work was proof of her own critical taste.

The graphic style of this recital shows that Colonel Preston possessed in abundance the power of interesting his readers. His positive, rather dogmatic nature was not of the absolutely unbending kind, and his adoration of his gifted wife, his pride in her achievements, his unceasing encouragement and sympathy, oiled any grooves of the inflexible kind that might appear at what one might call moments of overweening heredity, and softened a robust masculine strength and self-assertion into something like the velvety curves and spirals of the flexile feminine nature.

Streams of Southern youth have flowed through the crowded class-rooms of the Military Institute, and for forty years their edges were emiered and polished against this courteous, steadfast, virile incarnation of manly manhood, to their infinite benefit and enrichment. Colonel Preston was a power in the town, a power in the church, a power in the lecture-room, a power in his home. His friends often smiled at his old-fashioned conservatism, as when he clung to the old canal-boat and opposed the introduction of railways on the ground (he smilingly asserted) that it "would wake all the babies in town long before daylight!" But all recognized the sturdy common sense of his constant battle against noisy innovation and radicalism. He and his son-in-law, the distinguished war critic and historian, Colonel William Allan, played no unimportant part in Jackson's Valley campaign, at a later date, and their careers make up a part of the history of that memorable period. Many eminent men went forth from the Institute to do battle for the Confederacy, — generals, colonels, engineers, congressmen, legislators, even bishops and governors; and none of these were exempt from the personal influence of such men as Preston,



Massie, Williamson, Gilham, Smith, Jackson, and later, of Maury, Brooke, Custis Lee, and the present accomplished faculty of the Institute.

The exquisite beauty of the parade grounds, the striking situation of the castellated buildings (commemorated in Mrs. Preston's "Semi-Centennial Ode"), the inspiring sight of battalions of trim cadets in blue-gray uniforms and gleaming buttons going through their complicated evolutions every afternoon like clock-work, the sound of "taps" and "reveille" and rolling drum and far-sounding fife, the evening gun, the gayly lighted Mess Hall with its animated groups, and now the beautiful Memorial Halls in honor of Jackson and Smith, forming pictures never to be forgotten, group themselves into *tableaux vivants* that the memory will not willingly let die. All their lives the Prestons were associated with these scenes of beauty: *quorum pars magna fuerunt*; and Mrs. Preston became the poet laureate of both institutions.

For if a poem was to be written, if an anniversary ode was to be sung, if a dancing wedding-hymn of many a linked stanza, or involute Spenserian rhythm, was to be composed in honor of a village bride, Mrs. Preston was always the one to be called upon, was always ready with "The Heart of Bruce," "Belle White," or the noble memorial stanzas to Washington and Lee and the Institute, or the Threnody on Edgar Allan Poe. She easily became queen regnant — if queen there could be — of the little republic in which she lived and over which she ruled with kindly, appreciative, but acknowledged sway. An invalid through so many years of her life, shy, secluded, studious, an inveterate reader, a copious correspondent, with many literary friendships, always with some literary "iron in the fire," — some

book at press, some article to write, some book to review, — her inner as well as outer life was filled to overflowing with agreeable engagements, and her crowded work-table, with its new books and foreign stamped letters and autographed pictures of far-away friends, was but a pleasant type and symbol of the internal, the intellectual activities that engrossed her days.

As far back as 1835 this precocious pen began writing, when its wielder was a schoolgirl at Easton, Penn., where her father was president of Lafayette College. Access to Mrs. Preston's commonplace-books, manuscripts, and journals shows wonderful activity on the part of the girl poet, who, scarcely in her teens, was called upon to celebrate the Fourth of July, write madrigals and rhymes and poems of all kinds, and show her unusual talent for melodious versification in a thousand ways. The American journals from 1848, or even earlier, began to teem with productions signed "Margaret Junkin" (*Jonquin* was the Huguenot way of spelling it, Mrs. Preston told the writer); the famous "Southern Literary Messenger," edited by Poe and Matthew Fontaine Maury and John R. Thompson, catches echoes of this early matin song and reproduces its graceful trills; and north, east, and south the weeklies had many a Poet's Corner brightened by rays from this abounding poet's life. A note-book dated Easton, 1835, shows in delicate, girlish handwriting, when the remarkable child was only fifteen years old, "Notes on Locke's Human Understanding," quotations from Silvio Pellico, Sheridan, Kant, Coleridge, Carlyle, Goethe, Tacitus, condensed biographies of Petrarch and other Italian masters, and extracts from many of the celebrated poets of the day.

Another volume of very early date is filled with printed

clippings from the literary periodicals of the day, containing illustrated devotional poems, novelettes, stories, legends, a sixty-dollar prize story ("The Stepmother") from the Baltimore "Weekly Sun," sonnets, Christmas lays, Bible poems, dirges, translations (among them the famous "Dies Irae"), most of them signed Margaret Junkin.

A very interesting little booklet crops up among these faded manuscripts and clippings, — "A Theme Book," wherein the poet has entered suggestions for future poems, essays, and tales, notes for ballads and the like, historical incidents, picturesque anecdotes.

Excellent as her memory was, she never trusted it wholly, and many a pleasant conference does the present writer remember to have held with her, and many a notelet received, asking for news of some literary personality, the whereabouts of some striking episode or anecdote that she could not trust herself exactly to place, which she wanted to embody in a "Cartoon" or a "Ballad."

Her learned father had early schooled her thoroughly in Latin, Greek, and French, in English literature and in theology; she was saturated with the faith of the forefathers, and her cultured mind was a storehouse of the literary treasures she had assimilated. *Culture* — culture to the finger-tips — is the word that expresses the kind of education that Mrs. Preston had received. She was not a bluestocking; she shrank from the reputation of a *bas-bleu*; the idea of being called a "learned woman" — a Molièresque *femme savante* — made her recoil with horror. Her humility was great. What she had taken in from the great writers of olden and modern time was their bloom, their essence, their perfume; and this she gave forth in the spiritual fra-

grance of her poems, an ethereal presence that hovered about everything she said or did, and communicated an exquisite refinement to her conversation and correspondence. Those who knew Mrs. Preston only as a writer could never appreciate the delicate humor that played about her spoken words as the lambent fires played about the head of Iulus: the quick repartee, the smiling jest, the witty flash, the homely Scotch common sense and good judgment that underlay her whole life and made her as notable in housekeeping as she was in literature.

The hospitality of Preston House was as well known as the grace of the gifted hostess, whose crullers and "Christ crotches" and waffles had more than a local celebrity, and showed the rare union of practical and ideal gifts in the rounded, many-sided woman. Never an ink stain did the Boorioboola-Ghaites see on her immaculate fingers or any trace of untidiness in hair or person due to absorption in literature. A more alert, wide-awake head of the household was not to be found in all the Valley of Virginia; and a more systematically ordered household, in the homelinesses as well as in the elegancies, was nowhere to be found.

For many years her favorite habit was to take long and solitary drives over the blue hills of the Blue Ridge around Lexington, in the course of which some charming poem would spin itself forth amid the gossamers of Indian summer, or get entangled among the turquoise mists of the hills and bring back their iridescent hues. Often she would call and take up a friend, and the two would go rolling down the laureled avenues or to the edges of the glorious Goshen Pass, lit with the wavering flames of the July rhododendrons, the poet engaged in vivacious conversation; the friend listening to and enjoying the eager talk.

And many a sunset would die on the burning hills and many a twilight rich and rare would glow up from its expiring embers while the friends traveled on home, and the big, comfortable carriage finally came to a stop before the house which in Lexington had come to be the synonym of comfort, elegance, and culture. The "little mother," with the "tiny black key basket" a-jingle with its hospitable keys, became one of the town's institutions. Everybody went to her for counsel, for advice, for comfort, for the new books and the great magazines. Her devotional poems, often very beautiful in their deep feeling, were in the religious papers taken by the community and gave comfort to hundreds of readers. The prettiest rhymes went through the mails to "Herbert and Georgie" whenever she happened to be away at the Springs for rest and recuperation; and Colonel Preston now and then received graceful rhyming notes written with the ease and fluency of the notes flowing from the throat of a bird.

Mrs. Preston's spontaneity was indeed one of her striking qualities. Whether it was a hymn of benediction to a missionary going to China, or an epithalamium for a bride about to be, or a sonnet for the "Independent" or the "Century," a translation from Goethe or a Church father, the ever ready gift and grace were always there — elves at the fountain, presenting their upturned urns of dew or mead ready for the sparkling curve of descent.

A glance at her unpublished manuscript *reliquiae* shows this fountain-like spontaneity that leaps heavenward at the mere suggestion of a theme; and also the reticence that forced the poet to garner her soul-experiences and select from them for print only here and there a blossom. What the public saw was the finished product,

not the wavering, unwoven, fluctuating lines of the design that flickered hither and thither in the loom of the poet's phantasy until they wrought themselves into some "Old Song or New," some picture "For Love's Sake," some line for "Beechenbrook." One sees whole poems recast, rewritten, interlineated, erased, like bits of embroidery raveled out, over-embroidered, "feather-stitched," renewed, rejuvenated. These overturned urns were once full of fragrant flowers; now they lie in the grass, empty and neglected.

Mrs. Preston, like Poe (for whom she wrote the rhythmical "At Last" when his monument was unveiled in New York), kept a series of most interesting record books, — "Pinakidia," Poe called them, — "little tablets," on which she wrote quotations, passages that stuck fast in her memory, single words that suggested poems, lessons from the old legends, artists' names, unusual words from old ballads that appealed to her imagination, — "polarized words," as Emerson called them. Some of these were seeds that grew into flowers and fruits; others were bits of jeweled glass strung together on lines of foolscap, to be wrought hereafter into some prismatic window, in the shape of dainty cinque-foil, lucid triangle or angel-face.

A keen observer always of the mere beauty of words, — those atoms of psychal cadence and mellifluence, — Mrs. Preston records in these private note-books the garnered treasures of much and multitudinous reading: her notes on art, etymology, rhythm, criticism, anecdote, mythology, a thousand varied themes, furnish delectable insights into a busy, cultivated mind that found seed-pearls in many an old oyster shell that most readers would have thrown contemptuously on the shell-heap. Long before she came to Lexington, at picturesque

Pennsylvania Easton she was filling volumes of blank books with reminiscences of this kind, — extracts, requiems, addresses to Kossuth and McDonough, poems, some of which (as “The Bells of Brienne”) afterwards appeared in her collected volumes, “poems written by request,” and, among other things, the following “Course of Reading in History and Philosophy for the Year 1839,” when she was in her nineteenth year.

#### HISTORY.

Historical Chart.  
 Rutherford’s Ancient History.  
 Gillies’ Greece.  
 Ferguson’s Roman Republic.  
 Gibbon’s Decline and Fall.  
 Hallam’s Middle Ages.  
 Robertson’s Charles V.  
 Watson’s Philip II.  
 Hume’s England.  
 Robertson’s America.  
 Irving’s Columbus.

#### MENTAL PHILOSOPHY.

Payne’s Intellectual Philosophy.  
 Abercrombie’s Intellectual Powers.  
 Abercrombie’s Moral Feelings.

#### GEOGRAPHY, ASTRONOMY, NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

Arnot’s Physics.  
 Biot’s Astronomie, Physique.  
 Brun’s Geography, vol. i.

Verily, those were days of robust intellectual womanhood, before your Vassars and Wellesleys and Sophie Newcombs and Lady Margaret Halls were even dreamt of! The old Scotch Presbyterians knew what

“larnin’” was and early inducted their lads and lassies into it. Thank Heaven, these merciless days are past and one can now imbibe his learning through a cooling straw!

No wonder that an intellect so early ripe should soon win from the Philadelphia “Dollar News Paper” — the paper for which Poe wrote his celebrated “Gold-Bug,” gaining the one hundred dollar prize — two prizes of fifty dollars each for the two best prose stories: “The Ashburnes, a Tale of Seventy-Seven,” and “The Child of Song;” and that strains from her harmonious lyre should soon echo in John Neal’s “Saturday Gazette,” “The Literary Messenger,” “The Herald” (just established), “The Home Journal,” Sartain’s “Union Magazine,” and many another periodical and paper of sixty years ago to which she soon became a welcome contributor. Many of the old annuals — the “Opals,” “Gifts,” “Lady Books” of a bygone time — contain from her pen “gems reset,” — fugitive poems that flew around the land on paper wings and alighted airily in these congenial corners. Her precocity in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, her metrical versions of Greek odes and Horatian rhythms at sixteen, and her constant and fluent use of English in manifold melodious stanzaic forms, had encouraged her friends to predict a brilliant future for the delicate, imaginative, high-strung girl, much of whose life was spent in darkened rooms, with a distressing weakness of the eyes naturally traceable to over-study and under-exercise.

Her first great success was “Beechenbrook: A Rhyme of the War” (Baltimore: Kelly & Piet, 1866), with its striking dedication: —



TO  
 EVERY SOUTHERN WOMAN,  
 WHO HAS BEEN  
 WIDOWED BY THE WAR,  
 I DEDICATE THIS RHYME,  
 PUBLISHED DURING THE PROGRESS OF THE STRUGGLE  
 AND NOW REPRODUCED AS A  
 FAINT MEMORIAL OF SUFFERINGS,  
 OF WHICH THERE CAN BE NO  
 FORGETFULNESS.

"There is sorrow in Beechenbrook Cottage; the day  
 Has been bright with the earliest glory of May;  
 The blue of the sky is as tender a blue  
 As ever the sunshine came shimmering through;  
 The songs of the birds and the hum of the bees,  
 As they merrily dart in and out of the trees —  
 The bloom of the orchard, as sifting its snows,  
 It mingles its odors with hawthorn and rose,  
 The voice of the brook as it lapses unseen —  
 The laughter of children at play on the green,  
 Insist on a picture so cheerful, so fair,  
 Who ever would dream that a grief could be there!"

So begins this musical and pathetic poem whose story has been so charmingly told by Mrs. Allan that it need not be further dwelt upon here. It runs on in its melodious hendecasyllabics for seventy-five duodecimo pages, and tells an incident of the War of the Confederacy only too familiar to readers and dwellers in the South. Written in a few weeks, under intense emotion, it throbs with volcanic fires still only half extinct. Few Southern men or women can read the poem without tears, and its immediate and widespread popularity was attested by its going through eight editions within a short time.

Before this, a year prior to her marriage, Mrs. Preston had published, in 1856, "Silverwood: A Book of Memories," a pleasant story of Virginia life and landscape, full of the fluent charm of a prose style that had

helped to win the three prize stories. "Beechenbrook" and "Silverwood" are both out of print now, but both are good specimens of the double talent which distinguished the author: extreme fluency in versification and bright, winning prose style.

From the publication of "Beechenbrook," in 1866, Mrs. Preston's work approached rapidly its flood-tide: the last twenty years of her life are marked nearly every lustrum with a golden milestone, — a volume of collected verse, into which she has gathered the sheaves of miscellaneous poems that had accumulated in the interval.

An analysis of these volumes develops the fact that the poet excelled in the two branches of the narrative and the devotional. The poems most likely to live in the four collected volumes are those that sing a story and those that hymn a sentiment. Here and there a fine sonnet, a fine dramatic dialogue, a reminiscence of Greek or of Hebrew life, set a-spinning in mellifluous cadences, mark themselves off as the poetically carved capitals of a fluted temple colonnade; but the chiseled wreaths and garlands that bind them together are the Hymn and the Story.

This series of four volumes begins with "Old Song and New" (J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1870), and is divided into "From Hebrew Story," "From Greek Story," "Ballads and Other Verse," "Sonnets," and "Religious Pieces." Nearly all of these are either narrative or devotional, showing even then the bent of the author's genius. A most varied mastery of metres is revealed in the collection; hardly any two are alike, and all show subtle insight into the resources of the language. Among the Greek pieces may be specially signalized "Alcyone," "The Quenched Brand" (treated by

Swinburne in "Atalanta in Calydon"), and "Rhodope's Sandal," each a dramatic incident thrown into lines that gleam and quiver: —

"They caught  
A gleam of flickering robes — a quick, dull splash —  
The sullen gurgle of recoiling waves —  
The clamorous screaming of a startled gull  
That flapped its wings o'erhead, — but saw no more,  
For all their searchings through the moonlit night,  
For all their desolate wailings, nevermore  
The woe-worn face of sad Alcyone."

No doubt the devotion of Tennyson and Mrs. Browning to themes like these, — poets whom Mrs. Preston intensely admired, — influenced the sensitive spirit of the Virginian singer and called her attention to the Greek and Hebrew masters; but there is always an individual tone, an absence of the harsh rhythms of Mrs. Browning and of the quaint mannerisms of Tennyson, that make her Greeks and Hebrews entirely her own.

"Old Song and New" is full of the germinating promise of the poetic dialogue that comes to its perfection later on in "Cartoons;" the volume too contains the pathetic "A Year in Heaven," "The Vision of the Snow," and the following fine sonnet: —

#### EQUIPOISE.

Just when we think we've fixed the golden mean, —  
The diamond point on which to balance fair  
Life and life's lofty issues, — weighing there,  
With fractional precision, close and keen,  
Thought, motive, word, and deed, — there comes between  
Some wayward circumstance, some jostling care,  
Some temper's fret, some mood's unwise despair,  
To mar the equilibrium, unforeseen,  
And spoil our nice adjustment! — Happy he  
Whose soul's calm equipoise can know no jar,  
Because the unwavering hand that holds the scales

Is the same hand that weighed each steadfast star, —  
 Is the same hand that on the sacred tree  
 Bore for his sake the anguish of the nails !

Just five years later, Roberts Brothers brought out "Cartoons," which contains perhaps Mrs. Preston's ripest thought and imagery in verse: a series of what the Greeks called *eidyllia*, "little pictures" sketched with rare skill and earnestness on a thumb-nail, a cherry-stone, the golden circlet of a coin, a medallion; bits of delicate intellectual craftsmanship that recall the jeweled ovals, the transfigured inches of canvas, the gilded panels on which Fra Angelico wrought his cherub-faces, his long-winged golden seraphs, his Madonnas vested in bits of blue Italian sky, his lilies of the Annunciation. None of these "Cartoons" are long, but they are nearly all specimens of rich intellectual tapestry colored with philosophy, sentiment, reverential feeling, a true love of art, and a strong dramatic sense. Couched in conversational form, they are poetic "Imaginary Conversations," flavored, like Landor's, with the sweet essences of Italian memoir and history, old German anecdote, or the legends of the Saints. Hardly one but contains a fillip, — a flash of the lash at the end of the whip, — to bite in its moral epigrammatically, to leave the reader in possession of the poetic climax: one can never doubt to whom the particular *pinxit* or *fecit* belongs.

## MURILLO'S TRANCE.

"Here, Pedro, while I quench these candles, hold  
 My lantern; for, I promise you, we burn  
 No waxlights at our chapel-shrines till morn,  
 As in the great Cathedral, kept ablaze  
 Like any crowded plaza in Seville,  
 From sun to sun. I wonder if they think  
 That the dead knights, — Fernando and the rest, —

Whose bronze and marble couches line the walls,  
 Like to scared children, cannot sleep i' the dark."  
 And, muttering thus, the churlish sacristan,  
 Went, snuffing out the lights that only served  
 To worsen the wan gloom.

And (mindful still  
 Of his Dolores' greed of candle-ends)  
 He chid, at whiles, some lagging worshiper,  
 Nor spared to hint, above the low-dropped heads,  
 Grumblings of sunshine being in Seville  
 Cheaper than waxlight, and 't were best to pray  
 When all the saints were broad awake, and thus  
 Liker to hear.

So, shuffling on, he neared  
 The altar with its single lamp a-light.  
 Above, touched with its glow, the chapel's pride,  
 Its one Ribera hung, — a fearful, sad,  
 Soul-harrowing picture of the stark dead Christ,  
 Stretcht on the cross beneath a ghastly glare  
 Of lurid rift that made more terrible  
 The God-forsaken loneliness. In front,  
 A chasm of shadow clove the checkered floor,  
 And hastening towards it, the old verger called  
 Wonderingly back :

“ Why, Pedro, only see !  
 The boy kneels still ! What ails him, think you ? Here  
 He came long hours before the vesper-chime ;  
 And all the while as to and fro I've wrought,  
 Cleansing of altar-steps and dusting shrines,  
 And such like tasks, I have not missed him once  
 From that same spot. What marvel if he were  
 Some lunatic escaped from *Caridad* ?  
 Observe ! he takes no heed of what I say :  
 'T is time he waked.”

As moveless as the statues  
 Nighed round, a youth before the picture knelt,  
 His hands tight clinched, and his moist forehead strewn  
 With tossings of dank hair. Upon his arm  
 The rude old man sprang such a sudden grasp  
 As caused a start ; while in his ear he cried  
 Sharply, “ Get hence ! What do you here so late ? ”

Slow on the questioner a face was turned  
 That caused the heavy hand to drop ; a face  
 Strangely pathetic, with wide-gazing eyes  
 And wistful brows, and lips that wanly made  
 Essay to speak before the words would come ;  
 And an imploring lifting of the hands  
 That seemed a prayer :

“ I wait — I wait,” he said,  
 “ Till Joseph bring the linen, pure and white,  
 Till Mary fetch the spices ; till they come,  
 Peter and John and all the holy women,  
 And take Him down ; but oh, they tarry long !  
 See how the darkness grows ! So long — so long ! ”

“ Cartoons ” is a picture gallery in which incident and anecdote have been poetized, thrown on canvas, made to talk, dramatized themselves. Each little sketch tells its own story in figured language eloquent with warmth and fancy. It is a picture talking to you and entering your thoughts by direct address.

## AGNES.

## I.

Surely there hangs a dimmer shine  
 Over the sky than a month ago ;  
 Droppings of tears this sougning pine  
 Holds in its voice — it is sobbing so :  
 Yonder a lonely robin weaves  
 Heart-breaks into his plaintive weet ;  
 Even the scarlet maple leaves  
 Sink with a sigh about my feet ;  
 And Indian-Summer's haze droops wan, —  
*Agnes has gone !*

## II.

*There* is the reason : Out of the sky,  
 Purpled and paled with dreamy mist,  
 Shaken from breezy wafts that lie

Calmed in their isles of amethyst,  
 Gurgling from every bird that croons,  
 Heard in the leaf-fall, — heard in the rain,  
 Under the nights and under the noons,  
 Ever there sounds the sad refrain,  
 Throbbing and sobbing over and on,  
*Agnes has gone!*

## III.

Ah, can we live and bear to miss  
 Out of our lives this life so rare?  
 — Tender, so tender! an angel's kiss  
 Hallowed it daily, unaware:  
 Gracious as sunshine, sweet as dew  
 Shut in a lily's golden core,  
 Fragrant with goodness through and through,  
 Pure as the spikenard Mary bore;  
 Holy as twilight, soft as dawn,  
*Agnes has gone!*

In 1886 "For Love's Sake" appeared from the press of A. D. F. Randolph & Co., getting its title from the poem celebrating the marvelous fane of the Taj Mahal in India. How charmingly the theme is treated may be gathered from the following extract:—

## FOR LOVE'S SAKE.

You have read of the Moslem palace, the marvelous fane that  
 stands  
 On the banks of the distant Jumna, the wonder of all the lands.

You have read of its marble splendors, its carvings of rare device,  
 Its domes and its towers that glisten like visions of Paradise.

You have listened as one has told you of its pinnacles snowy-fair,  
 So pure that they seemed suspended, like clouds, in the crystal  
 air;

Of the flow of its fountains, falling as softly as mourners' tears;  
 Of the lily and rose kept blooming for over two hundred years;

Of the friezes of frost-like beauty, the jewels that crust the  
 wall,  
 The carvings that crown the archway, the innermost shrine of  
 all, —

Where lies in her sculptured coffin (whose chiselings mortal man  
 Hath never excelled) the dearest of the loves of the Shah Jehan.

They read you the shining legends, whose letters are set in gems  
 On walls of the sacred chamber, that sparkle like diadems.

And they tell you these letters, gleaming wherever the eye may  
 look,  
 Are words of the Moslem Prophet, are texts from his holy book.

And still as you heard, you questioned, right wonderingly, as you  
 must,  
 “Why rear such a palace, only to shelter a woman’s dust?”

*Why rear it?* — The Shah had promised his beautiful Nourmaha  
 To do it because he loved her, — he loved her, and that was all!

So minaret, wall, and column, and tower, and dome above,  
 All tell of a sacred promise, all utter one accent — LOVE.

“For the Love of God” is another fine poem in this  
 collection, and so is “Keeping his Word,” both illus-  
 trating in telling fashion the poet’s power of giving a  
 sharp yet tender edge to a story in verse.

#### FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.

Reading a time-stained volume, ancient and vellum-bound,  
 Hid in the quaint black-letter, here is the tale I found :

Only a childish legend, you in your wisdom teach,  
 But is there never a lesson even a child may preach ?

---

Once, as a traveler journeyed over the Apennines,  
 Children and wife together, toiling beneath the pines ;



Hungry and hot with climbing, deep in a shady pass,  
Pausing they spread their noontide meal on the mossy grass.

Just as the bread was broken, just as the wine was broached,  
Slowly a band of pilgrims, weary and gaunt, approached.

Stretching their hands, they pleaded, "For the love of God, we  
pray  
Give us to eat, for nothing has moistened our lips to-day!"

"Children and wife, ye hear them! Giving God's poor our bread,  
Say — shall we trust His bounty, traveling our way unfed?"

Up from the grass the children sprang with the barley-cake;  
"Here is the flask, untasted," the wife said; "freely take!"

Sated, the pilgrims blessed them, leaving them prayers for gold —  
"He for whose sake ye did it, pay you an hundred-fold!"

Ready to journey onward, gathering the wallet up,  
One of the unfed children, dropping therein the cup,

Cried with a look bewildered, "Father, I thought you said  
*Nothing was left: why, only look at these loaves of bread!*"

Stooping beside the fountain, dipping the empty flask,  
The father o'erheard quick voices, eager with wonder, ask,

"What has so reddened the water? Its drops like grape-juice  
shine!"

He lifted the brimming bottle — lo! *it was filled with wine!*

The year after (1887) "Colonial Ballads," dedicated to the author's friend, Jean Ingelow, was published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., and showed again the gift of lucid dramatic narrative. Many striking stories from old Virginia history — "Cro-a-tan," "Greenway Court," "The Queen of Pamunkey" — and many from New England story — "The First Thanksgiving Day," "Miles Standish's First Proclamation" — are thrown

into galloping ballad measure and ring with the resonance of Percy's "Reliques." Mrs. Preston was always devoted to the old Italian Vassari and his "Lives of the Painters," — that delightful Italian Plutarch whose style is almost as limpid as Boccaccio's; and this book abounds in indications of it in its "Childhood of the Old Masters," in which Guido and Claude, Leonardo and Titian, Giotto and Van Dyke, Angelico and Angelo are brought before us in graphic dialogues. The glow of Claude and Titian, the grace of Angelico, the *naïveté* of Giotto, the far-away beauty of Leonardo are not absent from these poetic canvases, which reproduce in a series of clear-cut "medalion-heads" the dreams and reveries of the Renaissance, the golden tides of poesy and romance that then flowed over Mediterranean Europe.

In one of these little volumes, which had not been opened for a long time, the writer found the following little note, dated —

Dec. 30, '86.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR, — *Ex pede Herculem!* Who but you could have written that charming notice of my little volume of religious verse in "The Critic"? I did not send you a copy purposely, because I did n't want you to feel obliged in any degree to write a critique, but since you have done it without any hint on my part, how much more I do value it! I have had a great many notices of the little book sent me; but yours is the very best, because it is not so full of fulsome praise, but is discriminating and scholarly, as everything you write must be.

I have gathered together some dictated sketches, which Randolph asked me for, and offered to publish at his own risk; my copies are exhausted, but I have ordered some more, and will send you one when they come. Now you will think, "She has me on the hip; she is going to make me notice her whether I will or no." These thumb-nail sketches will seem as tame to you as the Main Street of

Lexington; but remember there is only one person, here and there, who exhausts the world of travel, as you have done. Every page was dictated, and no proof, not even a page of it, overlooked by myself. But I have many friends who will read it because I wrote it, and that is my reward.

Best Christmas wishes to your wife and yourself, and believe me,

Ever gratefully yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

The book spoken of in the letter was "A Handful of Monographs," in which the author for the first time visits Europe and describes with delightful freshness her impressions of the ancient world, about which she had been pondering and poetizing all her life without ever having seen it with the physical eyes. All the wealth of her varied reading is poured out on the pictured page. The unalloyed happiness of having her husband and family with her intensifies the enjoyment; and the leisurely rate of travel and the choice of only the finest parts of Europe compassable in a summer tour make this trip truly the climax and culmination of the poet's life. The *Aidenn* dreamed of was now realized. She got very near to the heart of the Old Country whose soul was already so intimately hers, and she bathed herself, spiritually, in its intoxicating dews. The fascinating itinerary of this journey carried the party of seven "in the track of the Golden Legend," up the Vale of Chamounix and the Drachenfels, to Cologne and Chillon, to Antwerp and the Hague, through the crypts of Canterbury Cathedral and the aisles of Westminster, "Around Greta Hall" and the Wordsworth country, into Sir Walter's land and through "The Heart of England." The Oxford Quadrangles were the subject of a delicious pilgrimage; Kenilworth and Furness Abbey overflowed with memories of Elizabeth and the

monks ; the white pinnacles of Warwick Castle and the Bazaar conducted by the countess made up an interesting experience ; and “ King William’s Orange-Trees ” at ancient Hampton Court vied with “ The Quaintest City in England ” — old Chester — to store the crowded portfolio with sketches and recollections.

The stimulus, the exhilaration of this long-deferred trip were enormous. The poet visited Cripplegate Church and saw the painted sheen of its cherub-window fall over and glorify the pew where Milton sat, the following beautiful sonnet welling up in her bosom meanwhile : —

#### IN CRIPPLEGATE CHURCH.

I stand with reverence at the altar-rail  
 O'er which the soft rose-window sheds its dyes,  
 And looking up, beheld in pictured guise  
 Its choir of singing cherubs — Heaven’s *All Hail*  
 Upon each lip, and on each brow a trail  
 Of golden hair ; — for here the poet’s eyes  
 Had rested, dreaming dreams of Paradise,  
 As on yon seat he sat, ere yet the veil  
 Of blindness had descended.

Who shall say,  
 That when the “ during dark ” had steeped his sight,  
 And on the ebon tablet flashed to view  
 His Eden with its angels, mystic bright,  
 There swept not his unconscious memory through,  
 The quiring cherubs that I see to-day !

At 50 Wimpole Street she lingered over the home of Elizabeth Barrett, whence she fled with Browning to the “ little church around the corner ” from the old ogre-father, was married, and off to Italy and “ Casa Guidi Windows ” ! Her Presbyterian heart saturated itself with reminiscences of the Westminster Catechism in the Jerusalem Chamber ; and her final conclusion about

"Democracy in Europe" was that it is a more real kind than exists in hurried, dollar-loving, elbow-pushing America, whose people have forgotten how to enjoy themselves. This journey was indeed "a year of consolation" to the author, who had long hungered and thirsted after something more than "fireside travels," and now, in the meridian of her strength and poetic powers, with all her loved ones about her, saw the distant dream turning into a precious reality.

Well might she say, Enough! and gather up the evening lamp, and smile good-night!

But this chapter would be incomplete if it failed to emphasize the many-sided activity of the author as a reviewer, correspondent, and contributor to the casual publications of the past twenty years. A well-filled scrap book, abounding with fugitive papers and "fliegende Blätter" of all kinds, lies before us and reveals Mrs. Preston's incessant coöperation in all the literary journalism of the day, the incessant calls made on her ready pen and the ready response to the calls. Her secluded life, in spite of its perpetual social calls, "the ingathering of the clans" on festive occasions, the annual visits to the Springs in search of health and recreation, left her a busy leisure which, in the companionship of her accomplished husband, she busily filled with intellectual work. Both delighted in everything connected with the church; he was for many years superintendent of the Sunday school (colored) and did effective work among the blacks; and she enriched the contemporary periodicals with those gems of religious verse which we cannot but think mark the acme of her talent. Full of spiritualized emotion, expressing with rare ease and music what all have felt, tender and deep in the chords they strike, and glowing with a fervor that de-

scends from the souls of the hymn-loving, hymn-singing Scotch ancestry, these poems contribute the most *personal* heritage Mrs. Preston has left, the direct legacy of her soul, her most individual word to each of her readers. She delighted to send these pieces to the "Independent," the "Congregationalist," the "Southern Presbyterian," to all the prominent religious journals of the day; and they have thus comforted and strengthened thousands. The "Chimes for Church Children" garner up many of these choice bits and show an unusual gift in telling to children the simple stories of ethical and Biblical belief.

This serious — one might think sombre — side of her nature is edged, however, with the silver lining of "Aunt Dorothy," a delightfully humorous story of Old Virginia plantation life, in which it is not difficult for the initiated to discover the originals: a story reproducing faces and atmosphere of the Old Dominion long years ago, "befo' de wah," when slavery showed all its most human and poetic sides. This, with "Aunt Kizzie's Creeds," plainly enough shows Mrs. Preston's understanding of the negro nature both on its humorous and on its pathetic sides.

The following little batch of notes from Mrs. Preston to the writer are good specimens of her graceful epistolary style, and will serve to reveal her intense interest in literary matters when she herself was nearly blind: —

THURSDAY.

DEAR PROF. HARRISON, — You are such a busy man, I hear, that I hesitate to interrupt your grave studies for a passing moment. Nevertheless, read the few words I have scribbled about your namesake's new translation of *The Odes of Horace*, — if you have seen his little book, I feel sure you will agree with me: the *angularity* of the renderings would strike you instantly.

By the way, where are those Sketches of Travel you were to have prepared for the press? I'm afraid you let those Washington and Lee boys eat up your valuable time—*now don't!* Your conscientiousness will hurt you as it has hurt Prof. Caskie Harrison. (But he has Prof. Longfellow on his side, who praises him wonderfully!)

I have wanted so much to hear you talk—but have been a positive invalid for ever so long.

May I ask you to hand the Southern Review to my George at French Class—as I want to send the notice to Prof. C. H.

Ever very truly,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

Nov. 10.

MY DEAR PROF. HARRISON,—A niece of mine who has been summering at the Channel Islands sent me the other day this little collection of Patois Poems, which may have some interest for such a seeker after dialects as yourself; so I send them over for your entertainment.

I was unfortunate in not seeing Mrs. Harrison and yourself the other day, and I fear now that I shall not have the pleasure of meeting your mother again, as I am just about to start to Philadelphia; Mr. Preston goes with me. In case I should not see Mrs. Harrison senior, give her my love and regrets at not being able to see more of her. I have been having constant company lately, which has prevented my seeing as much of her as I would like.

The Critic's notice of your "Story of Greece" is pretty fair, I think; but you see they will be after you, these critics, for letting the hearts of the Greeks "sink into their boots," but if that is all the fault they have to find, you will not be much hurt.

Very truly yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

THURSDAY.

DEAR PROF. HARRISON,—I have had it on my mind for several weeks past, to write and ask how you progressed in

your literary work — but I have been the entire winter such a wretched invalid — miserably depressed and made deaf with horrible sore throat, that I concluded my friends had forgotten me, and considered my obsequies to have taken place at the same time poor Fritz's did ! Poor dear Fritz ! The boys buried him sadly at the foot of the orchard, and Mr. Preston pronounced a Latin oration over his remains. It is my comfort that he has "gone where the good dogs go" — for he did his duty faithfully in this life, if that will gain him admission ! No, we have not yet imported any more "bloodhounds" ! We have one old grey idiot, who runs if you say "boo !"

I am sorry for the necessity of compression — it is so troublesome. I have seen announcements of your forthcoming vol. over and over. It disappoints you to be so used ? Ah, well, my dear fellow, what "castles in Spain" were not disappointing ?

But I doubt not it will do you infinite credit, and redound to your good in every way, and "put money in the purse," which you see even immortal old "Will" thought it worth while to work for.

But I am afraid you will kill yourself toiling over MSS. so. Out in the air with you ! — out in the delicious sunshine, no matter if the University Press (of Cambridge) does have to wait for you. What's fame without health ? splendid, magnificent, golden health — the very, very best thing in the world. I who lack it, have lived to be sure of this. So now that you are young, don't, *don't* overtax yourself, anyway. It is so unwise a thing to do — but a thousand people have told you so already !

The new Southern Magazine (the editors write me) will appear the 1st of May.

Ever very truly,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

THURSDAY, Jan. 19.

DEAR PROF. HARRISON, — I am greatly obliged for the kindness of your note, in offering to help me in case I should



go to press, with my very realistic verses. But depend upon it, I shall put myself out of the pale of your friendship if you think that this friendship is composed of such brittle material that it cannot stand honest criticism. Did I not criticise you mercilessly in the matter of "Greek Vignettes," from the beginning of which I made you cut away fifty pages! and I did n't lose your friendship for all. It is all bosh, my good fellow, that one friend cannot stand another friend's fault-finding. Nothing pleases me more than to find one willing to take this trouble; so if you are not willing to give me an hour or two, in order that you may run over these Sonnets, I won't believe that you care a fig whether they are good or not! I am not disposed to be the least hurt by criticism, even if it is severe, provided the spirit is kind and just.

I remember Fénelon somewhere says, "If God tires you, don't be afraid to tell Him so!" That seems rather impious, but if a friend can't stand being called a bore, or being told of want of taste, sentiment, or finish, all I have to say is that this is *prima facie* evidence that such a one needs scoring, and ought to have it. So be persuaded to read my Sonnets; say which are the best, which worst, and throw out unworthy ones. Whatever you do, shall not have the power to create the faintest ripple in our friendship.

I will not trouble you to return the MS., but will send for it in the early part of the week.

I had a letter from Miss Kingsley yesterday. She is quite earnestly engaged in literary work. It takes about four weeks to write and get a reply from England; by that time I hope you will hear from Mrs. Kingsley.

As to autographs, I have letters from Whittier, Longfellow, Holmes, Philip Marston, and such people, but how to lay hands upon them among five thousand other letters, is the question. My own eyes can make no search; but if any turn up I will send them to you.

Very truly yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

Feb. 11.

DEAR PROF. HARRISON, — Can you give me any book (not in Latin or Greek), which will furnish me with a little story about Praxiteles, and the legend about his faun? You remember that the sculptor promised his best work of art to the lady of his love, but insisted that she should make the selection; of course I need not recall the *ruse* which she practiced in order to find out which he thought the best. Now if you can send me any book that contains the story, I shall be very much obliged.

A ballad of some sort is demanded of me for one of the Northern magazines; have you got such a store of themes lying by you that you can spare me one? My want of eyesight allows me to make no search, and I daresay your memory is stocked with old ballad lore somewhat after the fashion of Sir Walter.

Were not Mrs. Harrison and you very much shocked to hear of the somewhat tragic death of our poor friend, Mrs. S——? It is too sad to think of!

Love to Mrs. Harrison.

Very truly yours,

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

To sum up this long and yet inadequate sketch of fifty years of literary life: —

Mrs. Preston was a true poet, whose spontaneous gift of poesy grew out of an ardent imaginative and devotional nature cultivated to the highest degree by reading and study. Her masters in the art were first *Religion* and Enthusiasm for the Beautiful; then Longfellow, Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. From all these sources the stream of poesy that naturally ran through her nature was enriched and spiritualized. To a natural gift for rhythm and cadence far beyond the usual, she added an exquisite ear for spiritual music, ever on the alert for the impalpable

melodies that haunt the slopes of Parnassus and float ethereally about its laureled clefts. Her glowing Celtic nature was all Southern in its passion and love of harmony; and though all American poets must stand behind the sovereign Poe in his supreme distinction, Mrs. Preston takes her place beside Lanier and Hayne and Timrod in fertility, wealth of fancy, culture, and rhythmical melodiousness of expression and feeling.

In memory of her delicate yet vigorous work, in recognition of her varied and delightful gift, some Old Mortality might well select three of the loveliest words in our language and inscribe them on tablets of Parian: *Woman, Poet, Saint.*

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