

GODEY'S LADY'S BOOK.

PHILADELPHIA, JULY, 1855.

PERFUMES FOR THE LADIES, AND WHERE THEY COME FROM.

PERFUMES are very ancient; they may claim an antiquity almost as great as that of the fragrant flowers they imitate. We find perfumes, and especially incense, mentioned in various parts of the Sacred Scriptures. They were used not only in the costly ritual of the Hebrew worship, but in the still more ancient rites of idolatrous worship of the nations by whom the Hebrews were surrounded.

Some perfumes were permitted to be used only in sacred worship. This is apparent from the following Divine direction to Moses:—

“Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense, of each of which shall there be like weights.

“And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy.

“And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee; it shall be unto you most holy.

“And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord.

“Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.”—*Ex. xxx. 34-38.*

Perfumes appear to have been in general use throughout Asia from the remotest times. Their general introduction into Europe was of comparatively recent date; and up to the present time, the favorite and costly perfumes are still brought from the East.

The use of perfumes in this country is, of course, derived from England. There they appear to have come into very general use among the highest classes as early as the reign of Queen

Elizabeth. A recent writer, speaking of that period, says:—

“Perfumes were never richer, more elaborate, more costly, or more delicate than now. Elizabeth’s nasal organs were peculiarly fine, and nothing offended her more than an unpleasant smell. Perfumes and cosmetics of all kind were in very general use. The cosmetics and other smaller accessories to a lady’s toilet were kept in boxes strongly impregnated with some favorite odor, and were called ‘sweet coffers.’” This term perpetually occurs in the old writers. They were reckoned a necessary part of the furniture of all state-bedchambers, and a fair criterion, by their form and richness, of the taste and liberality of the owner of the house.

The bottles of perfume connected with the common labors of the toilet were called “casting bottles.” The pomander, which originally was meant only as a preventive of infection, as a camphor-bag is now, but became an article of fashionable luxury amongst people of rank, was a little ball of perfumed paste worn in the pocket or hung round the neck. They soon became mediums for the most exquisite devices in jewelry, and were frequently offered as complimentary tokens. Many pomanders were presented to Queen Elizabeth as New Year’s gifts, and amongst the list is the somewhat puzzling item of “a fayre girdle of pomander.” Perfumed gloves were also fashionable.

Elizabeth had a cloak of Spanish perfumed leather, and even her shoes were perfumed. The city, of course, soon imitated the fashion of the court, as is apparent from frequent allusions by the dramatic writers of the time.

The extensive and free use made of essences and scents in Queen Elizabeth’s time seems to have been a matter of necessity, in consequence of the half-civilized usages of the day; the rushed

"LIVING IN VAIN."

BY MARION HARLAND, AUTHOR OF "MARRYING THROUGH PRUDENTIAL MOTIVES," "THE THRICE WEDDED," AND THE NOVEL OF "ALONE."

"Affection never was wasted ;
If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full
of refreshment ;
That which the fountain sends forth returns again to
the fountain.
Patience, accomplish thy labor ! accomplish thy work of
affection !
Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient endurance is
Godlike." LONGFELLOW'S "Evangeline."

THE last hour of the Old Year was drawing near, "the time for memory and for tears," and a solitary watcher counted the fleeting minutes. She was young, but not beautiful, and the bloom and vivacity belonging to early womanhood, which might have shed a charm over plain features, were wanting to-night. A closely-written manuscript volume lay before her, and the fingers that hung so listlessly by her side still held the pen, although the ink upon its point was dry. Her rovery had been long, as well as deep. The eyes were unmoistened, but away down in their depths was a settled mournfulness, such as youth should never know—youth, whose only sorrows should be those that it can weep away upon a mother's breast. The mother was not there, and had she been, the girl would have locked up her heart, and smiled and spoken cheerful words. Yet she was not alone; no door swung on its hinges; the floor gave back no echo of footsteps; but there stood beside her a comforter, one of the myriads of unseen ones sent forth to minister to man.

They come sometimes to the hardened transgressor with revelations of the unveiled deformity and hatefulness of his iniquity; and he quails at what he calls the voice of conscience, as if a dead thing could speak! To the doomed, they whisper: "Prepare, prepare, behold the bridegroom cometh;" and men marvel at the wonderful presentiment that taught Him to predict his end; they check the presumptuous, urge on the timid, and "bear up" His chosen ones in the hour of peril. You have felt their presence, my reader, and so have I. Have you never, in a season of tranquil musing about nothing or everything, been lifted in spirit to a purer and holier atmosphere, a region of delicious fancies and ennobling emotions, that seemed for the time to purge your soul of all that was gross and debasing?

And you have actually raised your eyes to thank the bearer of this happiness, it appeared so real! Believe me, that impulse was more worthy, ay, and more rational, than the smile at your "ridiculous fantasies" that followed. This, and every other blessing, comes down from the "one Great Spirit" whom you acknowledge; but angels are his messengers.

Their mission is chiefly to the suffering, the smitten, the afflicted, wherever in this wide universe they may be found; and who that has known the sting of grief but has had cause to bless their gentle ministrations? The girl knew and loved her visitor, yet her approach was unwelcomed by a smile. There was even reproach in her face as she drew to her the page upon which she had been writing, and read aloud its blotted lines—

"I'm sad to-night; the happy light
Of joy and hope is gone;
I find no joy in paths gone o'er,
No hope in years to come.
My life has passed in rearing high
Gay bubbles, made to break;
I loved to dream, although I knew
I dreamed but to awake.

It is a waking moment now;
In still despair I stand,
While shattered heaps of treasures lie
Spread wide on every hand.
My thoughts can even wander forth
Into the outer world,
And seeking what were idols once,
Now from their bases hurled,

Can bring them calmly, one by one,
To swell the funeral pyre
Of all that once could joy impart,
Or fill each fond desire.
My hope, my trust, where are ye gone?
Where is the cheerful faith
That harkened eagerly to vows,
Telling of love till death?

Of love till death! Do not I live?
My friends, do not they breathe?
A garland rare for other brows
More fair than mine they wreath;
The barb will rankle; oh, that I
Could don the cloak of pride!
Its jewelry of merry smiles
A bleeding heart might hide."

"You have told me of the reward of a faithful performance of duty," she said, again tossing

aside the book. "You said that the delirious pleasure of my early hopes was as nothing compared with that which I should derive from promoting the happiness of others. I have striven to forget self, to throw my whole strength into my appointed work; yet here I sit at the end of another year, a burden to myself, useless to my kind, with old feelings strong upon me, and new principles weak and dumb, having done nothing, and gained nothing, alone and unloved."

She paused, but the angel only looked compassionately and lovingly upon her, and she continued—

"Had I talents, I could, I *would* make for myself a name, and do something towards achieving the end of my creation; had I beauty or grace, I could win men to the sight. I had but my heart and my time; I have given both. Behold the harvest! I have lived in vain!"

"In due season you *shall* reap; even the Divine sower awaits the appearance of 'the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.' It is but the seed-time as yet with you."

"The few poor grains that I have scattered have fallen upon stony or frozen ground, and it is just. My mind was too full of anticipations; the world was to me a field; I was young and strong, and had but one hope on earth, to spend and be spent in the self-sacrificing task of benefiting my fellow-beings. I am humbled now."

"What did you hope to do? Woman's lot is seldom one of distinction or triumph."

"I dreamed not of these. I know that the life of a woman is crowded with toil and trial. I ask no higher station than to labor in the ranks of my sisters; but the spirit will faint when unrequited by a ray of success or encouragement. I have such strivings within me, searching into the future, as if it must hold the prize I covet so passionately; and this, too, is illusion."

"Can aught that your Heavenly Father has promised be illusory? There will be a realization of every dream of bliss, a recompense for every effort. Heaven holds more than these."

"It may be; I should say it is; but oftentimes Heaven seems too far away for me to reach. Think you that I have a right to lay hold upon the promises while I do nothing to evince my gratitude to the Giver?"

"You have done much even to-day."

"To-day? You mock me! Listen to its beggarly details, and count it as I do—lost! I arose sick and desponding; constant effort was required to prevent my irritability from breaking out in word and action. My morning duties were performed without interest; I was drooping and

spiritless, only aroused to feel annoyance at petty *contretemps* which, at other times, might have been dismissed with a laugh. I walked out in quest of refreshment and diversion, but the wrong side of human nature seemed held up to me wherever I looked. I visited a sick friend; she was in pain, and I could do nothing to relieve her. I received visits, ceremonious calls, that consumed, not improved the time; sat in the family circle in the evening, trying almost vainly to counterfeit cheerfulness. Those bitter words will tell you the rest."

The angel smiled.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit! You have spoken of irritability, but passed lightly over the struggle that enabled you to conceal it. Of your trivial 'annoyances'—not the least was the destruction of the valuable gift of a departed friend; a mild rebuke was your only notice of carelessness which gave you real pain. Harsh and unjust words were heard with rising tears, but not of resentment; and more than once the curt reply and querulous objection were smothered upon your tongue, giving place instead to the 'soft answer that turneth away wrath.' Think you that He who endured patiently contradiction and buffetings from the vilest of the creatures He had made is now unmindful of the labors and tears of his children who tread the same rough path in His spirit and temper? In your walk, you witnessed a scene of strife; loud abuse and execrations vexed your ear; it was not your place to interfere, but your momentary pause and sorrowful glance were not lost; shame led to regret and reconciliation. Again, you encountered rudeness aimed at yourself, and your gentle self-respect extorted an apology from the author of the insult. There are other assuagers of pain than medicines, and it will be long ere your suffering friend will forget your tearful eye and the kiss that fell like cooling balm upon her hot lips. It taught her that some of life's treasures are enhanced in value by the afflictions that prohibit the enjoyment of others. The 'ceremonious calls' of which you complain afforded opportunities for casting in precious seed. One came reluctantly, with a mind soured against society, and sickening of the insipid routine to which she was bound, and left with a lighter step, half persuaded into a belief of sincerity and friendship by your social warmth. To another, you said kind things of one whom you knew to be your enemy. They have already reached her ears, and her last waking thought to-night was of remorseful tenderness and resolutions for the future. A brother sought his home, disheartened by failures, and fierce against the sordid mean-

ness of those who had occasioned them. A sister's love shone upon the angry waters, and, one by one, the better feelings that had bowed before the flood unfolded their blossoms to the light. My child, you do not spend your strength for nought, if you keep but one heart from stagnation or dryness!"

The girl looked upward, and her lips moved in thanksgiving; but the shade returned, and with it a sudden flush that dyed the white cheek scarlet.

"If I bemoaned a useless life, I also spoke of a wasted heart. You know—why need I tell you?—of the shy, homely child who envied her more gifted playmates nothing but the love and caresses they received, and who, when at rare and precious seasons some pitying being put aside the thick locks, and left a kiss upon the unlovely brow, stole away to hide the tears that were a mystery to others, whose source she hardly knew herself, except that they were the overflowing of a fountain which could find no channel deep or broad enough for its swellings; who added a secret petition to the formula of nightly prayer; whispered to the darkness, and its fulfilment dreamed of when slumber came: 'Our Father, who art in Heaven, make everybody love me!' You know how this feverish longing of the child became almost madness in the girl; how the stream would gush forth, and be beaten back by scorn and indifference; how that one petition became the burden of agonizing supplications; the heart so longing for something on which to pour out its wealth, that, had this gratification involved the yielding up of its life also, death would have been welcomed! You bade me 'wait and hope.' Then came one whom I did not think of loving; but he was manly and kind, and I learned to look to him for comfort and encouragement. He sought my lonely corner, and paid to me attentions such as beauty and talent alone win from the rest of his sex. I wondered at the coincidence of sentiment and taste revealed by these frequent conversations, without analyzing the strange joy the discovery gave me. I built no more air-castles. I believed that life was becoming more and more real and earnest, and my soul went out in gratitude towards the friend who had taught me that duty and pleasure are sometimes even here inseparable. I awoke in a scene of revelling (hearts often break amid such!). A radiant creature leaned on his arm, and their names were coupled by many tongues. What was this to me? I stood in a blaze of light, and laughter was echo-

ing around. Why should I have thought of the grave and its eternal silence? He did not wed that fair young girl; but this brings him no nearer to me. When did a woman feel resigned to a motiveless life? The wearing toil of the day, and the deathly torpor of the soul when necessity for action is over! Pity me! Pity me! My own upbraidings are enough!"

The tears flowed fast now, and the stillness was disturbed by the quick-drawn sobs of a spirit too harshly wrung. Shame, and affection, and despair made up that cup of agony. The angel's voice was tremblingly sweet.

"My child, you do not hate him who has brought this latest and heaviest sorrow upon you?"

"Hate? Oh, no!"

"You pray for his happiness?"

"Always! Always!"

"Martyrs have gone to the stake with less of a martyr's spirit!" cried the angel, exultingly. "Unto few is it given to battle for the crown in the sight of angels and men; the world calls them heroes; their every drop of shed blood a jewel; their death in the cause a victory. There are sorer conflicts witnessed but by the Father's eye. He hails the bleeding victors 'his own!' He has planted thorny hedges across your path, and bids you bless him for it. Your love is very precious to him; he would have it all. Having stricken the idol from its place, he will not leave the temple vacant. These yearnings, this unquenchable thirst for fulness of love, are so many bands to lead you to Him. Do you not see how, when they fasten upon perishable things, he quickly tears them away, and binds them anew about his heart? Men think your lot untroubled; he knows that you walk through deep waters. You fancy that your existence is aimless; he sees that you have a work to perform, and that you are doing it. It is the destiny of many—but it is none the less glorious—to erect the happiness of others upon the holocaust of their own loves and hopes. Self-abnegation is the noblest task God has set for mankind—a work as yet perfected by none save the Divine sufferer, who laid down self to embrace the cross. Call you this a labor without motive or meed? The life of His humble imitators may be lonely, and their outward reward scant and ungracious; the time of fruition will come. In your high home of love and rest, the proudest crowns of those who have been mighty on earth will pale at the triumph of the meek and lowly one who, in patient humility, *'hath done what she could.'*"