

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE WORLD GOES WITH ME, ETC.

“ Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown ;
Only waiting till the glimmer
Of the day's last beam is flown ;
Till the night of Earth is faded
From the heart once full of day ;
Till the stars of Heaven are breaking
Through the twilight soft and gray.

Only waiting till the reapers
Have the last sheaf gathered home !
For the Summer time has faded,
And the Autumn winds have come.
Quickly, reapers, gather quickly,
The last ripe hours of my heart ;
For the bloom of life is withered,
And I hasten to depart.

Only waiting till the angels
Open wide the mystic gate,
At whose feet I long have lingered,
Weary, poor, and desolate ;
Even now I hear the footsteps,
And their voices far away ;
If they call me I am waiting,
Only waiting to obey.

Only waiting till the shadows
 Are a little longer grown ;
 Only waiting till the glimmer
 Of the day's last beam is flown ;
 Then from out the gathering darkness
 Holy, deathless stars shall rise,
 By whose light my soul shall gladly
 Tread its pathway to the skies."

FEBRUARY 18TH, 1859.

MY DEAR MRS. VOORHEES :

I will answer your request as to how the world goes with me. You will remember I hinted to you my intention of improving my little home by having a white front fence, having my line fence made over, and then having my square lot set with maple trees all around—then have some nice shade trees set inside my front yard, together with rare shrubbery and flowers—thus making my rural retreat as pleasant, tasty, and neat as possible. But the times are so hard at the West that my interest cannot be paid, so my calculations cannot be carried out in doing the little business I had intended to keep us busy, and make us a livelihood—letting alone all ideas of ornamenting, except what we could do with our own hands.

In the Spring of 1858 I bought forty apple trees, (they are not yet paid for,) and had them set, thus commencing an orchard; had currant bushes taken up, that were growing in front of my house, and set in my garden, making two long thrifty rows; and a

few plum and cherry trees set near the house. I and my Mema brought cherry trees, gooseberry bushes, and strawberry vines, two miles in our arms, and set them. We re-set some peach and plum trees that we brought from Michigan, in our trunks. We went to the swamps for balsam and tamarack, to the sugar bush for maples, and to the hills for sumac. We set rose bushes, lilacs, various other shrubs and vines, many of them presents from friends, and sowed flower seeds. Methinks you ask, "Why! how could you do it?" I will tell you. We would choose small trees, such as we could handle, hoe off the top dirt, leaves or moss, then take one root at a time and loosen that, then another, and so on until we got the tree. We would get five or six trees at a time, lug them home, rest, then just at night dig places for them, pour in water and sprinkle dirt around the roots, and soon they would be made fast in their new position. I would get so tired that I would lay awake nights with lameness and pain, and perhaps get a three days headache; but when I could see the trees swell their buds, put forth leaves, and grow larger, I felt paid for my toil.

I hired men to work by the day in cultivating my land, we doing our garden work ourselves, which kept us digging, weeding and hoeing, all the summer long. What I raised on my land would hardly pay for the work of cultivating,—so it would not make us a livelihood; and situated as I am, in the country, cannot get work such as would help to sup-

port us, so I am obliged to turn my hand to anything that is within reach. Last fall I bought wool and spun and prepared sock yarn, and these winter evenings are spent in knitting sale socks, and in meditation. I have had a boarder a few weeks, and the pay will be a great help to me.

My brother's people across the way have been sorely afflicted. Their only daughter, a beautiful and lovely child of ten years, has sickened and died with the scarlet fever. Their jewel has gone from their household, and a shadow of deep mourning broods over our pleasant hill.

“Mother! could'st thou endure
 To think thyself forgot
 By *her*, who was *thy life, thy air,*
 The *sunbeam* of thy lot?
 Would'st thou not live in doubt and fear,
 If all thy bright hopes perished *here*?”

MARCH 21ST, 1860.

MY DEAR MRS. V—— :

Pecuniary pressures are upon me as you shall know. I have been obliged to get considerably into debt to live, hoping all the time that my interest money would be forthcoming, so that I could make all straight, but it comes not yet. I was owing for my cow, and for my wood, which is quite an item even in this wooded country, with getting it all prepared for burning. I received some money last spring that was due on a small mortgage, but felt

that I must pay it all to those whom I was owing, and in some way work out our living. I rented my lot, and with half of what was raised on it, some butter from my cow, a few eggs, the proceeds of a little domestic wine, a boarder awhile, and a little sewing that I have done, we have come along thus far with our necessities supplied.

* My large debts, as I call them, were pressing upon me so heavily that last fall I went and mortgaged my little home here, and paid them. I have changed the place, but keep the pain. I felt that honor, that I had rather lose my home than to have others suffer losses by me. So what I am owing now is \$300, all in one place. My interest, could I have it, would soon pay it and give us a livelihood besides. The saying is that “Misfortunes never come singly.” Another that I have deemed misfortune is, that my brother, whom I came to live beside, has sold his farm, and on the first day of this month moved away; so I am left settled down in the country alone, where I would not have come but for the sake of living by my brother, and with my stake so firmly driven down, that it will take another adversity's upheaval to loosen it so that I could follow in their wake, even if I desired it. I have learned this lesson, that it will never do to follow friends around the world. It has proved unfortunate to me that I yearned to hover to the side of *consanguineous* friends—that I felt the want of a ladder, trellis, or oak, around which to twine for support. I must

stand up like the lone weather-beaten pine on the plain, and take the winds and storms as I travel life's sandy desert, seeking shelter and protection from Him, who, when told that his brethren desired to speak with him, asked, "Who are my brethren?" Happy will be the time when the Christ principle of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us, shall be lived out—then my interest will be your interest, and your interest will be my interest—and by becoming, "My brother's keeper," or my sister's "keeper," we shall become our own keepers, and enrich ourselves far beyond the value of gold!

In the past year, I, with many others, have been wreathed in cypress and willow again. My most lovely sister Louisa, (Mrs. Briggs,) on the morning of the last Fourth of July plumed her wings of immortality and left this mortal sphere, leaving a husband and six children, besides numerous friends, to mourn.

A lovely niece of rare endowments in musical lore, has been suddenly removed from fond and doating parents, an adoring husband, and a large circle of friends.

Our friends leave us, and we say,

"Alas! if it be so
 That in the burial-urn
 The soul must garner up the love,
 That once did in it burn,
 Better to know not of the worth
 Of true affection on this earth,

Better to live alone,
 Unblessing and unblest,
 Than thus to meet and mingle thought;
 Then from the immortal breast
 Shut out the memory of the past,
 Like day-beams from a forest vast.

Oh! no; it cannot be!
 Ye! the long-lost of years!
 Mid all the changes of this life,
 Its thousand joys and fears,
 We love to think that round ye move,
 Making an atmosphere of love."

You will be pleased to know that this sad heart of mine is often cheered with letters from Booneville, Mo.; and in summer-time they come laden with leaves from the rose, myrtle, and verbena, that my friends have planted on the graves of my loved ones, who are sleeping far away from me. *Leaves from off their graves.*

"Ye are faded all, and withered,
 Sad reminders of the day"
 When they bore them to the grave-yard,
 And laid my darling ones away!

"Once I deemed it sad and gloomy,
 In the 'city of the dead,'
 Shuddered when its hallowed precincts
 Echoed to my startled tread!"

"But I am no longer fearful,
 When I rove" their "shades among;"
 Hold they "not my choicest" treasures,
 "Heaven's best" gift, "my dearest" ones?

"Ye are faded, all, and withered—
On" your "leaves, like summer rain,
Glisten now the pearly tear-drops,
From a heart surcharged with pain."

"Ye have" grown "above" their bosoms,
'Waved o'er mounds where I would grieve,
"From" their "dust ye've gathered" moisture—
"How I love ye," withered leaves!" "

APRIL 18TH, 1861.

MY FRIEND MRS. V——:

Adversity, "stern rugged nurse!" still holds her sway over me. During the past year the first mortgage on the farm on which my security rested at the west has been going through the process of foreclosing, which has given me considerable anxiety. I wrote to Mr. A. H. Byerly, the man that held the first mortgage, stating to him my circumstances, and that if there was anything in the farm that belonged to me I needed it. He wrote me that the amount of the first mortgage was about \$3,200, and that the farm was well worth \$5,000, and even more, and if I could send and pay the first, the farm would pay mine, and more. But I knew of no one that could assist me, so asked no one.

When the day of sale came, Mr. Byerly bid in the farm on the first mortgage—nothing was left for me. Thus you see, our laws will take the bread from the mouth of the widow and the fatherless, and lay it in the lap of the man worth more than his

hundred thousands. The weaker must submit to the stronger.

I learn that there is no sale for the village lots. Notwithstanding my dues come not—yet I *have been called upon to pay for the last nibble of grass my cow has taken in a generous man's pasture; though it has taken that which I would have held in pleasant remembrance of a promise I made in sunnier days.*

It often seems as though every thread of hope was cut off, leaving no way for us to obtain a livelihood. My physical health is not strong enough to enable me to labor for people; I could not stand it three days; neither can I send my child out to earn her bread, for I am so afflicted with my dreadful headaches and with their convulsive tendency, that it would not be safe for me to be left in my house alone. It is but little sewing I can get to do, for here in the country people generally do their own sewing—then it is the worst work for my poor head. Were we situated in a town or village, I should try and do something at my old avocation, teaching, although my nerves are weak. Last season hired my land cultivated, paying by the day, but when what I raised was stored in the fall, it would not have sold for enough to pay for the work.

I have learned not to want, and all I pray for, is bread to eat and wood to warm—apparel the plainest and cheapest, for we cannot desire superfluities,

when we know not how that which serves to keep soul and body together is to be supplied. The past winter has seemed long, and loneliness has brooded around our little home,—the winds have blown cold and the snow has piled mountains high around, which we must needs dig through. Our "cruise of oil" has been almost drained—and almost the last stick of wood laid on the coals; yet my grateful thanks have ascended to Him who forgetteth not the sparrow, for my kind neighbors came to my relief, and have supplied me with a whole year's stock of wood.

My nephew who had my money, invested his all in said farm—he is now a poor man, with feeble health, and with a little family on his hands; still he has made an effort, and has just sent me fifteen dollars, which I know well how to appropriate. Should he be prospered, some time in the future I may hope for more.

We keep our a cow and a few hens, so that like the old swain,

"In summer's heat and winter's cold"
We feed our "flock," and pen our "fold."

Now, my dear friend, let me turn your attention from the foregoing adverse picture, and invite you to read a piece of my Mema's poetry.

THE WORLD'S A MYSTERY.

When first I woke to consciousness of living in this sphere,
 My first thoughts were of wonder, how it was that I came here;
 The world and its busy throng they were but shadows to me—
 And I turned away and thought "the world's a mystery."

I look'd around upon the world and on the bright blue sky;
 I thought of all the folks, "do they live, breathe, and think as I,"
 Six sunny, sunny years pass'd o'er my head, years fraught with
 naught but joy,
 For in the interim I had a brother—baby boy.

But clouds began to gather, and the distant storm to beat,
 And soon it burst with violence around our pilgrim feet;—
 In a distant land they're laid, my father and my brother—
 We are left lone in the world, me and my precious mother.

But still I love the world, and look with joy to the morrow,
 Though poets and misthropes talk of "this vale of sorrow;"
 I make poetry at the wash-board and as I feed the cow—
 And look around upon the world—it seems a mystery now.

I think of the ages past, and the ages yet to come,
 And then it is I stop and wonder, "O, where is my home?
 Do I live in ages past, 'midst heroes, poets, and sages?
 Or am I a wand'rer from one of the future ages?"

There's hope and ambition within, as seasons come and go,
 And change from summer's heat to winter with its cold and
 snow;
 I make poetry at the wash-board and as I feed the cow—
 'Tis true I am fourteen—but the world's a mystery now.

MIRIAM LOUISA COLE.

MAY, 1862.

DEAR MRS. V—:

You ask if I have as yet received anything purporting to come from my beloved husband in the Spirit Land. I answer in the affirmative. A little more than a year ago, I was feeling very low-spirited—almost in the “slough of despond,” when in the secret chambers of my own heart, I made this request: “If my husband in his home of immortality takes cognizance of the passings of earth, and witnesses my desolation of heart, will he not through some medium commune with me?” It was only about two weeks after, when to my surprise I received the following message from a lady medium, enclosed in a letter:

MY DEAR MIRIAM—My dear wife—you are longing to hear from one who loves you yet. Dear wife, remember that I am with you—I long to comfort you—long to let you know how bright is the pure reward here for you. Have hope my love; skies may lower and all seem dark, but the day is dawning! Remember our little girl, she needs your care; watch over her carefully, and the angels will bless you. My boy is here—he sends love to mamma, and to Mema. May hope smile on you, my Miriam. Day after day I watch over you, and you cannot see me. I am near you—ever near you—always when affection calls. Good-bye, my dear, for this time.

From your husband, Wm. H. COLT.

Last fall I sent a sealed letter to the same medium, in which were the following questions: What shall I do with my little home here? Can you read my thoughts? Do you know my troubles? When shall I come to you? Do you love me? Direct about Mema? What of my Willie? Do you see your father? In a short time I received the following answer, and my sealed letter unbroken:

DEAR WIFE—You ask for a test. I am not sure that one can be given whereby you will know me. Patience, O my dear. Do not give up your little all. Aid will come; my own help is always ready as far as I am able to give. Miriam, my own dear wife, it grieves me to see you doubt that I can see you. Sands of life are running short—you will soon join me—and, O, dear one, do not fear for a moment that eternity will be all dark. Poverty so afflicting is not known in this bright land. We love the same of ruin, the old loves of earth—we are so glad to bring glad tidings to them. You are tired, my Miriam. Your lamp is growing dim. There will be no more headaches nor heartaches on *this* side the river.* Will that comfort you? Rejoice! Willie is well cared for. Do not doubt for a moment that we are living yet. Father says, at times he revisits old scenes—he goes in, he says, and nobody

*He refers to the dream he had previous to our leaving Kansas, about fording the river.

says, "How d'ye do," or "Will you come in?"—and so he thinks nobody wants to see him. The old gentleman will have it so, and being rather obstinate, won't listen to my explanation.

My little girl—she is now grown almost out of knowledge, but I must not say out of remembrance. Perhaps the sitting, the studying so much may injure her more than you are aware of—her vocation is destined to be one of deeds, not such as you would have her perform, but are not the less useful, if she does right and keeps her system in good tune.

O, my dear, forget not that there is one who waits for you behind the veil. Keep up courage, and as regards worldly matters, could those better fitted by the place they occupy, give advice better than I, who stand apart, as it were? Yet I am willing to help you every way that seems needful to you. Always yours, my dear Miriam.

From your beloved

WM. H. COLT.

Last fall I was determined to sell my little home, and save what I could, so as not to have it sold on the mortgage, but could get no one to buy. After, I received the following through the same medium:

MY DEAR WIFE—Again I come on wings of love to thee. So you are going away from your home; I wish you could stay where you are. You are having many disappointments, but they will not always last

—and here you will find freedom from aught to vex or make afraid.

Now, my dear, let us reason together: you being just now in the "slough of despond," and tempted, and say to yourself,* "O! where is he that once would have protected me from the blasts of adversity? Can he imagine my forlorn condition wherever he is, and give to me of his advice?"

From my being incapable by the laws of nature and spirit of returning bodily and taking control of earth-born cares, fixing matters in my own way—which if all this could come to pass might not be after all just right—do not imagine for a moment that I am indifferent to your trials; for, Miriam, you ought to know that I am now where by the nature of things I am not so well fitted for acting in regard to pecuniary matters as I used to be. Still I am not at all desirous of your becoming a beggar while you dwell in the bad world,—and let me tell you again, this will not always last, though for a time you are obliged to ask for that which is your right, from those who ought by the ties of consanguinity and honor to see you protected—but the end, the end of sorrow is at hand. Your husband,

WM. H. COLT.

Again still later he says:

I would not have you discouraged or perplexed;

*These words have been spoken many times by myself.

there are bright days in store for you, my Miriam :
 you will then see clearly why so much is dark now ;
 then how thankful you will be for the trouble you
 are undergoing, and rejoice we will all together, that
 the cloud has passed, leaviag our spirits more smil-
 ingly bright for the rain of sorrow that swept over
 them. * * * * Give my love to
 our daughter, and as for yourself, my Miriam, re-
 member, I am "not lost—only gone before." Fare-
 well. From your husband, WM. H. COLT.

Now my dear friend, you were acquainted with
 my beloved husband, so judge for yourself whether
 these breathings, purporting to come from him, seem
 to be like him. They have buoyed my spirit up
 when nigh sinking in despair. After reading them
 the following lines were suggested to my mind. *My*
husband's whisper—

Have dark sorrows round thee gathered,
 Barbed with anguish fierce and sharp,
 All thy hopes and joys been smothered,
 Pierced thee with a mourner's dart ?
 Yet hope and trust, O do not fail !—
 I wait for thee behind the veil.

Disappointment harsh and bitter
 Has blown to thee on every breeze,
 Cutting off each true endeavor,
 Causing thy light almost to freeze—
 Yet toil on, love, thou wilt prevail—
 I wait for thee behind the veil.

Thought oft you know not whence will come
 Your bread to eat or wood to warm ;
 His store is full, for all there's some—
 Be troubled not by winter's storm ;
 Though dark the days that may assail—
 I wait for thee behind the veil.

Remember now, my own dear wife,
 With patience all thy ills endure ;
 Add lustre to thy crown of Life—
 Glory an eternal weight insure ;
 Though laden with the widow's wail—
 I wait for thee behind the veil.

"Not lost," I'm "only gone before"
 Into my Father's Mansion, where
 There's covert when life's storms are o'er—
 'Tis there I'll meet you love, 'tis there ;
 Your sands of life soon, soon will fail—
 I wait for thee behind the veil.

Do you wonder, my friend, that when I have
 thought of this war that is scourging our land—
 brother warring with brother—the suffering it pro-
 duces—the keen sorrow and anguish it is sending to
 almost every hearthstone, that I have congratulated
 myself that my husband and son are safely moored
 far beyond the dismal cannon's roar and the bloody
 carnage of the battle-field ?

When will earth's inhabitants "learn war no
 more?" When that new commandment is lived up
 to, "*that ye love one another.*"

You ask, "How do you like your neighbors?" I

will tell you. The parents of the interesting family who purchased my brother's farm across the way, were once from the *Green Isle* of the ocean. Mr. Hayes is a quiet, pleasant, unassuming man, who brings up his family in the way they should go; and from the least to the greatest of eight boys, nothing but propriety, good breeding and marks of perfect gentlemen are to be seen. Mrs. Hayes is a true, whole-souled, and noble woman; and Mary, the only daughter, is a picture of health, youth, and beauty, and a model of female loveliness. She is an agreeable and useful associate for Mema, and the whole family are very kind indeed to us.

For the five long years that I have lived here almost a recluse, shut out from society, I am indebted to my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Mathews, who live under the hill, for my peeps out into the big world. They, by their kindness in my desolation, have proved themselves worthy the name of brother and sister; but I do think, now after the confinement through the past howling winter, that should I visit any public place, even to church, there might be danger of my going bare-footed, and of my standing in the doorway to make my obeisance to the audience. My neighbors are all so kind that I often think I could not live without them.

I am trying to fit my Mema to make her own way in the world, by having her prepare herself for teaching. She has attended the district school since we have lived here—and in fact, she never attended

school until we came here. Last fall, by the assistance of friends, I was enabled to send her to a select school kept two miles away; she walked back and forth each day, staying out only two days during the term of twelve weeks. She has a pretty good knowledge of the elementary branches, geography, grammar and arithmetic; and has studied algebra, McElligott's Analytical Manual, ancient and modern history, philosophy and physiology, and loves to read. In the time of flowers her botany, Breck's Book of Flowers, and the Poetry of Flowers, are often perused, giving her much pleasure. Could she have the advantage, she would make a scholar; she however improves her time at home, and has my assistance.

The poultry business, like everything else I have undertaken, has proved a failure; not that it could not be made as profitable as keeping cows, for I have done enough at it to know that it could, if a person could take advantage of the times in getting in food for them when it could be got at the lowest price, and in marketing their own eggs and chickens; but when manacled it is hard to labor and have it tell; it is also profitless to labor at arms length. Mema, however, has taken much pleasure in looking after the hens, petting the chickens, and gathering the eggs. In our hen park, empires and kingdoms have risen and gone to decay; thrones have been abdicated and kingdoms usurped; renowned personages have lived and died or been guillotined. Darius, Ninus, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Lady

Jane Grey, Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth, Louis Fourteenth, Maria Antoinette, Napoleon, Victoria, Prince Albert, and the Prince of Wales, have all figured here in hen-dom. Our number of hens is only eight now; it consists of one pair of white-faced black Spanish, that are known by the name of Ferdinand and Isabella—grandma'am Rosa Bramah, the only one left of the Michigan emigrants, now five years old, and enjoying a quiet life—and five peasants.

We still keep our noble cow dairy, and are raising her cow baby, Lily, which is a perfect fac simile of its mother. The above mentioned, and Foxy Johnny, (our red cat,) are all that we have the care of, that breathe the breath of life.

You would know, if I said no more, that poverty is still gaping upon us; but you know that I am bound to tell the whole story—just how life goes with me. My nephew is still in poor health, but is doing what his health will permit, at teaching among the Indians up Lake Superior; consequently he has no money for me. On account of the rainy season last year, I had nothing to speak of raised on my lot excepting hay for my cow. I have had to buy potatoes. I committed the sin of trafficking again in ardent spirits, in the shape of a little currant wine, that I made from currants picked from my own bushes. But when fall came, we had not the wherewith to procure our necessities through the cold winter. But HE who feedeth the ravens, has fed,

warmed and clothed me and my child; thereby keeping us from the streets and the county house, through the kindness and benevolence of my much esteemed Montreal friends. My gratitude to God and to them cannot be measured by a whole catalogue of big-sounding words,—their reward is with them for drying the tears of the widow, and comforting the fatherless. I have given my bread freely to all who have come to partake with me, and I am glad that I still have something "*when somebody comes.*"

Notwithstanding our little home is under a mortgage, (which by the way runs out next fall,) we have tried to improve it all we could with our own hands; so from year to year we have added to our fruit and shade trees. Last spring we set twenty small apple-trees, and those that had been set three years, in the fall yielded four apples. This year we were expecting a full supply from them, but the deep snows the past winter produced such a famine among the mice that they were driven to subsist on the bark of trees; consequently when the snow melted away, we found that the bark from the trunks of our apple trees had been gnawed off one-half yard up. I banded them with cloths, applying a plaster from the cow stable, and now the most of them look as though they would live.

Our shade trees, shrubbery, and climbing vines are growing finely. We can almost describe our home—(can when the trees and vines grow a little more,) thus—

“’Tis a cottage, small and fair,
 As a cloud in summer air.
 White it rises ’mid the leaves,
 Woodbines clamber o’er its eaves,
 And the honey-suckle falls
 Pendant, on its silent walls.”

Mama had last year fifty kinds of flowers, which gave us much pleasure and knowledge; she will have more this year. I think we shall have a good supply of plums, cherries, currants, strawberries and raspberries. One of our peach trees still survives, and our pear trees, quince trees, and grape vines are thriving.

I rejoice in the return of green fields and woods, and the buds and flowers of spring, and can, with the little birds,

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.”

My prayer to Heaven is, that I may profit by past experiences, and have grace to bear all the remaining reverses that may come in my pathway. Until more transpires of note,—ADIEU.