

## FELICIA.

BY FANNIE E. HODGSON.

URSULA unclosed the door, and looked in, and having so looked in, entered the room and made her way to the fire.

No one was there but Felicia, and on a footstool upon the hearth Felicia sat, moveless and silent, one elbow resting on her knee, her open hand pressed against her cheek. She was not dreaming in an idle, enjoyable fashion, as any other girl would have been doing. She rarely dreamed, so Ursula knew, and, apart from this, her first glance told her that the girl was in one of the worst of her moods. The tense stillness of her slight figure expressed it; that wretched covering of her cheek with the fierce, thin, young hand expressed it; and when she reached the other side of the fire-place, and sat down, Ursula saw that her face expressed it fearfully.

She did not speak at first, and Ursula knowing every change of shadow—there were so few brightenings—that crossed and roused the tempestuous nature, recognized this one, and was silent also. The flame of self-torment would leap out before long, despite the barrier of pride.

And so it was. For a few moments the girl actually turned upon her all at once with an angry gesture.

"Why are you looking at me?" she said. "What are you thinking of?"

"Of you, Felicia," Ursula answered, simply.

"Of me?" she said, with a depth of self-scorn fearful to behold. "Of me?"

"I am wondering," said Ursula, "what has hurt you to-night."

"Hurt me?" was her echo. "What should hurt me? You always think that I have been hurt if I am silent. Yes, you know so well that—"

"Hush!" said Ursula, in her strong, even tone.

The raised, harsh voice dropped at once, almost as if silenced by a spell. But the storm was not stilled. It was working in the girl's whole frame so strongly, that she was fairly trembling in her struggle against it, and, in the end, notwithstanding her efforts, it conquered her. Suddenly, the hand fell from her cheek, showing the broad, unsightly scar, throbbing with fiery red.

"Ursula!" she cried out the next moment, and with one swift movement, she slipped down upon the hearth, and hung upon the woman's knee, sobbing in a hushed, wild way, almost terrible.

"Don't speak to me," she said. "Don't touch me! I cannot bear it! Let me alone until this is over."

Ursula did not try to control her—did not even caress her at the first outburst. She knew what was coming, almost without hearing a word of explanation.

But when at last the desperate, impassioned creature raised her head, she laid a gentle hand upon her arm, and the simple gesture seemed to have a sort of softening influence, for the next words were uttered in a manner strangely humble for Felicia Unsworth.

"Have you seen her?" she said.

A sudden rush of sympathy thrilled Ursula like magnetism from her heart's core to the tips of the firm, cool fingers, that moved in a subtly expressed caress upon the slender arm.

"Yes, I have seen her."

Felicia bent her face until her cheek, the scarred cheek, rested upon the kindly hand.

"She is very pretty, Ursula?"

"Yes," Ursula answered.

"The style of woman Martin likes—low-voiced, and peaceful, and sweet; altogether unlike me. The style of woman Martin cares for."

Ursula's hand moved a little again; but she said nothing, even though she half-imagined she could feel the hot blood beating in the disfiguring scar resting upon her wrist.

It was a hard task she had taken upon herself, when, of her own free-will, she had resolved to help Felicia Unsworth to bear the burden of her life. Few women would have made such a resolution, and fewer would have held to it, if they had possessed courage, and earnest, womanly sympathy enough to make it. She was not young; she had lived through sorrow of her own. There was no particular need that she should come to an out-of-the-way country-house to care for an unhappy girl, whose nature had been warped, whose life had been embittered, and who had no claim upon her save that of their common suffering, and the shadow of a relationship. And yet she had come, and had never faltered in her resolve, even when Felicia was at her worst, which was a worst bad enough, Heaven knows. Ursula's day was past, so long past that she looked back at her girlhood with a thrill of hushed, tender pain.

such as she felt in these later years, when God's world was at its sweetest, on some still, golden autumn day, or when she looked up at some great, calm, white star, hung in the solemn blue at midnight, when such experiences came to her; in fact, as were stirrings of a soul only held to earth by the simple weight of mortality.

Until she came, Felicia had almost lived alone. The old country-house, which had belonged to her father, had been her home all her life, and in these days she certainly did not care to leave it, though it cannot be said that she had any girlish enthusiasm, or love for its quaint beauty. The one misery of her life had overpowered all else. She was not like Ursula; no experience could ever make her like Ursula—nature had cast her in a different mould. Three years ago she had been a strong, healthful young creature, fiery and happy, and with a face whose beauty won admiration on every side, though she cared little for it. She had a betrothed lover, whose affection for her made her whole future fair with promise. She was fortunate, if imperfect—and she laid no claim to perfection.

This was how the world stood with her three years ago, when the whole earth changed its face to her in one short hour.

It was a sad thing, people said; a terrible thing—the accident. She was alone in her room, standing before a mirror, putting the last touch to her light evening toilet. Her lover awaited her below; guests were arriving at the house. One might have thought the cup of her girlish happiness was filled to the brim. It was only a slight movement which was the cause of all that followed, or, perhaps, a breath of air coming through the half-closed door, which wafted her thin sleeve too near the light. In a second the flames were soaring above her head, and in less than twenty minutes she was carried to her bed, unconscious even of her fiery torture. There was no rejoicing that night; the guests went home, the lights in the reception-rooms were put out, and, simultaneously, the lights in the almost dying girl's life were extinguished for ever; the flowers of her youth and beauty faded into a shriveled mockery of their natural bloom.

She came out of her chamber three months later, worn, maimed, and disfigured, a fearful scar upon one cheek, a fearful scar upon her life. Her nature had never been a particularly soft and tender one; but now it seemed warped and embittered forever. When Ursula came she found her repressed, silent, and moody. In her fierce resentment against fate, there was no hope for any softening of her misery, no effort to find any. She was bitter almost to vindictiveness. She even

met with hardness and indifference, this woman who had resolved to be her friend.

"If you have anything to say to me about resignation, and 'Heaven's will,' and 'crosses,'" she said, abruptly, the first time they were alone together, "you may as well say it now. I am used to hearing such things, and am learning to listen to them with a reasonable degree of indifference."

"I have nothing of the kind to say," was Ursula's unmoved reply.

That night, when Martin Oswald came, she understood all. She had the power to read others clearly, yet with a grave tenderness which was still just in its measuring; and she had held the girl in the hollow of her hand in an hour. But five minutes after the lover's first appearance, the hand in which she held her, the delicately perceptive hand, began to tremble.

"He is my lover," said Felicia, half-defiantly, afterward. "I suppose you understand that I should have been his wife now if—I had dared. I have put him off from time to time because I did not dare. Do you understand that?"

If she had not understood it before, she would have done so then; as it was, a shock of hard pain struck her. The girl's eyes sought hers as it were, and she saw that a dull yearning lay behind the fire in their dark depths. She was trying this man day by day, playing a long, drawn-out game of self-torture, with what might have been a life-happiness. In his decisive, rather cold face, Ursula had read a great deal. For stern honor's sake, he would render up his life with immovable strength of will; he would never falter in any set purpose through the yearnings other men might feel; no dream of tender bliss would ever move him. If he had not cared for Felicia, he would have held true to her, not from fear of condemnation, not from any shrinking from giving her pain by his falsehood, simply because it would be impossible for him to swerve from the path of right. But, undemonstrative as he was, it seemed that he was true in heart yet; he bore with the girl's fierce, unstable words with some degree of tenderness. Something of the warmth of love and pity helped him in his forbearance; and though he had much to bear, he bore it unflinching.

"I am not of your world," Felicia said to Ursula, at the close of one of her most unreasonable days. "I rage against fate the more that I know it is all in vain. Your nature is different; but it is not yourself you may thank for it. Thank the God who gave you your calm, white soul. There is no gall in your blood as there is in mine." And then, almost the next moment, she broke out again. "Oh, how mad I am. Why cannot I take

what I can get. See, Ursula, he did love me once——”

“He loves you now,” said Ursula.

She began to walk up and down the room, as she had a frantic way of doing when she was excited.

“No,” she said. “Yes, perhaps he does. Love does not die an easy death with such a man as he is. But he cannot love me as he did when I could make him happy, because I was happy myself. No need to accuse him then—no need to torture myself. I had as much to give as he had; now I have nothing, and he has all. And yet while I know I am wearing out his very soul, I must go on—I must, Ursula. I see his face settling into its hard, cruel lines, and though I know so well what it means, I say to myself, ‘One word more—one trial more!’ and some day I shall go so far that I shall lose all.”

Thus it had been for nearly two years, and, during this time, Ursula’s burden had been the constant failing of her steadfast effort to smooth Felicia’s way. The plans concerning the marriage were indefinite in the extreme. It hung on from month to month, now near, now, as it would seem, half-forgotten; and Ursula began to see that Oswald had lost some shade of warmth, though he was more strictly faithful and assiduous than ever. He had loved Felicia in those happier days, and certainly no misfortune would have changed him. It was not the misfortune; it was its terrible result which was wearing him.

Then came the visitor. A distant relative had died, leaving a daughter, and this daughter had written to Felicia to ask for the protection of her home until she could find her place in the world.

It might have been that a fresh, miserable spirit of restlessness took possession of the girl after this. She was fitful and uncertain beyond measure—silent, impassioned, remorseful, and defiant; everything by turn, nothing long.

“I am going to give you a beauty to look at,” she said to Martin Oswald. “How will you like that?”

And full of hardened folly as the words were, Ursula saw the worn hand resting on the mantel, clinging to the marble almost convulsively, and the inner shadow of wild, desperate yearning fill the dark, disfigured face. But regarding her from his own stand-point of weight and measure, Oswald did not see this, or, if he did, scarcely comprehended it. She had been seeking to try his patience all the evening, so he looked at her coldly.

“You are not in a fair mood, Felicia,” he said.

She could not conquer the yearning in a moment. It lingered, and caused her to falter inwardly, even while her evil spirit prompted her to retort.

“Am I ever in a fair mood?” she said.

“Not often of late, Felicia,” he answered, still more coldly.

She echoed the words mockingly.

“Not often of late, Felicia; not often, ever, I think, Felicia. It was a wonderfully apt idea to call me Felicia, was it not? I wonder who we are to thank for it? Felicia!” in a very depth of passionate scorn.

And yet in passing the room-door later in the evening, Ursula caught a glimpse of her clinging to his breast in a tempest of remorse, which shook her from head to foot.

“I am turning your heart to stone,” she was crying out. “The time will come when you cannot forgive me, when no sacrifice of mine can bring back to me what I have thrust out of my life—when you cannot give me what you would. Oh, God! how helpless I am against myself. Why should I deserve such a nature? Could a God have given it to me!”

From the first, Ursula had been somewhat anxious concerning the advent of this guest; but when she saw the girl fairly, her fears were relieved upon one point at least. It would be through no fault of hers if her presence added one iota to Felicia’s morbid pain.

She came down into the dimly fire-lit room, as they sat together; a woman fair and young, with a fine, pure face, and beautiful, easily-read eyes; and when she entered, Felicia, who was sitting upon the hearth-rug, and resting upon her friend’s knee, turned upon her arm to measure her as it were with a glance.

Ursula rose and kissed her, just as she had kissed her by way of greeting an hour before. Felicia stood up and gave her a hand, still regarding her with the smouldering eagerness in her eyes. It was characteristic of her peculiar temperament that even the sweet, sensitive face should not move her to any ephemeral girlish enthusiasm of pitying welcome. She had never in her life been susceptible to temporary outward influence. After being thus received, Olive Gowan moved toward a shadowed corner, and slipped into a seat, and from that moment she slipped into her position in the household in a like quiet and unobtrusive manner.

The lights had not been brought in when Martin Oswald made his appearance, and it was not until Felicia spoke that he was aware of the new comer’s presence.

“There is some one here,” she said. “Mr. Oswald, Olive.”

And Oswald, turning with his usual grave ease of manner toward the shadowed corner, saw a tall, youthful figure rise out of it, and stand

before him, with a fair-featured face, and soft, large eyes upraised to his, and, for some inexplicable reason or other, he started a little, struck with an absurd fancy of finding himself confronted by a vision.

It was a sweet vision enough, too, the most prejudiced could not have failed to admit. Olive Gowan was a new element introduced into the old stormy life. She was what Ursula might have been in extreme youth—Ursula without sorrow, and without worldly experience. She was gentle, fearless, and guileless; she bore with Felicia as only Ursula did; she was tender without weakness, pure of soul, and sweet in womanly ways. Ursula had a fancy of her own about her. It seemed to her that if she had lived in certain dark ages, Olive Gowan would have been one of the maiden martyrs.

Olive had been in the house a little over a month, when, entering the sitting-room one day, Ursula found herself confronting a scene whose strangeness made her courage fail her suddenly. Olive had been out for some hours, and having returned, tired out with walking, had lain down upon a sofa near the fire, and, perhaps, overpowered by the warmth of the fire, had fallen asleep just as she had come in.

And so she lay when Ursula entered. But this was not all. At the other end of the room, far away from her, stood Martin Oswald, utterly silent, utterly motionless, his head bared, his cold face set and pale, his eyes resting on the girl's reposeful figure. Ursula remembered that she had heard some one enter some minutes before; but as Felicia had not been summoned, she had imagined it to be a servant. She turned away without a word, and went up to her room, and when she reached it, she heard the hall-door close as Oswald left the house. He had not seen Felicia at all.

There might have been a fate in Felicia's mood that night, it was so fierce a one. Ursula found herself almost shrinking from her more than once; but Olive's fair, fine face, whitening a little through very sensitive pity, wore a shining, tender look from beginning to end. There was always this soft, pure pity for Felicia in her face at such times; but on this occasion, something of its shadow seemed to fall upon Oswald also. She was moved to sorrow for her sake, too, Ursula thought; and surely it was so; for when Felicia had left them, and they three were alone together, the impulse broke its bounds.

There was a single moment of silence, in which Martin Oswald stood near the mantel, resting his brow upon his hand, his stern eyes fixed upon the hearth-stone; and then Ursula was conscious of a

soft stirring at her side, and with one swift movement, Olive had reached him, and touched his arm with her light hand.

"Oh, bear with her!" she said. "Pity her. She loves you."

He looked up, roused in a moment. She might have been a spirit, with her white, transfigured face, and fair, appealing eyes. Something long slumbering started to life in him in a breath's space. Ursula, watching, saw it with a tremor of recognition—it was so strong for a moment, so fearful in its strength; it was so near conquering him. The white figure, the white, shining face, the star-like shining eyes, might have been the embodiment of the angel of his lost happiness. This was the single thought his gaze expressed, with an intensity scarcely to be overcome.

Ursula held her breath, she so feared for him. But though there was need for fear, he did not fail. He broke the silence at last in a voice calmer than she had hoped to hear.

"I have borne with her," he said. "I do pity her. I will remember that she loves me."

This was all.

Only a few minutes later Ursula stood at the door of Felicia's chamber, almost fancying that the beatings of her heart echoed through the corridor. She had an uncontrollable longing to rouse her to a sense of her danger. It seemed to her strained imagining that her summons upon the chamber door was a summons to call her back from the brink of the grave of her love. The love was dead and buried, and but a few steps more would carry her to the sepulchre, whose existence she was ever fearing, and yet had never fully awakened to. It was a feverish fancy; but from this hour Ursula was ruled by it.

"Felicia," she said, half-breathlessly, when she had entered. "Felicia, go down stairs."

Felicia rose from her seat, and looked at her blindly. She had been weeping in a wild, remorseful way, and her eyes were heavy and clouded with tears.

"Why?" she asked. "Why do you say this?"

"Because I love you," said Ursula; "because it is right that you should try to undo the wrong you have done to-night. Yes, you must go."

And, strangely enough, the girl turned toward the door, and went out slowly without another word.

Far in the night, beyond midnight it seemed, Ursula awakened to find her standing by her bedside.

"Don't get up," she said, in a strange, resolute voice. "There is no need. I only came to look at you. I have been sitting in the room for nearly two hours. How quiet your face was when

you slept. I wonder if mine ever looks so. I am going to be married, Ursula."

"You promised him this to-night?" Ursula said.

"Yes." And then, as if she wanted to end here, she bent and kissed her friend's forehead.

"Good-night," she said.

"Good-night," Ursula answered. "And God bless you."

Felicia had left the bedside, but hearing this, she turned half round again, holding her light above her head, so that it fell upon her scarred cheek.

"Why do you say that?" she said, unsteadily. "Has He ever blessed me, and is it likely He will begin now." And then turned away again, as suddenly as she had stopped, and left Ursula in the darkness to her pain.

But her moods were less fitful and hard to bear with after this. Not that she softened exactly; it was scarcely that so much as that she seemed to hold herself under control with a new resolution. Bitter speeches were less frequent, and though she was more silent than usual, she was less sullen.

There were to be few preparations for the marriage; she was fixed in her resolve on this point.

"Why should I have such things?" she said to Ursula. "Olive shall have them when her turn comes, and there will be no mockery in it."

She was not as hard in her manner toward Olive as Ursula had feared she would be. She had spared her much, strange to say, and, somehow or other it came about that Olive took into her own hands the task of making the wedding-dress, and would let no one share it with her. It was a gentle fancy of hers to make the pretty work a labor of love.

The winter had warmed into spring, and the spring roses were beginning to bloom, when she took the work in hand; and, as the days grew brighter and more summer-like, they fell into the habit of sitting together at the open window, Felicia looking on in silence while the other two were at work.

They had been sitting thus during the whole of one long morning, and Felicia's silence communicating itself to them, a sort of stillness had fallen upon them. This silence was suddenly broken by Felicia's rising, all at once, and flashing past them out of the room, without a word—without a sound even, other than the one Ursula, and Ursula alone, had heard—a sound like a swiftly in-drawn breath.

The two looked up simultaneously.

At the door stood Martin Oswald. What did it mean? But they were neither of them to learn at that time. He came forward to them, pale

still, but apparently as gravely at ease as ever he had been in his life.

"Ought I to have come in?" he said. "If not, I can only plead ignorance of the state of affairs." And he glanced downward, as if in grave admiration of the heavy billows of white satin falling from Olive's lap, and draping themselves about her feet.

But this was the beginning of the end.

When Felicia came into the room to meet her lover, the two women, who loved and pitied her, almost started. The fire and color had died out of her face, leaving it hard and cold, and her mouth was drawn a little out of its natural curve as if by pain. She entered the room steadily, yet as with a strange footstep, and when she spoke to Martin, it seemed that she found it hard to confront him, and so her eyes sought Ursula's.

"I am not well," she said. "You must excuse me. I scarcely think I am well enough to entertain you. I don't know what it is——" But before she had finished, she staggered so that Martin held out his arms, and would have caught her, but that his touch seemed to give her a novel strength which helped her to steady herself.

"No," she said, putting his hand aside. "I am not going to faint. It is not so bad as that."

No one of them had ever seen her in such a mood, or heard her speak in such a tone before. To Ursula the very quietness of her manner was actually a shock; but it was evident that Martin did not understand, and that Olive was only anxious.

After she went to her room they did not see her again that day, and the next morning she was herself again. Indeed, all traces of the alteration wrought in the past few weeks had been so far swept away that she seemed to have gone back to the time when she had been at her worst. An evil spirit seemed to possess her, she was so uncontrolled in her moods.

It was a heavy burden that Martin Oswald bore during the few weeks that intervened between this time and the wedding-day—the wedding-day that never came. Only the sternest sense of honor could have held him true to himself; only the sternest honor did hold him true. Even Olive, whose gentle pity had often made her blind heretofore, saddened in her sorrow for both. Ursula, finding that her power was gone, stood aloof, and looked on with an aching heart. She had understood the girl before; but in these days it seemed impossible to understand her, she seemed so utterly lost.

But the time came when to Ursula, at least, the mystery was made clear.

It had been one of Felicia's dark days, and at its close she was standing with Ursula before the open window at which they had sat the morning Olive was making the wedding-dress. The wedding-dress was finished now, and laid away in a closed room up-stairs.

"How well I shall look in it," Felicia had said. "How well this will set it off." And she had laughed defiantly, pointing to the scar in which the red blood pulsed fearfully. "Well, put it away," she ended. "Let it lie there until it is worn."

Within the room, before the open window, the two women stood, Ursula with her arm wound about Felicia's waist; outside, upon the graveled walk directly beneath, Martin Oswald was standing talking to Olive—Olive, draped in long, straight folds of black, but with a single white lily in her hair, a lily whose white beauty was set at naught by the fair face uplifted in the soft, dusky twilight.

"And you know I shall not be here when you return," she was saying. "Felicia has been very kind, but I should not feel it right——"

"Olive!" said Ursula's voice from above. "Olive!"

She could see them so plainly, and knew that Felicia could too—would have known it even if she had not felt the convulsive start that shook the girl's whole frame, the moment Martin Oswald's miserable, stern eyes upraised themselves, revealing all his great pain, in despite of his strong will.

"Olive!" she cried. "Olive!"

And Olive, looking upward, smiled an answer, and turned to come.

The white lily in her hair loosened from its fastening, and dropped upon the earth at Martin Oswald's feet.

Felicia took one steady step, which brought her nearer to the window.

The man's whole face was white and working. He looked down at the flower, and by the motion that passed over his set figure, both knew that he was laboring for breath. But he did not bend to take it, or even to touch it, ever so lightly, in mute farewell. A moment more, and he took a step forward also—one step, and set his heavy foot upon the spotless blossom, and crushed it out of sight.

Then the panting form on Ursula's arm broke loose from her clasp.

"Let me go!" the girl cried out—cried out, yet under her breath. "Let me go. I am going to do no wrong. I am going to save him, to save myself—to save my soul, I think. Let me go!"

Years had gone before Ursula learned exactly

what passed between the two, in the hour they spent together after Felicia went into the garden, and led her lover away into the dusk; but when, in the silence of her own chamber, she heard the gate click, and the sound of retreating footsteps, she knew, as by instinct, that all was over—knew well that all was over before the door opened, and Felicia herself came in.

When the door did so open, each woman looked at the other in silence for a little space. Then Felicia came forward slowly.

"Do you know what I have been doing?" she said, every word dropping from her lips with a strange distinctness.

"Yes," answered Ursula.

"Is it best?" she said next.

The eyes of the woman whose sad life lay behind her in the softened shadow of the past, met those of the woman whose sad life was yet to come, and be borne and struggled with. It might have been a cruel thing to speak the truth, but Ursula had not learned to be false.

"Yes, it is best," she answered.

There was the strength of misery in the girl. She did not break down, or even falter. She simply came close to the window, and stood there in the faint light.

"Then you will believe me?" she said. "You will believe me when I tell you what I am going to tell you; or, perhaps——" And she turned round to look down at her. "Perhaps you can understand something of it without being told. Think of the past few weeks—think of them, Ursula, and try to——"

"Felicia!" the sorrowing woman cried out, and her voice was so wild and suddenly impassioned, that it startled an echo in the silent room. "Not that—not that!"

That instant, almost before her second cry, the girl was on her knees before her, clinging to her in her old, wretched, tempestuous way.

"Hush!" she wailed. "Hush! Yes, that is what I have done—that is what I have been trying to do. He would not have let me go otherwise. He would have sacrificed himself a thousand times rather. And I loved him, Ursula—I loved him, and he would have conquered my weak soul so shamefully. I could not have withstood him; but now, now he can only see that I am to blame—that I would not listen—that I seemed worse than mad. He will never suspect that I knew the truth—that I read it in his eyes the day he stood in the door-way, and forgot all else but that the woman he loved was making the bridal dress of the woman he was bound to. But he is free now, and in the end he will teach her to care for him as—as I have done; and they will

be happy. I want to redeem the past. I must—I will, Ursula! Ursula! for God's sake, fold your arms close about me, and help me! Help me! Help me—for God's sake."

And, having made this sacrifice, so strange, so wild, so unexpected, it might have been that the evil spirit which had heretofore ruled her, was, to some extent, appeased. Of her after life it is useless to speak; suffice it to say that the two women, bound heart to heart by the strong tie of suffering, lived out their lives together, each helping the other to bear the weight of her burden. As was quite natural, the time came, though it was long afterward, when Martin Oswald forgot his past, and won Olive to his will. Felicia did not meet him face to face again, though on one occasion, years after his marriage, chance threw them near enough together to cause Ursula at least a pang of fear.

One summer day, as the two were sauntering through a picture gallery, in one of the larger cities, a pretty child, whose father was intent upon a painting at some distance from them, stopped near them, probably attracted by some trifle in Felicia's dress, which aroused his boyish curiosity. Seeing this, Felicia bent down to speak

to him, and, as she did so, Ursula saw that she started faintly, and then recovered herself.

"What is your name?" she asked, the next moment.

The child looked up at her fearlessly, with a pair of brave, brown eyes.

"Martin," he answered. "Martin Oswald."

Felicia stood upright, and met his innocent, curious gaze, with a blanched face, for an instant. Then she bent down again, and laid her hands upon his shoulders.

"Will—will you kiss me?" she said, in a strange, suddenly sweet voice, which thrilled Ursula's every pulse.

"Yes," said the child, softly, and lifted his bright face.

Ursula turned away.

When she looked round again, the boy was returning to his father, and Felicia was drawing down her veil with a tremulous hand.

"Let us go, Ursula," she said.

They went out of the room without speaking; but before the veil had dropped, Ursula had seen that there were tears in her eyes, great, warm tears, that welled over, and slipped softly down her pale, tender, yet half-awed face.

## A TABLEAU.

BY A. KATE LAURENCE.

The sun beamed in at the open door,  
And broided with gold the cottage floor,  
And glinting o'er table, stool, and chair,  
Fell full on a form, with silver hair,  
An age-bowed form, with a face so fair,  
That the sunbeams stopped and rested there.

On her knee there lay a brown, old book,  
With dingy leaves, and a worn, soiled look,  
While the soft-blue eyes, grown blind with tears,  
And filled with yearning, as through the years  
Her thought went back, sought, with far-off gaze,  
The blue hills draped with the Summer's haze.

Beside her stood, in her winsome grace,  
A slight, fair child with a sunny face;  
With large, glad eyes, and a brow of truth,  
A picture of health, and joy, and youth,  
Who thought of the wondrous things it took  
To fill the leaves of that dun, old book.

With white arms clasped in a close embrace,  
The round cheek crushed 'gainst the pale, sweet face  
The soft curls draping the silver head,  
The sunbeams crept in with silent tread,  
And lay like a glowing, burnished crown,  
On the age-frosted head and the golden brown.

## LOVE FOR THE YOUNG.

BY M. B. SMEDLEY.

Nor only for yourselves, but for the years  
Which you, not knowing, bring to me anew,  
Are you so dear that I consider you  
With this persistency of quiet tears;  
For many silent tones are in your speech,  
And dead hopes rise and tremble when you smile,  
Making me fancy for a little while

That hands I cannot clasp are in my reach;  
And my soul cries, "What can I do or bear?"  
(I that have lost so much and wept so long.)  
"How make myself your servant, to remove  
The sting and weight of that remembered love  
Which was my joy, but may have had some wrong  
From aughts unknown, ere Time had taught me care!"