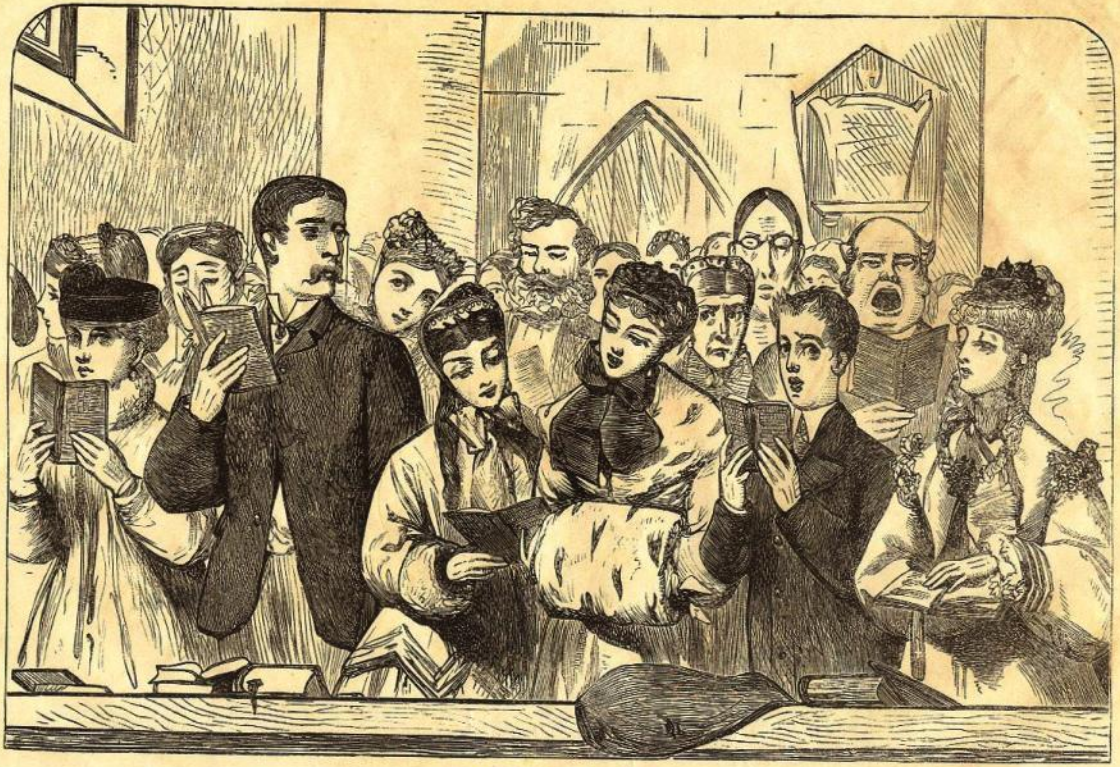

THE CHOIR OF OUR VILLAGE. [See the Story.

THE CHOIR OF OUR VILLAGE.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

STRANGERS who came to St. Peter's always praised the music, as something much better than they had expected to find; and on such occasions, Miss Clewell simpered, and looked distressingly conscious; Mr. Bilkes expanded his chest, and seemed to feel called upon for an encore; Mr. Garis opened his mouth, until it seemed like the entrance to the Mammoth Cave; while the Misses Manton evidently appropriated nothing of it; and Harry Crayfoot, with his sweetest of boy-voices, looked no more conscious than the organ itself.

The lad who blew the organ always seemed as gratified at my admiring comments on the music, as though he had made it all himself; and he probably thought he had.

Miss Clewell was a young lady of forty summers, though she confessed to but half that much, sylph-like and fastidious, with a perpetually juvenile air, and a mezzo-soprano voice, the latter a little shrill in the higher notes, but toning in very respectably with the rest of the choir. She appeared to be all voice and rolls of music, for, meet her when you would, she always carried merchandise of this description, as though she were an advanced school-girl just going to take her music-lesson.

Mr. Bilkes was quite detestable, being a conceited clerk in the one drug store of Pleasance, and boarding at its one hotel, where he filled his room with all sorts of smoking and musical apparatus, and frequently disturbed the inhabitants with an attempt at serenading.

Mr. Garis "did the heavy respectable," as some one said, at St. Peter's; but in his own estimation, he filled a much higher and more attractive *role*. He called himself in his prime, which meant that he was no longer young; but his head was so bald that, as he stood in the choir singing, two tufts, sticking up like donkey's ears, on one side, was all the hair that could be seen. His features, generally, were cut on the model of a Hindoo idol, and taken in the aggregate, he did not produce the effect of beauty. His coat, however, was of the finest broadcloth; and he was fully persuaded that there was a certain something about him that could not fail to attract. With ladies of a calculating turn of mind, his very comfortable home would have proved an irresistible loadstone—for he was a lawyer in very good practice, and like the boy in the nursery rhyme, he lived by himself, with neither mother nor sister, aunt nor cousin, to mar this paradise; but he prattled continually of being "loved for himself alone," and called any woman over twenty-five "advanced in life."

This gentleman considered that nature had been particularly generous to him in the way of a voice; but she had not—she had only given him very strong lungs, with which he brayed and roared through the anthems and psalms to such a degree, that human endurance finally gave out, and (though not till after the period of my story) he was unanimously requested to withdraw from the choir, greatly to his indignation. But, with the air of a martyr, he took his seat among the congregation, and sang louder than any one else, staring hard at the choir during the whole service.

The Misses Manton were too bashful nightingales, who could scarcely be prevailed upon to let out their delicious voices; and seemed so distressed if any one spoke to them, that, by common consent, they were only looked at. They made two very pretty pictures; but as they were rarely known to speak, they should have been labeled, "Still Life."

Harry Crayfoot was a lovely boy, with such a face as one sometimes sees in marble, and such a voice as one rarely hears anywhere.

There were also two or three mothers and fathers in Israel, who remained in the choir because they had always been there, and no one had the heart to turn them out; but they were not progressive—they stuck to "Old Hundred," and "Coronation," and a few others of the same date; and when Mr. Bilkes seemed to be playing with a word or two at the end of a line, and Miss Clewell snatched it away from him, and ran off in a lengthened trill, and the Mantons came in and took possession of it, and then all got hold of it at once, and held on as though for dear life. Mrs. Glinter observed that "it reminded her of nothing in the world but a passel of little chickens fighting over a worm." Dr. Waybrook, who was "old school" in everything, glared through his spectacles at what he called "these high-singing antics," and thought that "people had better know

what they meant to do before they went to work at it."

The more lively portion of the singers worked on undisturbed by these comments; and as choirs have always quarreled from time immemorial, and yet always seem to hang together, so it was at St. Peter's.

My connection with the choir came about quite unexpectedly.

Pleasance was a place of some importance, and not a little pretence; a portion of it understanding very well how things should be done in style, and said portion rather looked down on those who dispensed with style. The friendly relations between Mr. Boffin and his "Henery-etta," with regard to this same question of style, did not prevail in Pleasance; and those who, like ourselves, lived on an off-street, in a small, frame house, with two steps to the front door, and neither elegance nor poetic wildness in its appearance, were not likely to be invited to cross the magical line.

"Ourselves" consisted of my two aunts and myself; aunt Martha, stout, and full of vigor to battle with the world; dear aunt Phemie, pale, shadowy, and suffering. Both were equally dear, but naturally one petted aunt Phemie, and expected petting from aunt Martha. My active aunt had been a wife, and had buried her dead; the other also mourned her dead, without the wife's sweet right to mourn. Disappointed women both of them, for whom life had failed to give out its sweetness; and yet I found them cheerful and companionable, and quite capable of accommodating themselves to my requirements, so that I scarcely felt the "bar" of "style" that prevented my admission to the *elite* of Pleasance society. We had books, and flowers, and a piano in our humble home; and we lived on contentedly, with scarcely a thought of the outside world beyond the denizens of the adjacent alleys, among whom aunt Phemie glided with gentle ministrations to both temporal and spiritual wants.

One morning I awoke to find myself twenty years old; and I was quite startled at the discovery. I gazed at my aunts, in a sort of reverie, frequently during the day, and wondered how it would feel to be just like them. Had life nothing better than this in store for me? I could not get reconciled to my advanced years, and in the evening Mr. Garis came.

His frequent coming was quite a nuisance to us all, and I tried hard to fasten his visits on aunt Phemie; but she repelled the slander with quite as much indignation as he would have done himself.

Mr. Garis was simply ridiculous; his conversations consisted of two questions: "Have you read Scott's novels?" and "Have you any music in your soul to-night?" The latter was an invitation to the piano, which I was conscious of handling pretty well; and, once there, I was sure to be fastened in my seat until eleven o'clock.

My two aunts, meanwhile, would sit, half nodding, on opposite ends of the sofa, (for I always insisted on their presence,) until aunt Phemie, perhaps, would rise and glide noiselessly about the house, rather ostentatiously closing doors and windows that did not require closing, and making, generally, as much of a commotion as she was capable of making. Mr. Garis, however, was impervious to all such reminders—no arrows penetrated the rhinoceros-hide of his self-complacency; and a faintly perceptible air of patronage and condescension rendered him almost unendurable. His pet phrase, "on several occasions," was quite a by-word with us—and our enjoyment of his visits always came after they were over.

This evening, to see what he would say, I ventured to ask: "Have you read the *Dies Iræ?*"

I was full of it just then; but Mr. Garis replied, grandly, "I have heard of it on several occasions—but no novels for me, Miss Grace, save those of the Wizard of the North."

A faint gurgling came from the sofa—I hoped that aunt Phemie had not broken a blood-vessel; and I hid myself in a roll of music.

I do not know why—it was a thing I rarely did unless quite alone, for my voice had never been cultivated; but I suddenly broke forth with the song, "No one to love me, none to caress;" and then, in a perfect ecstasy of relief, I laughed immoderately.

Aunt Phemie came bravely to the rescue. "You must excuse my niece, Mr. Garis," said she, in her own indescribable way; "but the first time she ever heard that song was in accompanying me on one of my rounds, when, in a house that appeared to have nothing in it but a piano, a great, slatternly girl, with uncombed hair and a ragged dress, screeched out the lament in question."

"Very funny, indeed," murmured Mr. Garis, with a total lack of comprehension as to the cause of our merriment; for a sense of the ludicrous had been altogether omitted in his composition.

"But, Miss Grace," he continued, still in amazement, "why have you not sung for me before?"

"Why should I?" I asked, very coolly.

He stammered a little at this. "Why—I—I—have been here, you know, on several occasions," (I should think he had!) "and am devoted, you know, to the vocal muse." (A painful case of unrequited affection.) "I beg your pardon, Miss Grace—did you speak? We might have enjoyed such pleasant little concerts of two."

"Oh, oh!" I groaned, as I thought of the braying and roaring that had so disturbed the respectability of St. Peter's.

"Grace is quite timid about her singing," said aunt Martha. "It is a great compliment for her to sing for any one."

Mr. Garis brightened, and made me a low bow.

"I may consider myself favored, then, it seems, after all; although, on several occasions, I have been deprived of pleasure that might have been enjoyed."

I could have shaken aunt Martha; but, as is often the case when our friends provoke us beyond endurance, her intentions were good.

Mr. Garis was evidently enjoying the feelings of a Columbus, and with all the right of a first discoverer, he said presently, "You must go into the choir."

"I have no wish to go into the choir," I replied.

A pair of sandy eyebrows were elevated at me.

"But, my dear Miss Grace, you really must consider the good of St. Peter's, and not bury your talent in a napkin. One of the Misses Manton is to be married soon—the one who lisps a little—and a female vocalist will then be absolutely needed in the choir."

I would have proposed sending the cat at that detestable word "female," had it been anywhere but the church; but out of respect for the sacred edifice, I swallowed the term in silence.

I regretted the reckless manner in which I had gushed into song; for, once in, there was no getting out of it. Mr. Garis lent the full volume of his voice, as he expressed it, and it was a very heavy volume, indeed; so much so, that I really feared, as it verged toward eleven o'clock, that some messenger would appear to demand the cause of the unearthly sounds that issued from our domicil.

Aunt Phemie had glided off, and aunt Martha was nodding in a corner.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed my visitor, with a sudden start, "what's that?"

"It must be Phemie's shoes," said aunt Martha, only half-awake.

I was laughing as well as I could in a whisper; for aunt Phemie had threatened, after the last visit, that if Mr. Garis stayed again one minute beyond the stroke of eleven, she would certainly fling her shoes at him—and they had now come with an unmistakable thud against the wall that separated us.

A heavy watch was consulted, and then the usual welcome words, "No idea it was so late—the evening has passed *so* pleasantly. Just one more song, Miss Grace, as a buny boutche," (a vagary of speech that Mr. Garis termed "French.") "Let us have 'Consider the Lilies.'"

Anything, I thought, to speed the parting guest, who opened his throat so widely at this beautiful anthem, that it was really appalling.

"Now," said Mr. Garis, hat in hand, with the air of a Sultan, "I feel quite satisfied as to the compass of your voice, Miss Grace—a little cultivation is all you need, and St. Peter's may well be proud of you. I expect a friend here soon, a gentleman from Canada, who is a highly-accomplished vocalist. Will you allow me to bring him here to see what arrangement can be made in the way of instruction? My friend intends giving singing-lessons."

Aunt Martha was now quite awake. "I should like to see him, Grace; your voice must be cultivated, and, perhaps, you can do something with it yet."

Doing something meant making money, of which we had a very slender supply; and on the strength of this hope, Mr. Garis received permission to bring his friend. I could not help feeling a strong presentiment that, when my voice was cultivated sufficiently to please him, Mr. Garis intended to bestow upon me the opportunity, which I certainly did not covet, of singing soprano to his bass during the term of our natural lives. Very likely he would make some private arrangement with the singing-man from Canada, by which I would be enabled to avail myself of his valuable services; and I resolved to look sharply after this.

I was glad of the prospect of improving my voice; but I scolded aunt Martha for her extravagance, and told her that she had behaved very badly during the evening.

"What a tiresome man Mr. Garis is!" she sighed. "I wish that some one would tell him so."

"I think *you* spoke very plainly, auntie," said I, laughing; "that prolonged doze of yours was quite eloquent—but Mr. Garis' ears are stopped with self-conceit."

Aunt Phemie pretended to be asleep, so I

had to wait until next day to scold *her;* and the keeping of my two aunts in order was quite a responsibility.

I soon found that Mr. Garis had spread my fame through Pleasance; and Mr. Bilkes, who had always paid me all the attention I desired from him, which was none at all, said very graciously, while tying up my parcel of camphor for aunt Phemie, (she lived on camphor,) "I hear, Miss May, that a new prima donna is about to appear on our little stage at St. Peter's—a great addition, I am told, in the way of voice."

"Yes;" I replied, with my face in a flame. "I had not heard of it."

Mr. Bilkes smiled significantly as I departed; and when I reached home, I found that Miss Clewell had called.

Aunt Martha was quite excited about it—she thought it was so impudent, she said, after neglecting me so long; but I treated it quite philosophically, and from the height of my worldly experience, I explained to her that I had become suddenly valuable to the aristocracy of Pleasance.

I met Miss Clewell soon after in a store, and she accosted me with smiles and compliments.

"*So* glad," she said, "to welcome me to the choir—and I would come, would I not? I must, that was a dear!"

"But I have to learn singing first," I replied. "I scarcely sing at all."

"Of course you don't," said Miss Clewell, graciously, "that is the way they all talk;" (it was not the way *she* talked,) "but Mr. Garis says you are a perfect nightingale. How very kind he is!"

"Is he?" I said, supposing this referred to his goodness to me.

"He is expecting a friend from Canada," continued the lady, very consciously, "and he asked permission to bring him at once to our house, as he is quite a musician. I suppose that a stranger could scarcely come to Pleasance without coming to us."

"He is a music-teacher, I believe," said I, carelessly. "Aunt Martha thinks of employing his services for me—I suppose it will be a very good opportunity."

Miss Clewell opened her eyes quite widely at my assurance, and said more distantly, "Mr. Paynmore will quite renovate the choir, and probably take charge of the organ, if Mr. Crew can only be persuaded that he is too old for the position."

I saw trouble ahead, but "it wasn't none of my funerals;" and, bowing to Miss Clewell, I left her matching worsteds, with a roll of music beside her—while I went home, wondering what this Mr. Paynmore was like.

I was not left long in doubt; for a few evenings after, Mr. Garis appeared with his friend—a tall, handsome man, with his hair parted in the middle, a fashionable mustache, and his linen and neck-tye perfectly immaculate. I pronounced him conceited at once, and as soon as he began to speak, I felt sure that we would be sworn enemies; for his manner of pronouncing certain words conveyed the idea that he considered none of us capable of speaking the English language.

Mr. Garis made a futile attempt to take the stranger under his wing, but was ignominiously routed at the outset; Mr. Paynmore was quite capable of taking care of himself. Aunt Martha dexterously cornered him to talk of terms, while I entertained Mr. Garis; and, strange to say, my practical relative took a sudden fancy to the foppish Canadian that seemed to me perfectly unaccountable. "He was a gentleman," she said, "a species she had begun to think quite extinct;" and in return, Mr. Paynmore pronounced her a lady of the old school.

I sang one or two pet pieces; and the gentleman was graciously pleased to say he thought he could make something of my voice. I bowed in indignant silence; and happening to catch his eye, I detected the glimmer of a smile there. So, he was laughing at me, was he? I added this to the account against him, and thought that, when reckoning-day came, his position would not be an enviable one.

I think that Mr. Garis had rather a miserable visit, as his friend's accomplishments quite threw him into the shade; and he rolled his eyes upon me, at parting, with a reproachful glare that was truly appalling.

Now began a stormy period of battles and skirmishes that was infinitely refreshing; and I thrived under the excitement to such a degree, that I was ready to go to any lengths of impudence. Mr. Paynmore was indescribably provoking without uttering a word; and when he did utter any, they fell upon my ear like a shower of fine-pointed needles.

He was a splendid teacher; and much as I had always disliked to see a man at the piano, I soon become reconciled to his musical performances, which were of the highest possible order. "More force!" he would say, rather impatiently bringing his finger down upon some note in the piece I was playing, until the whole instrument seemed to quiver under

his touch. Never before, it seemed to me, had any one piano been capable of so much noise; but it was grand—a perfect treat to any lover of music.

Mr. Paynmore's voice was magnificent; and the younger portion of the choir were jubilant. But, oh! the glances that were exchanged among the staid ones; the comments upon his pronunciation; (it was a little singular,) and the helpless indignation of poor Mr. Crew, who had never even heard of the tunes which he was now requested to play! He comforted himself by spreading the report through Pleasance that Mr. Paynmore had formerly traveled with a theatrical company.

The rector noticed a great improvement in the music and singing, and was satisfied; and as his reverence condescended to make an especial call to invite me into the choir, I could no longer refuse. I was very well received, and went faithfully through my part every Sunday, until I really began to think that I could sing a little.

Mr. Paynmore was very kind, and yet I was constantly provoked with him.

"I cannot do that part," said I, one day, "there is no use in trying."

"Oh! yes you can," he replied, singing it with the greatest ease; "any goose can do it."

"So I see," I remarked, with subdued fury. "Please go on."

My singing-master threw himself back and laughed; and, had he dared, he would, probably, have patted me on the back as a bright child. I was more irate than ever.

"I don't think you are very polite to Mr. Paynmore," said aunt Martha to me privately, "and he really is a very gentlemanly person. I have an impression that he has not always been a music-teacher."

"Possibly a stray earl," said aunt Phemie, laughing. "You had better look to your behavior, Grace."

"I think," said I, braiding my locks for the night, "that Canadians are intensely disagreeable, and nothing would induce me to marry one."

"Take care," replied aunt Martha. "I once heard of a young lady who declared that she would never marry a Yankee, a widower, nor a Presbyterian—and she married a man who was all three!"

At our next lesson, Mr. Paynmore spoke of "the *varz*"—a very pretty silver affair that held some June roses.

"What do you mean?" I asked, very innocently.

"I refer, Miss May, to yonder article of silverware, crowned with roses, that were, probably, arranged by your tasteful fingers."

"*I* call that a vase," I replied.

"Very likely, as you speak American——"

"No, I speak pure English; but as *you* talk Canadian, I do not understand you."

He looked provoked for a moment, then laughed.

Presently he attacked the flag. We had a miniature one hanging in the parlor.

"Perhaps, Miss May, you will be good enough to explain to me the meaning of the stripes in it," he said, "if, indeed, they *have* any meaning?"

"Oh, yes!" I replied, as tantalizingly as I could, "they have a meaning."

"And what is it, pray?"

"Why, don't you remember what the English got in the Revolution, and in the war of 1812? It means that."

"A woman's ingenuity is really wonderful," after a pause to guess my conundrum. "Shall we proceed with our lesson?"

Such skirmishes were frequent, and I usually came off victorious; but it seemed to me that the more I quarreled with Mr. Paynmore the better I liked him. The peculiarities that had repulsed me, at first, were becoming toned down. He was not continually feeling "jolly," nor calling quiet people "muffs." Occasionally, too, he remained after the lesson to read a poem to me; and I began to wonder how I could ever have thought him disagreeable.

Meanwhile, I knew that he spent many gay evenings at Miss Clewell's, where something always seemed to be going on; and people frequently coupled their names together, and evidently thought the union quite an appropriate one. *I* did not think so; I wondered if Mr. Paynmore did.

We were having a very hot "spell" of weather toward the end of June; and the day after an intensely warm Sunday I took my lesson, and stood thinking over some remarks of my teacher's after he had left me. A folded piece of paper near the door caught my eye; and I picked it up to find a sort of rhapsody, headed, "A Summer Vision." It was a description of myself, exactly as I had appeared in church the day before—my white organdy, with a tiny black spot, white barege shawl, and straw sundown, with a wreath of pansies. I looked cool, to be sure, although I did not feel so, and it was pleasant to be a refreshing sight to others; but my cheeks were very hot just now, as I meditated on the poetical phrases in which it

was all expressed; and I sat a long time in the twilight, with a strange sense of newly-found happiness.

I wondered how I could meet Mr. Paynmore again. I should certainly look conscious, and, perhaps, he would remember that he had dropped the paper in our parlor, and then——

But I was giving myself needless anxiety. Just before the time for the next lesson, Mr. Garis rushed in, wildly excited, and *brusquely* announced Mr. Paynmore's sudden departure.

"He is the son of a *lord!*" he added, with a sort of horror, as though he had just discovered his friend to be guilty of forgery.

I never could understand this friendship between two such uncongenial natures, until Mr. Paynmore chanced to say that his acquaintance with Mr. Garis was purely of a business character. He had remained but one night at the house of the latter, and then taken lodgings at the hotel.

A sudden silence fell upon us for a moment or two, during which I did a great deal of thinking, and came to the conclusion that this disguised nobleman had been amusing himself with me, and with Pleasance generally; and that I was a very silly girl, whom a thorough course of mathematics (my favorite aversion) would benefit immensely. I would not have another teacher, though, who—well, my first impression of Mr. Paynmore, as "a tall, conceited-looking man," was simply absurd.

"This Mr. Paynmore, etc., whatever he is to be called," said aunt Martha presently, with astonishing composure, "is certainly a very presentable-looking man for the son of a lord; the only other sprig of nobility I have been fortunate enough to see, was the most insignificant little creature I ever beheld, with white hair and an idiotic countenance."

Mr. Garis fairly gasped at her temerity; he was quite stunned at the thought of having been in daily intercourse with this superior being.

Aunt Phemie remarked that she did not consider it very gentlemanly to leave the place in this abrupt manner, after receiving hospitalities and kind attentions from so many families in Pleasance.

"On several occasions," began Mr. Garis, then stopped, and suddenly plunged after me, as I retreated to the garden.

He proceeded to make a goose of himself without delay, evidently fancying that disappointed ambition and wounded love might render me desperate enough to listen to him. I scarcely know what I said; but I was soon locked in my own room, with the vision of Mr. Garis' blank optics, set in a chronic stare of surprise, constantly before me.

"I never could get your bill from Mr. Paynmore," said aunt Martha, to me, in a troubled tone. "I made the attempt two or three times, but he always put it aside with some excuse. It is very unpleasant to be under such an obligation—and this is my greatest regret at his departure."

I felt like envying aunt Martha.

When I next encountered Miss Clewell, her manner was quite an amusing study. She had evidently framed it after very crude ideas of what the deportment of a countess-elect should be; and from her condescension to me, I fancied that she meditated offering me the part of lady's-maid.

Now I did not expect to see Mr. Paynmore again; he had played out his little farce, and, probably, had nearly forgotten it in more absorbing pursuits; but Miss Clewell was buoyed up by a strong hope of his return, and looked so exasperatingly as if she knew something," as the children say, that I felt a strong disposition to shake her.

The choir seemed weak enough on the next Sunday; every man there appeared to sing through his nose, and Dr. Waybrooke and Mrs. Glinter were quite triumphant, while I aroused my own contempt by hearing a voice that the others couldn't hear, and seeing a manly figure, that was not there, attired in a coat of the latest style, and altogether unexceptionable from hair to boots.

In about ten days Mr. Paynmore returned to Pleasance as composedly as though his erratic departure had been quite in the natural order of things. He was vastly surprised at the excitement on his behalf, and stoutly denied being the son of a lord; assuring the eager questioners that his respected father was at that very time carrying on the lumber business most successfully, and that not the shadow of a title had ever floated over the family to the remotest generation.

There was a long, confidential talk in our little parlor, when we were informed that aunt Martha's surmise respecting the gentleman's experience as a music-teacher was quite correct, as this was his first attempt in that line. Being passionately fond of music, and animated by a love of adventure, he had planned a tour of "the States," in the capacity of instructor; but, somehow, he never got beyond Pleasance. A telegram, announcing the sudden and serious illness of his father, had called him back un-

ceremoniously; but the old gentleman was now quite himself again, and very much interested in his son's new friends.

"Especially in Miss Clewell," I suggested.

Something that sounded like "Hang Miss Clewell!" reached my ears; and I wondered what was to become of that unfortunate countess elect.

What *did* become of her was that she married Mr. Garis, in spite of the latter's theories; and I—— Well, in spite of my theories, I married a Canadian.

ALONE.

BY S. E. GRAHAM.

THE morning beams across my brow
Their golden sunshine fling;
And every gale comes laden with
The fragrance of the Spring.
And yet a tear is starting now,
And yet I sigh and moan;
Where are the loved, true-hearted ones?
Alas! I'm all alone!

The Summer birds are coming back;
They sing in wood-notes wild,
The very songs that charmed me most
When I was but a child.
But, ah! those voices, gladly gay,
That echoed back each tone,
I cannot hear, and I must weep,
For I am now alone.

But wild, romantic hills are here,
And dells, and lakes, and flowers;
And glades, beneath whose whispering shades
The elves keep merry hours.
Their blithe and mellow songs I loved
In my old childhood's home;
But their wild notes are plaintive grown,
Since I have been alone.

I left you for a wilder clime,
My spirits to regain,
And the pure air and strengthening breeze
Have given them back again.
But, ah! my loved ones are not here,
I miss each gentle tone;
My heart is aching for the friends
Of my New England home.

In fancy I am strong again,
As when, with glowing cheek
And sparkling eye, I climbed with you
Our favorite wild-wood steep,
And gathered flowers the cliffs among,
Sweet flowers, so frail and fair,
And twined them into garland's bright,
For your soft, waving hair.

I see each old, familiar spot,
Our home upon the hill,
The old beech grove, the spreading pond—
A lakelet, clear and still.
The very berries on the brink
I gather, as of yore,
And memory gives me back again
Each favorite haunt, and more.

I see the sunny island, bright
With mossy-stone and beach;
And trees, beneath whose cooling shade
The sunbeams scarce can reach;
For the wild vine, with pliant stem,
Their branches interlaced,
And its rich, clustering, purple fruit
Our wild-wood arbor graced.

I sit again beneath your shade,
And bathe my burning brow
In the cool stream, whose limpid waves
O'er the smooth pebbles flow.
And now fond voices call my name
With kind and loving tone;
I clasp ye in a warm embrace,
And am no more alone.

NELLIE'S PICTURE.

BY MATTIE WINFIELD TORREY.

I SAID to my heart, in its sorrow and longing,
Be patient, repine not, it cannot be long;
The boon that you wish may be yours on the morrow;
Arouse! let its coming be greeted with song.

Oh! bright were the tints of the gay Autumn morning,
And brave shone the woodland in crimson and gold;
Blithe, blithe sang the lark, as he rose at the dawning,
In sunshine and music the day was unrolled.

The wonderful rose of the morning blushed sweetly;
Its perfume and beauty enchanted me quite;
Oh! never a day had gone by us as fleetly,
With perfume, and music, and sunshine bedight.

I lingered and waited, Hope sprang up and flourished;
"Thy waiting is over, lo! here is the prize!"
She gave me a picture; the friend I had cherished
Looked up at me gravely, with clear, earnest eyes.

The friend I had known in life's earliest morning,
Whose love had been proven by absence and years;
At last, oh! at last! without herald or warning,
This picture she sends to dispel all my fears.

Shine on me thus ever, oh! eyes that are tender!
And face that is haughty to all save to me;
Be faithful, be true, and thy friendship shall render
The sunshine of life more abundant and free.