



The book is given to
Mary Robt
on her leaving Christ Church
Sunday School,
As a token of appreciation
for her punctuality
and good conduct,

Sept. 30th 1859

V. C. Bandy Sept.

First Flight.



"AU's right in the kitchen."

First Flight from the Nest;

OR,

NELLIE'S SIX MONTHS IN BOSTON.



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FIRST FLIGHT FROM THE NEST.

Boston, Saturday, September 20.

DEAR GRANDFATHER, GRANDMOTHER, AND MARY:—

I AM impatient to announce my safe arrival here, for I've carried grandmother's anxious parting looks about with me ever since I left.

We arrived in Boston just before dark, after whirling two hours through woods and villages, over water and under ground, feeling myself all the while the most insignificant thing alive, completely at the mercy of the leviathan that bore us along. Grandfather's prayer for my safety helped much to quiet my feelings, and when at last the fiery charger stopped, and I felt my feet again, it seemed as though I had been a peculiar object of God's care.

Aunt Martha received me with open arms, and led me to a nice little chamber close to her's, and installed me as mistress thereof. How glad I was that she left the room before my feelings overcame me! A lifetime might pass happily here, but six months from dear old Roseville was too much to look full in the face composedly; it raised a tempest of emotion that did not fairly pass off for the evening.

After tea, Uncle Standish asked me to sing. I happily had too severe a headache. *How could I sing those dear home-melodies in a strange land?* Much to my relief, Aunt Martha proposed my retiring early. My dreams of home were broken by the tingling of the breakfast-bell. Never mind, grandfather. I mean yet to do justice to your "early to bed and early to rise" precepts. My eyes were too full of tears last night to appreciate the pretty box I had dropped into—just large enough for a little body like me not to feel lonely in,—carpeted and furnished in green, with white drapery. It would fill your eye, May, exactly, and would accommodate us both nicely. *How I should like to have it so!* but all the sunshine you can

give is needed to warm and brighten our dear grandparents' hearts, and they are welcome to it.

I have been occupied within-doors to-day, getting domesticated, and haven't seen much of the city. Can say more about that in my next letter.

Uncle Standish has taken me at once into his favour. My resemblance to father may influence his feelings. You know he was his only brother. I shall try to merit his love.

Bessie is the same little fairy as last summer,—a little taller, and quite as inquisitive. She has been plying me with questions about what she saw in Roseville. Cows, chickens, &c. must all be accounted for.

School-term commences next week. I feel rather timid at the thought of meeting so many strange faces; but Uncle Standish will introduce me, and then I must fall back upon my dignity. The process from old scenes to new will be hard, I know; but it may help to make a woman of me, and that will be a great thing for a home-baby.

Do write often, and particularly. I shall send kisses every night by a certain magnetic

telegraph; and, whenever your thoughts take the route to Boston, they will be quite likely to meet those of

NELLIE.

Boston, September 27.

MY first school-day has passed off more pleasantly than I expected. Mr. Walker relieved my embarrassment by his cordial welcome. Miss Wingate, whose class I have entered, is quite prepossessing in manner and appearance. The class is composed of ten girls. The course of study is much like that of our Seminary, with the addition of Latin. I must give an hour or two to music every day, and that will make early hours as necessary here as they were pleasant at home. How I miss the morning birds and my garden-hour before breakfast! We have a mocking bird in the house, whose ventriloquial powers might make robin and blue-bird a little jealous of their rights. He will be a pleasant accompaniment to a fancy stroll through the woods.

Last Saturday Aunt Martha escorted me through the principal thoroughfare of the

city. We took the most bustling part of the day for our walk; and my mental and bodily impressions were very sensible.

I see every thing here in the light of contrast:—these noisy, crowded streets, and the quiet, accommodating country roads; the lofty front of the city mansion, and the white-faced little domiciles of our village; the full-dressed lady on a fashionable promenade, and one of our sun-bonneted lasses. Desire Brown's shop would be totally eclipsed beside one of these brilliant fancy stores or refreshment-saloons, that look like enchanted palaces; but her cozy little counter has stores of pleasant memories for me, that far outweigh all these costly piles. I see nothing here to compare with our grand old woods and noble hills, for "God made the country and man made the town,"—which is the moral of my street-musings.

The church that uncle attends is one of the largest in the city. It seems to me that all the places of public worship in Roseville might be accommodated within its spacious walls. It seats nearly two thousand people, and is generally filled. Mr. S. is perhaps the most popular preacher here. He is cer-

tainly one of the most interesting I ever heard. His manner gives great effect to his discourse, so that a deaf man might almost interpret it. I prepared as usual to take notes, but soon found that the preacher must have my eyes as well as ears. I have enclosed a few notes from memory, which I mean to do every week: it will keep me in good habits, if nothing more. They have fine music, and follow the old-fashioned way of closing the service with the doxology which grandfather so much approves.

Grandmother's oft-repeated admonition, not to let my imagination run away with me, ought certainly to be observed on the Sabbath; but I could not prevent its wandering now and then to my accustomed seat in that quiet little sanctuary—my Sabbath home. What hallowed associations cling around it! I remember, May, when our dear mother was carried in her coffin through the aisle. The voice that spoke in prayer and comfort then is the same we have listened to ever since and love to hear from the pulpit or by the fireside. Our grandparents, whose love has made us forget our orphanage, are there ripening for

heaven. In its shadow are the graves of our parents, and there shall we sleep, Mary!

Those sketches you sent are very beautiful. The churchyard and parsonage is a gem that deserves a rich setting. I will try my skill at a few *city pencillings* by-and-by. Tell me of all that goes on at home, even to the opening of a flower. Your's,

NELLIE.

Boston, October 4.

I AM becoming more and more interested in things about me, and feel that my six months' sentence to Boston will not prove a very severe one after all. I should be very ungrateful to my friends and false to the principles you have instilled, my dear grandparents, not to appreciate their kindness and make all the return in my power. I could not exchange "my ain fireside" for a pleasanter than this, I know; and the advantages for improvement here are very great.

My daily routine of duty commences at half-past six. Study from seven to eight, which is the breakfast-hour. Family prayers follow. School commences at nine and

closes at two, which brings us to the dinner-hour. After that, practise music; then come freedom-hours, which I divide with Bessie, walking, reading, &c. After tea, Uncle Standish joins us in the library, and we could almost as well dispense with gas and anthracite as with his smiles and cheery ways. How much depends upon the man of the house for pleasant evenings at home! If uncle were a human iceberg or a thunder-cloud, wo be to aunty and me from seven to ten, P. M.! After reading the news, uncle usually furnishes a conversational treat from his large resources, and gives his affectionate wife and inquisitive niece the benefit of his world-wide experience; and Bessie always gets "one story from papa" before going to her crib. Uncle and aunt are very fond of music, and I feel it my bounden duty to take my seat at the piano when they request it. "Sweet Home" was called for the other evening, and with somewhat of a martyr-spirit I made the attempt to sing; but I had overrated my courage, and broke down on the fourth line. Uncle called me a "sensitive plant," aunt kissed away my tears, and thus ended the scene.

I wish uncle would talk more freely to me of father. Though we do not retain him in memory, we inherit his name and all the honours that cling to it. We know that he was good and noble; but I long to be familiar with his life. I have caught uncle's moistened eye fixed more than once upon me, and I knew he was tracing the lineaments of that dear man in my face. I shall try to gain admittance to the chamber of his heart. I feel quite at home in school now, and sufficiently acquainted with some of my class to make a sketch or two of character, waiting till the seasoning-process has been fulfilled before shading off.

Miss Wingate's attractive exterior is the expression of a kind heart. Her influence over her pupils and interest in them seems like that of an elder sister; and her instructions are so familiar and unprofessional that we seem like a family group together. Yet the respect due to the teacher is freely given, though it is so gradgingly given to the mere taskmaster. Sour and severe sits before me, in fancy, one of the profession, under whose reign we suffered some time, May. Learned in all philosophy but that of the

heart, we should no more have thought of gaining his love than that of a heathen oracle.

I have, undesignedly, brought out my first sketch in a sort of contrast; but its beauties are not the less real.

NELLIE.

Boston, October 13.

DEAR SUSY:—

This letter bears a later date than I intended, and I thank you for not being ceremonious with your old friend.

Your letter was a dish of tit-bits that I relished exceedingly:—odds and ends of interest that make such pretty patchwork. (Susy, I recommend to you to write a book.) Those walks and neighbourly visits I enjoyed very much, and the call at Uncle Isaac's mill was the pleasantest I have made for some time. Please give my love around among the neighbours.

May (the rogue) says that the village clock strikes as merrily as when it passed the time of day with me every night and morning. A sober thought underlies those

light words,—“Nobody is missed.” But I know that a certain person is missed at one fireside, and I have a feeling that the squirrels and sparrows felt lonely without me at first. I sympathize with you too, Susy, about my vacant seat at school, and should like sometimes to slip into it again. But pray take back that half-resolution of not going to singing-school this winter without me. I should feel implicated in the decline of the musical prosperity of the village, if you should withhold that gift of your's on my account.

So you are getting up a donation-party for our good pastor—and I not there? Why, I would walk five miles to see him now, and as many more to meet him on that occasion! Do put in a word for having it on Thanksgiving-week. That, you know, is my seven-days' jubilee.

I wish you would do an errand for me, Susy. I have been cherishing Aunt Nabby's memory over a few articles of winter-clothing, which will be of service to her. Reminiscences of pleasant hours we have passed together in her humble home are stitched into every seam. The hospitalities of her

fragrant garret, ample fireplace, and little round table, I delight to think about and anticipate. Please give her the package directed to you, and the accompanying wish that it may afford her as much pleasure as it does me to send it.

I have thought of something to compensate for my not joining you in the sewing-circle this winter; which is, to take up my needle here, simultaneously with you, for the same object,—which is, I believe, a box of clothing for the Choctaw mission. Perhaps I shall accomplish quite as much in that way; for, Susy, you remember our tongues sometimes went faster than our needles.

Now for your interrogation-points. Latin and French are the only new studies I have taken up. Mr. Walker teaches the Latin, and a French teacher comes to the school twice a week: we have a fine philosophical apparatus and most interesting experiments. Botany is not quite as interesting to me now as when buttercups and roses were assistant teachers; but I love it still for their sakes. My old enemy, arithmetic, still demands particular attention; and I must confess to a feeling of triumph when Miss Win-

gate complimented me on my proficiency in the science. You, Susy, who were always so quick at numbers, don't know how much it has cost me to master them, nor what mountains of difficulty your molehills were to me. Grandmother's maxim, that a distasteful duty should receive our first and most careful attention, is very true, no doubt.

I congratulate you all on the opening of the Hall. It is quite an era in the annals of our village. Lectures on almost every imaginable subject are given here; but I move in the school-girl orbit, and shall not be much the wiser for them—if other people are.

Tell dear Lily I will not forget her Boston paint-box. I wish something could be found to bring the colour to the dear child's cheeks again. The lengthening out of such a life as *her's* is a rich gift from heaven, like the ministry of an angel.

Did you ever think, Susy, that early piety was the presage of early death? When I was a young child I was possessed with the idea, from reading memoirs of pious children; forgetting that well-developed Christian character in a child, from its rarity,

becomes prominent, and that many more children die without than with it, and many pious children live and grow up that we hear nothing about. But I feel with you, Susy, that God is fitting Lily soon to be an angel.

I am cultivating some pleasant acquaintances here, which may ripen into friendships. For, though that sentiment has been thought not to exist in school-girls, it has been proved that all their hearts are not of too light a soil to support it. A spot in mine yields a fine specimen which is labelled "Susy," answering to that in your's which has produced a

NELLIE.

Boston, October 21.

For the first evening since I came here, I am alone. Uncle and aunt are passing an hour or two with a friend. I was urged to accompany them, but am unwilling to break my engagement with you about writing, and this is the only time I have to meet it.

Every thing is favourable for a flight of the imagination, and, if you have no objection, I will alight in Roseville and take my

vacant seat in the family circle. There sits grandmother in the warm corner, knitting (I do believe) a stocking for Nellie; for she has no idea of her walking, city fashion, in lisle open-work over the ice and snow. Thank you, grandmother—always so careful and considerate! Grandfather's arm-chair is facing the hickory blaze, and that is May behind the newspaper, reading aloud. Puss is purring on the hearth-rug, and Ranger dozes at his door-post. The rosebush, which you wrote me had budded, is now in bloom, and the bulbs are shooting bravely. The family pictures preserve their accustomed dignity on the wall; and, to make the tableau perfect, Priscilla puts her head into the room a minute, just to say she is going to bed early, as to-morrow is baking-day, and all's right in the kitchen. Dear childhood's home!—a heavenly benediction rests upon thee, for the hearts of the dwellers there are stayed on Him in whose gift is the peace which passeth understanding.

Fancy is a swift bird, and I am back again to city-quarters. I wish you could return my flying visits; but, as you are strangers here, the pioneer visit must be

made in the body. Uncle has been so short a time resident in the city that the family acquaintance is rather limited, and of course there is not much visiting; but that is no disadvantage to a school-girl, and no damper to our home happiness.

The genius of hospitality presides here, and no one reciprocates more heartily than uncle and aunt the kindness and attention of friends. But they have the elements of happiness within themselves, and it is quite contagious, I assure you.

Having arrived at the venerable age of fifteen, I might perhaps incline to more independence of the family than I now care about, had my domestic tastes been less carefully cultivated, and home influences been less attractive than you have made them, my dear grandparents. You have used the check-rein so skilfully in training, that I hope there is little danger of my becoming unmanageable, even in a city.

Yesterday was as fine a Sabbath as ever dawned upon the hills and vales of Roseville; and although that is the Jerusalem of my earthly affections, to which I instinctively turn on God's day, yet I know that my

heavenly Father is as accessible here as there, if I seek him with the right spirit.

After attending church all day, I went by previous invitation to the house of Judge H., who holds a Bible-class for young ladies immediately after the afternoon service. Judge H. is as eminent a Christian as jurist. He lays aside his high secular office, and comes to his class in lowly Christian garb, bringing with him the wisdom of a sage and the heart of a child. His biblical knowledge is remarkable, and his instructions, I hope, will be as profitable to me as they will be pleasant.

I have been long enough in a large city to see that it is not made up of wealth and grandeur. Bare feet and tattered garments dodge about among the silks and velvets, and miserable abodes of poverty stand in the shadow of palaces. Now and then a pale-faced child or sturdy beggar asks for cold pieces at the door, and it seems hard to deny a child food, though the habit of street-begging is disapproved and is full of evil.

We have a regular applicant for cold victuals at our basement:—a child of eight years, whose pitiful face might be a pass-

port to any heart. Margarette's story is perhaps a common one, but not the less sad for that:—*father dead, mother sick, and a large family of young children.* When Margarette can be spared from home she goes to school, and an intelligent expression peeps through her tangled curls and dingy complexion.

Can any thing be done to raise this child to a higher level? is a question that has been tumbling about in my head since I first saw her. An organized band of city missionaries go about here among the poor, and do a great amount of good. Aunt Martha frequently makes a charity-tour; and I accompany her sometimes, and, by so doing, have made the acquaintance of an old woman who will do as a substitute for Aunt Nabby while I am here. Her tidy little room is comfortably furnished, and herself a pattern of Christian cheerfulness and contentment. Though she is a widow and childless, a peace that is independent of earthly joy or sorrow beams in her face. *The little money that her son left her is dwindling slowly away, till now scarcely more than the two mites remain;*

but she says that her bread and her water will be sure till she is called to eat of the tree and drink of the water of life.

I hardly know which is the clearest expositor of God's truth,—my learned Christian teacher Judge H., or the unlettered, pious Widow Jenkins.

Boston, October 25.

WE have all been this afternoon to Mount Auburn—a beautiful cemetery five miles from Boston. I had heard so much about it that curiosity was all alive, and I hardly associated it in my mind with the dead. Uncle being a proprietor there, our carriage passed through the massive granite archway, on which is inscribed, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." That solemn voice of Scripture, the retarded motion of the carriage, and the stillness of the place, checked somewhat the curiosity that I started with, and brought on sober reflection. As we rode along the monumental avenues, and read the names of the

great and princely dead, I thought that the vanity of earthly distinctions was all these marble and granite piles are commemorating.

I knew that Charley's remains had been brought from their Southern home to rest there, and his grave was the spot to which we were wending our way. The carriage stopped at a rising ground, and we alighted to take the foot-path. A few rods brought us to the place which the eye of love would select as the place to lay its treasures. Crowning a green slope, and half hidden in foliage, is Charley's grave. The word "Charley" is engraven on the stone; and above the name a cherub is seen, as if to be his guard till he shall waken. Although I had never seen and loved him, the sight of that little grave, where so many hopes are buried, the sad silence of the dear ones by my side, and the artless talk of Bessie, brought tears to my eyes. Rustic chairs are placed within the enclosure; and, as we sat around Charley's grave, the birds filled the air with sweet melody. A fresh bouquet was laid above his pillow, when we left him with his angel watchers.

The Mount Auburn grounds are very extensive, and the beautiful variety of hill and dale, with little lakes here and there among the broad, undulating avenues, with foot-paths leading from them to quiet places, and birds of various plumage and note flying from tree to tree, make it almost like enchanted ground.

As you wander round, monuments of rare beauty almost startle you with their loveliness. Some, to-be-sure, are too grand and ornamental to excite any feeling but wonder and an admiration of art; but many are the embodied expressions of love. A lamb is sentinel at a baby's grave; a lyre with broken strings marks where a poet sleeps; and a harp seems waiting for the child of music beneath to awaken its melody.

There is one monument that attracts every visitor on the ground:—the recumbent figure of a child in marble. It is large as life, and is disposed so naturally on the couch that appears yielding to its pressure; the features are so expressive of sleeping childhood, the blue veins look so instinct with life-blood, that imagination readily supplies what only

seems wanting. I fancied the bosom rose and fell with its soft breathings.

This is a garden of flowers as well as graves, and, though their season is nearly over, some are blooming on the borders, and bouquets, fresh and faded, are strewn over almost every mound.

How the heart labours to express itself over the grave, from which comes no response of love! But if it only treasures our dead, and promises to give them back immortal, it is no unmeaning offering that we yield there.

A beautiful chapel stands near the entrance of the grounds dedicated to the dead. The walls echo no sound but the funeral dirge, the mourner's sigh, and the low voice of prayer.

An observatory of massive granite stands on the summit of a lofty hill on the grounds, which commands a very extensive and delightful prospect.

Mount Auburn, with its acres of sacred mould, its wealth of nature and art, its solemn and instructive associations, is a place where hours may be profitably spent. But let my resting-place be in that nameless

little churchyard where are and still will be gathered my heart's treasures. Among those simple tablets, sacred to memory and love, let one be inscribed

NELLIE.

Boston, November 13.

It is some time since I made sketch No. 1 of my school friends, and, having a little leisure on my hands, I will take my pencil again and make a few more touches.

Emma Snow might sit to a skilful artist and not have justice done to her features; and although the heart and face oftentimes tell quite a different story, yet one can hardly be mistaken in reading a sweet and sensitive disposition in her countenance. She is an orphan, and that invests her with peculiar interest to me. I am not far enough in her confidence to know much of her history, but the badges of bereavement about her tell that its last page is one of sorrow. Miss Wingate is a sympathizing friend and counsellor to her, and many words of tenderness and kind caresses are exchanged, as

between parent and child. She appears to be a favourite in the class, though, I should think, she is slow to attach herself to any one. But those friendships are sometimes most valuable that, like precious ore, are hard to get at. I will wait patiently in the vestibule till the inner door of her heart is opened to me.

Harriet Meyer, the next subject, we will call a transparency, and place it in a strong light, my favourite one, contrast Emma's calm temperament, Harriet's ardent, impulsive nature; Emma, absorbed and retiring, Harriet, exhaling her fancies as freely as flowers their sweets; Emma, the study and sometimes the problem, Harriet, the alphabet of clearness and simplicity. Her heart was evidently made without fastenings, and opens readily (as I have proved) to a stranger. I have brought two fine subjects to your notice, but, to be complete, one should be a little bolder in outline, and the other would bear a little softer finish.

I have been prosecuting a further acquaintance with our young side-door visitor, Margarett, and am much interested in the

disclosures of character that from time to time are made. Beneath the rubbish of ignorance and degradation peeps out now and then a jewel that a skilful lapidary might bring to a fine polish. Little could be done to improve her, if she continued the practice of street-begging. Her acuteness would degenerate into mere cunning, while public contempt would crush her sensibilities. Aunt Martha promised Margarette that we would go to see her mother. Accordingly, one day, we set out on an exploring expedition. After puzzling through a labyrinth of streets and alleys, we found the street and number as directed.

The poor do not live here in cozy little cottages covered with flowering vines, such as we read about in stories, where it would be so pleasant to drop in occasionally; but they are crowded into four and five-story buildings, shut out from the sunlight and free air, bereft of all conveniences for comfort; and such is Margarette's home.

"Does Mrs. Lory live here?" inquired we of a first-floor tenant.

"Yes, ma'am; third floor, right-hand."

After navigating up the rickety stair-

case and through dismal entries, we knocked as directed. A pale-faced, shadowy-looking woman opened the door and invited us in. Margarett was out, and we introduced ourselves to Mrs. Lory—for the pale face belonged to her. She understood who we were directly, and talked in a confidential way of her affairs. The uncomfortable room and every thing in it spoke more eloquently than she could of their condition. Penury was written on the weather-stained walls and scanty dilapidated furniture, and was reflected from the mother to the two little ones that clung around her.

I always want to kiss every child that falls in my way; and, if there had been a clean spot on either of their cheeks, I should have improved it; but neglect was their doom as well as poverty; so I contented myself with distributing the contents of a wallet I had filled for the occasion. At the sight of apples and gingerbread, one hand dropped a cold potato and another a crust, and I never enjoyed the daintiest morsel with half the relish that I did the sight of those poor children at their banquet.

Margarette and her sister came in while we were there, and we made an agreement together that, if Margarette will give up begging, aunt will give them all the pieces from her table, employ Mrs. Lory occasionally herself, and interest others in their behalf; and I invited Margarette to come for an hour every Wednesday afternoon to learn to sew. There seemed to be a little sunshine on their faces when we left, which was doubly reflected back to our hearts.

Well, I have opened the sewing-school. Margarette is very prompt in her attendance, and proves a very apt scholar. Her brain works as nimbly as her fingers, and, if I attempt to answer all her questions, I shall find myself in pretty deep water. She preserves the dignity of my brown dress, which I made over for her, and smooth curls and clean cheeks become her admirably. If she could be transplanted to a more genial home-climate, we might look one day for a noble flower.

Perhaps you will laugh at my enthusiasm, and think I am making a heroine of the little beggar-girl; but, to tell the truth, I feel that a higher aim than selfishness

ought to be mine, and, perhaps, Marguerite was sent to remind me that it is time to put my convictions to some use.

NELLIE.

November 7.

DEAR SUSY:—

THREE days your letter has lain in the "unanswered" apartment of my portfolio, and I shouldn't wonder if, by this time, you had taken up a lament over Nellie's inconstancy. But my excuse would, I think, satisfy a more exacting correspondent than you.

Bessie has had a birthday-party this week; and, one of Aunt Martha's severe headaches coming on about the same time, the principal cares of the occasion have devolved upon me, reserving only time enough to make out a despatch for the homestead, which is a duty always in the imperative mood.

Oh, Susy! you remember when we used to hold our birthday-levees on the hills, in the woods or hollows, and what goodies

Hannah or Priscilla got up for the occasion; and how Farmer Pope's wild cow came to the party once, without an invitation, and set us scampering over the wall; and many like reminiscences, stowed away in memory, which I ransack frequently.

That sweet call to "Nellie dear" echoes back from my heart.

SUSY DARLING.

Yes, dear Susy, I have treasured
 Memories of the early time,
 That, like distant bells, keep breaking
 Into sweet yet pensive chime.
 Childhood's years are now behind us,
 Youth's bright course we have begun,
 Yet the old time, as we call it,
 Love I well to think upon.

Daily do I lead my fancy
 Over the familiar round,—
 Through the woods and o'er the hill-side,—
 With the quick elastic bound;
 And a bright-eyed, dear companion
 Meets me there, and in the dell
 Where we pick'd the first young spring-buds,—
 Susy, you remember well.

Oh, those hours upon the hay-mow,
 That we talk'd and mused away,
 When the calm was on our spirits
 And the sun too hot for play;
 And our perch among the branches
 Of the gnarl'd old apple-tree,—
 Not a queen in any kingdom
 Happier enthroned than we!

And the cheerful winter evenings
 At your fireside or mine,
 When the minutes gave short measure,
 And the clock struck early nine.
 Then the sled of Frank or Charley
 Waited for us at the door,
 And, like car in fairy harness,
 Lightly skimm'd the snow-path o'er.

On these holy Sabbath mornings
 You and I and sister May,
 With our Bibles, to the church-path
 Took our early quiet way,
 There to ponder o'er the wisdom
 From the Saviour's lips that fell,
 Or to hear our gentle teacher
 Of His love and glory tell.

Ever your's.

NELLIE.

Boston, November 10.

A WEEK from to-day, I hope to be in closer communion with you than by pen and ink. I promise myself a lip-to-lip and heart-to-heart greeting, as the first and crowning event of the Thanksgiving festival. By this time, Priscilla is making the usual preparation for the joyful occasion; and, as I had risen in her estimation from a kitchen-encumbrance, at such times, to "quite a help," perhaps I shall be missed a little. But you May, will step about in my shoes quite as acceptably, perhaps. Though I cannot have "a finger in the pie" exactly, I shall be a very busy body in that region between now and then. I have a way of entering the store-closet without a key, and can see now a tempting array of ingredients waiting Priscilla's magic touch. I have not outgrown the pleasures of Thanksgiving week, nor lost my relish for the savoury compounds thereof.

Uncle and aunt accept with great pleasure your invitation, and Bessie is full of anticipation; so we shall gather in full ranks again on the festive occasion. I be-

lieve Aunt Nabby is to be Mr. Miller's guest this year. I can't help wishing it was our turn to have her.

As the time draws near for home, I feel rather impatient; and, when the hour arrives, instead of being afraid of the iron-horse conveyance, I shall want a span of the same metal to shorten the distance to the "home of my heart."

I shall be bearer of my own despatches next time, which will be—kisses all round.

NELLIE.

VOICE FROM THE HOMESTEAD.

Come, dear children, to your places
 At the fireside, board, and bower;
 We have miss'd your pleasant faces,—
 They must crown our festal hour.
 From the far-off busy cities,
 Leave behind all cares and ways;
 Native of the hills and woodlands,
 Seek again your nesting-place.

We are coming, coming gladly,
 To the call of "home, sweet home!"
 Turn'd we from it slowly, sadly,
 Bounding joyfully, we come.

Not a spot in all the wide world
 Could we find like thee to love;
 To the shel'ring ark of childhood
 Comes again the wand'ring dove.

To your Father's sacred altars
 Gather first, with joy and praise,—
 For His love that never falters
 Loud your grateful voices raise.
 Bring an offering of thanksgiving
 To your father's God and thine,—
 He has bless'd the children's children:
 How His covenant mercies shine!

With his bounties richly laden,
 To the festive table come,
 Sires and matrons, youths and maidens,
 Children, one and all,—there's room!
 Every face reflects a sunbeam,
 Every voice to music set!—
 Who of us, through years of sorrow,
 Could this happy day forget!

December 9.

CAN it be that the visit home is over, and that all those golden minutes, that I counted on like a miser, have followed in the wake of other winged treasures? Yes, but they made a valuable deposit in the bank of memory, that yields large dividends, and I must not complain. Let me look over the account, and see how it stands in my favour.

Oh, that joyful meeting with grandfather, grandmother, and May! I don't know which I love best, and I don't want to know. Grandmother's arms were about me first, and she got the first kiss. Grandfather's "welcome home!" was worth its cost of absence, warming to the very tips of my numb fingers. And as for you, May, how you have improved in your style of reception! You used to caper round and go into ecstasies on such occasions! But you were a child a few months ago: a little experience in domestic command has brought out your dignity wonderfully.

I've found myself laughing more than once over Priscilla's consternation when I

caught her before she had time to "fix up." She was soon convinced that Nellie was only the same subject continued, and that the company were as "easy-spoken folks as she ever saw," though they were all the way from Boston.

Oh, the happy hours and days that followed! Thanksgiving day is embalmed with its predecessors, and its fragrant memory will revive many a dull hour.

In making up an inventory of the week, Aunt Nabby's levee takes a prominent place. If I were going to make it public, I could speak of the lady of the house as one of the old school in politeness and dignity; of the tables, spread with the choicest contributions of the village larders; of the attendants being as numerous as the guests; of the vocal performances that varied the social intercourse till nine o'clock, when the party dispersed with Aunt Nabby's blessing and with light hearts. How would that look beside the Queen's drawing-room, or a White-House reception?

After a week's recruit, I must give my energies to duties here. My first winter in

Boston is before me, and whatever it brings of interest shall be shared by you. Whenever I feel like having a family party, I shall bring forth your miniatures and place myself under their magnetic influence.

Uncle Standish has engaged one of the first artists here to copy father's portrait.

"You look strangely like your father, Nellie," said he to me, one day. "Did you ever try to remember him?"

That was an introduction to what I had waited for so long, and I sat by his side for an hour, listening as only a child could who had found at last what it had long been seeking,—the treasure of a parent's life and worth; and, though I strove in vain to link my memory to it, it opened a new channel of love in my heart that nothing but death can close. I can talk it over with you, May, better than I can write.

I am consoling myself as best I may for coming back without Susy. I had made so many little plans for her visit that of the two, perhaps, she was the least disappointed. Her self-sacrificing spirit is worthy of praise and imitation. That tear in Lily's eye outweighed her own inclinations and de-

aided the question. And I suppose she is far happier at home than she could be here, on the principle that the more we do for another's happiness the more we promote our own. When she and Lily are parted forever in this world, among other alleviating reflections will be that of her untiring devotion to her.

I received a cordial welcome back to school. Miss Wingate gave me a sisterly embrace, and inquired kindly about my friends. Hatty Meyer half-smothered me with kisses, and said she could not have done without me another day. I felt that *all* my friends were not left behind. We have shared every thing together, May, always; and I feel impatient to introduce you to our school-girls. I have made up some plans for next summer that will bring us all together. Hatty would enjoy Roseville hospitality right well, I know. Ranging through our woods and over the hills would just suit her adventurous spirit; and Emma, I think, would not find our atmosphere uncongenial to her delicate nature. Grandfather would see his beau-ideal of a lady in Miss Wingate, — though grand-

mother furnished him with that some time ago.

Uncle and aunt wish to be remembered to all at home, and would be so happy to reciprocate your hospitality; but that is very far out of the question. Nothing less than the call of duty would lead you so far from home.

Good-night, all. I lay down my pen, to meet you, perhaps, as I often do, in dream-land.

NELLIE.

December 18.

I HAVE not said any thing about the Bible-class for some time, but am more interested than I expected ever to be. I can now realize, in some degree, that the more one studies the Bible with a desire to be taught, the more we love it. Mr. H.'s personal interest in his pupils is a friendly introduction to his instructions, and wins a way to every heart.

I never before realized how deeply into-

esting is the Old Testament history. Mr. H. takes up the story of the patriarchs and kings so familiarly that they seem no longer traditional and beyond our sympathies, but lifelike, and corresponding to human nature in our day.

We are now on the history of David. His rising fortune, from the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem to the king of Israel, has nearly all the charm of novelty to me. After all, the son of Jesse is a more interesting hero than one who leads us through the fields of romance, and his harp discourses sweeter music than any modern bard.

We had a sermon last Lord's day morning, on the subject of influence, from the text—"None of us liveth to himself."

After applying it to the prominent acts of men and their general intercourse with each other, the speaker seemed to look through a microscopic glass at what we call the little affairs of life; and, lo! a multitude of active and indestructible forces appeared around us,—some purifying the moral atmosphere, and many scattering poison from their wings. Light words and little

deeds, as we call them, are so much the more nimble in their work of good or evil. They are constantly dropped — little seeds from which shall rise abundant harvests. Seen through such a medium, life looks like a sober reality, and to live to one's self impossible. May God help me so to live that it will be well for myself and others that I have lived!

I never thought that my influence was of great account, and have sometimes felt that I shall only be a supernumerary on the stage, and not of much importance; but I have learned that the lowliest may teach as high a lesson as the greatest, just as does the violet among flowers.

Margarette has been with me to-day, and it would do you good to see my bright little scholar. Aunt Martha is as much pleased with her as I am, and we all sit together in my chamber. We find the hour slips away very fast, and, when we can spare time, help her longer. Bessie and she are good friends, and to-day Bessie followed her to the door and put a three-cent piece into her hand. It was a part of her little charity-fund which she lays by from pocket-money. Mrs. Lory comes occasionally to

the house, and seems in better condition herself and pleased with Margarette's improvement. She has pretty constant employment now. The older children are in the daily and Sunday-schools, and on the whole the prospects of the family seem improving.

One need not go far from home here to be a missionary. Heathendom is within a stone's-throw of every door; and, for one looking with wistful eyes to the ends of the earth for a sphere of usefulness, it perhaps would be a good preparation to revolve a while in this narrower and equally dark circle. It makes me sad to think how many in the city know nothing of the blessed Saviour who died for them.

Living as we have, May, in the free air and bright sunshine all our days, the striking contrast of condition in these poor children is very painful. I have often wished they could take one day of comfort, such as our whole life has been; but then the next would be less endurable in consequence. But if our lot is happier than their's, there should be a corresponding gratitude, which

we are so slow to learn. Wise heads tell us that one reason why the poor are always with us is that we may exercise the heavenly spirit of benevolence; and, if gratitude and benevolence are both wanting in our hearts, we had better be in their condition than *our own more responsible one.*

The long winter evenings have fairly set in, and busy fingers and brains find ample time for exercise. As Christmas and New Year are coming, they are a little more lively than usual. We used to plan and compare notes together, May, about this time, and I miss your counsel very much.

I will try not to let the last "Happy New Year" at home ring so loud in memory as to drown the chimes of the new.

NELLIE.

December 20.

I RECOVERED slowly from the disappointment of finding I was to do without you this winter, dear Susy, for indeed I should be unpardonably selfish to cherish such feelings when you so nobly overcame them. And Lily, sweet child, is unconscious of any influence in the matter. Her little heart would almost break if she knew the sacrifice was made for her. Since your personal presence is wanting here, pray be as communicative as possible: an every-day journal is a great deal to ask, and I will say nothing more; or, seated in your little sunset room, gather inspiration from the hills, woods, and sky, and send me the amount by railroad. Those Roseville sunsets—how we used to make up the clouds into all imaginable shapes, mundane and aerial, and float away with them in fancy! I sometimes mount to the attic window here, to refresh my memory; but the pros-

pect is bounded by house-tops, and tall chimneys rise up between me and the cloud spirits. I think I see best with my eyes shut and with imagination on the wing.

I am happy with my friends here, notwithstanding a pulling at the heart-strings sometimes. We have arrived at an age when the object of life must be pursued at whatever sacrifice, and I hope I shall not prove unworthy of Uncle Standish's kindness and generosity.

We are expected to furnish a composition every fortnight at school. I generally take a theme from memory or experience. Excuse me, dear Susy, for making capital of yourself occasionally. You figure very gracefully in story, I assure you, under the disguise of Lucy or Annie, and are no doubt as willing to render friendly assistance in that way as in any other. I should hardly dare introduce Lily, lest I should appear to draw too largely from the ideal. Uncle Isaac makes quite a hero on paper, and his mill has served me a good turn in more than one emergency. If I were a

genius, I should set about immortalizing "our village" directly.

Saturday evening, with its hallowed influences and associations, is here, and the tide of feeling sets homewards. The almost Sabbath sanctity that pervades it there steals over me as it used to when the school-books were laid away on the top shelf, the Sunday-school lesson learned, and body and mind put in a condition for the coming holy day.

You have heard me speak of our Bible-class. I don't know what else could compensate me for the Sunday-school I so reluctantly gave up. Mr. H. is a most interesting teacher and a lovely man. His class is not at all sectarian, but is composed of members of several denominations; and all are united in love and appreciation of him. Though I would not rob Miss Neal of her right-hand scholar, or transfer your affections from the little vestry, I can't help wishing that you could catch some of the wisdom that falls from our honoured teacher's lips.

I have often thought if we should lose our eyesight and the outward world should

be a blank to our vision, yet memory would be a mirror to hold the reflection of what we once saw, and nothing but the loss of that could deprive us of its beauties. So will it be if we store our minds with the word of God. The eye might be dim, but it would be all written indelibly on our hearts. The hymns and verses that we first learned are all in safe keeping, and not one of our Sunday-school lessons is lost; which remark reminds me that I have a chapter to study, with references, for to-morrow. So, Susy dear, I will leave you for the present. Don't remember my former shortcomings; but write very soon to your past, present, and future friend

NELLIE.

December 23.

WE have been riding on horseback this afternoon, and a delightful time we have had of it. Snow has kept off remarkably, and the roads are in fine condition for equestrians. Three of us made the party, and we took the Tremont Road, one of the main avenues that lead to the country, and were soon beyond city limits.

The suburbs of Boston are celebrated for beauty, and it is easily discernible even in December. Princely mansions and tasteful cottages are scattered profusely over the hills and along the romantic roads, and woodlands and lawns meet the eye in every direction. Uncle owns a cottage in Roxbury, where the family reside in summer. A widow lady and daughter occupy it through the rest of the year. We stopped at the house, and made a very pleasant call. Mrs. Beach urged us to stay to tea; but we promised instead a visit next week. Six miles' riding brought us again to our own door

with much the same feelings with which you and I, May, would return from a canter with Peggy,—namely, high spirits and sharp appetites.

I spent an afternoon this week with my cronny, Hatty Meyer, and am delighted with the family. Her father is one of those genial souls that reflect sunshine all about them, attract little children, and make old people feel young. Mrs. Meyer is a sensible, quiet woman, motherly and kind. Harriet is the eldest of the children, and is what an older sister should be, in kindness and care. Instead of putting them out of her way or fretting at them, Hatty is their oracle and their plans are referred to her and their sports shared together. If I had a troop of brothers and sisters, I think I should try to imitate her example.

Another afternoon of this week Aunt Martha and I spent at the Athenaeum among paintings and statuary; and I need not say how much we enjoyed the company. The building is a noble one, and the apartments spacious and very inviting for a leisure hour.

The *effect* of a painting is as much as I can appreciate, leaving critics to put on spectacles. There was one picture that impressed me deeply, though it might not bear a severe quizzing:—"A peasant family at evening worship." A fresh young girl reading from the family Bible, the white-haired grandfather bending his dull ear to catch the inspired word, the grandmother in an easy chair, and a child on a stool by her side; the parents looking together over an open Bible, and a sleeping babe in a rustic cradle, complete the group. I felt like joining their simple devotions, and the "Cotters' Saturday Night" came to mind.

By the side of this picture, in strong contrast, is one of a scene in court. The proud courtiers of an earthly monarch, and the lowly worshippers of the King of kings,—side by side. The effect was very striking.

After we left the Athenæum, we walked round the Common,—a place for not describing which I owe you an apology. Bostonians are very proud of it, and justly so, I think. It is very large, being a walk of a mile around it. The surface is undulating.

Broad avenues shaded by majestic trees, clumps of smaller trees, green slopes and lawns, and a beautiful pond called Crescent Lake, combine to make it one of the finest public grounds in the country. There is *one tree that is supposed to be two hundred and fifty years old*. Some of its colossal branches are supported by iron bands, and it is protected by an iron fence. When the trees are in full foliage it must seem almost like a paradise, especially when the fountain throws its graceful jet from the lake.

The most prominent building in Boston is the State House, which stands on Beacon hill, one of the "Tri Mountains." It is particularly interesting to me, as the place where grandfather sat in honourable council for years. *A statue of Washington stands in the public hall*. Sometimes subjects interesting to ladies as well as men are discussed there; perhaps I shall be able to write more about it.

The afternoon's ride encroached upon my study-hours, and to make up for that I must cut short my letter.

NELLIE.

January 1.

Six o'clock in the morning, and a thrice-happy New Year to you all! Which of us spoke first this time, May?

The sun is smiling on the new-born year, and its natal day no doubt will be duly celebrated. The shops have been full of Christmas and New Year's gifts the past week, and almost every one we meet carries a package and a smiling face. Children are in fine spirits; and those who expect nothing—the poor, neglected, and forgotten ones—cluster about the show-windows and feed their eyes with the forbidden dainties. How I should like to give them all a taste of a happy New Year!

On coming out of a fancy-store the other day with Bessie, three little urchins stood looking in at the window with longing eyes. I was overcome by an impulse to take them in, but it was hard to make myself understood. They hung their heads, and were making a retreat, when Bessie stepped up as

interpreter, and they followed us into the store; but they took their bon-bons without a word, ran out of the shop, and turned the nearest corner. Poor things! Their suspicions were keener than the finer sensibilities, and no wonder!

Christmas passed very pleasantly with us. We attended Dr. ——'s church, and heard from him a very learned and interesting discourse on the nature and mission of the Saviour. His sermon, which was mainly on the deity of Christ, was clear and powerful. The text was from the first chapter of John's Gospel:—"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Uncle had a few friends to dine with us. Need I say how much he would have liked to return your thanksgiving hospitality? On Christmas eve I was presented with an elegant writing-desk, inlaid with pearl and furnished elaborately, (Uncle Standish's gift;) and the "Parables of the Saviour," in antique binding, from Hatty Meyer.

If you have been puzzled to know the fate of two missing old shoes, just cut the

string of the accompanying bundle, and the secret will come out. The only way I could take your measure, dear grandmother and grandfather, and I hope the new slippers will make good the temporary loss of the old ones.

Don't accuse me of vanity, May, when you meet Nellie face-to-face in the locket; it was sent in consideration of a wish expressed, and may be forgotten by you long ago.

I would charter an express, if possible, with tokens of remembrance and love to Roseville, and hardly know where to drop a *souvenir* among so many that I love. Please distribute the packages as directed.

One o'clock, P. M.

Your love-tokens have just arrived, and are beautiful. Aunt Martha is delighted with the specimen of your ingenuity, May; she says it is the prettiest piece of leather-work she has seen. Bessie is crowing over her doll, and has named it already for the

donor. And what shall I say for my share! They fill my eye and taste exactly. The books are just what I wanted. Cowper is my favourite poet, and is particularly attractive in this dress. Thank you a dozen times, dear grandfather and grandmother. The reticule is another thing I have been wanting, but is prettier than I ever expected. Thank you, May, a dozen times! Susy has sent me a ring, and Aunt Martha presented me this morning with an elegantly-bound and illustrated Bible. Mustn't I be a good girl after all this? A happy New Year again to you all, and many, many added to it, is the prayer of

NELLIE.

A happy New Year!
 With smiles and good cheer
 The greeting is passing around;
 If over the past
 A sad glance is cast,
 The New Year with joy must be crown'd.

The hours one by one
 Of the old year have run,
 O'erflowing with blessings from heaven;

And if to our share
 Fell a few drops of care,
 Even those *for our best good were given.*

While we deeply regret
 And would never forget
 The time past we've lost and misspent,
 Let us prove this new year
 That our sorrow's sincere,
 By improving each moment that's lent.

And first let it bear
 Thanksgiving and prayer
 To our Father and Saviour above;
 For the past we adore,
 For the future, implore
 Protection and guidance and love.

January 6.

I WAS very sorry to hear that grandfather has had an attack of rheumatism, and is still an invalid. I depend upon you, May, to tell me the whole truth in case of sickness. If any unfavourable symptoms appear, let me know at once. If you could dispense with my services as nurse, I could not forego the satisfaction of ministering in that capacity. And, dear grandfather, since I am deprived of the pleasure of being round your easy chair, I must content myself with administering a little advice. Do be careful about open doors, and don't put on cold slippers, nor venture out too soon, nor talk about growing old,—for young folks have the rheumatism, or neuralgia, which is worse; and no doubt you will be as well as ever soon. This is gratuitous advice, dear grandfather, and won't add to the doctor's bill.

We have been to Bunker Hill, (Charlestown,) and ascended the Monument. It is a

plain shaft of granite, rising to the height of two hundred and twenty-one feet. Standing at its base, and gazing up to the top stone, a feeling of awe and solemnity came over me. How long after the whole human race now living shall have passed away will this tower of strength raise its head as proudly as ever? And then comes the thought of immortality. When that monument shall have crumbled away, the soul will live,—shall rise forever, a monument of divine mercy or of justice!

It is a weary way up two hundred and twenty-one feet of stairs; but the view from the summit more than repaid us for the trouble. Ocean, city and country, hills, valleys and plains, lay beneath,—a vast picture set in the horizon, which was wrought up with sunset-clouds most gorgeously. It would seem easy to feel above the world in such an altitude; but the battle of life must be met below, in the jostle and friction of every day-experience.

We have made our promised visit to Beach Cottage. The afternoon would have graced the month of May with its sunshine

and soft breezes. Mrs. Beach and her daughter were expecting us. The mother is a very dignified lady; she has seen a great deal of the world, and puts a true estimate upon it. Her husband held a high office in Washington, but left little more at his death than a good name. They were obliged to reduce their style of living to the greatest simplicity. The daughter is an accomplished lady, the very counterpart of her mother in look and manner. She has scholars in music and drawing. I never saw such fine specimens of crayons as are hung here and there about the cottage. Uncle suggested that I should be her pupil, but I fear I cannot take time for it.

Beach Cottage must be a lovely retreat in summer. It is bounded on one side by a grove and on another by a fine park. The scenery is picturesque and the cottage-ground laid out most tastefully.

After a very social cup of tea Miss Beach treated us to some fine music, and early in the evening we returned home. We hope to have an early visit from our interesting friends.

February 7.

With a trembling hand I resume my pen, my dear grandparents. I have tried several times since recovering to write out a letter, but brain and fingers have refused to carry out my purpose; and it is now about four weeks since I wrote last.

The first week of my sickness I had little consciousness of my state. A high fever came on me and it left me in extreme weakness. They tell me when the fever was at its height I talked of home and called for you all by name. It is gone from me now, but I remember how I longed to see you, and I can never forget the first look I had of May. They told me she was coming and when I heard her step in the room I closed my eyes and did not open them till the greeting was over, and then but for a moment. I was afraid to trust my poor brain with too long a gaze. The most careful nursing and delicate attentions from the

whole household have been lavished upon me; and with God's blessing on the means used I have been carried through one of the most painful and dangerous fevers.

I know you are anxious to learn how I felt so near the valley of the shadow of death. My mind was confused and wandering much of the time, proving how uncertain a preparation for death is that which is made on a sick-bed. At times some familiar passage of Scripture would come into my memory and bear me up a while, till the next surge of the fever would set me adrift again. I remember one night, in an interval of troubled sleep, I was thinking of my unprofitable life and how I could prove that I was a Christian if I died then, and that verse came to my mind, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith shall be counted to him for righteousness." I fell asleep on that sweet promise.

When the crisis of the fever had passed, the sense of weakness seemed the only one left. As I opened my eyes upon the world again, old feelings returned one by

one, and for the past week I have felt myself growing stronger every hour. Oh that my faith in my blessed Saviour may increase and strengthen every day!

I thank you, grandmother, for sparing May so long. She has been like a ministering angel to me. Uncle and aunt have been as a father and mother to me. Their anxiety was equalled only by their kindness. Sickness is indeed a trial.

Miss Wingate has been with me a good deal, and has claims upon my gratitude which I can never forget. One night she stood over me bathing my head and trying to soothe me to sleep, when the thought of dying came over me like a dark cloud. I asked her if she thought I should die. She said, "I hope not, Nellie. Do you fear to die?" I did not answer; and she repeated the hymn—

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

I had sung it many times in church and at home, but never had my utter helplessness made it so appropriate as then. I can never

hear it again without the most touching associations.

Flowers in the garden are sweet pets, and in the woods and pastures and on the hill-sides; but never did I appreciate fully their mission till they bloomed in my sick-chamber. A fresh bouquet was never wanting, and as soon as I was able I got May to press a few from each, and by so doing have a collection of souvenirs which I shall cherish with peculiar feeling. They breathe a language which no florist can interpret,—eloquent to my ear alone.

I have walked down to school two or three times, and hope soon to be a regular attendant, though it will be some time before I can apply myself very closely to study; and by the time I get thoroughly recruited, perhaps, I shall begin to talk of home again.

Well, when the thought of being laid by from study four weeks and more troubles me, the mercy of a spared life and those lessons which cannot be learned except in the school of trial outweigh the other loss, and I feel that to repine would be sinful.

May says she must return home next week. She has borne confinement to the house better than I feared, but I want her to get the roses on her cheeks again before she leaves us.

The close of this letter is far behind the date. I have laid down my pen several times since I commenced it, and will only add—

Your ever-affectionate child,

NELLIE.

February 10.

I HAVE thought much of you, dear Susy, while unable to write; and, when it seemed probable that I never should see you again, how I longed to say a few parting words and clasp your hand once more! We have talked together about dying, but it is another thing to stand alone on the verge of eternity and gaze upon its shoreless tide, expecting soon to be launched upon it. I acknowledge I shrank from it, though sometimes the Saviour seemed near; but faith, if it was such, was weak; it had not been proved as it ought to be, by a life of obedience. Now that the light of a new day of probation has dawned upon me, may I prove the sincerity of the resolutions then made!—to live to the glory of God.

And our sweet Lily is pluming her wings for heaven, they say.

What a blessed prospect is her's! But for you, Susy, my tears flow. Yet what more could you desire for her than freedom from

pain? The most untiring attention on your part cannot procure for her one night's uninterrupted rest. The only relief for your anxiety and her sufferings is in death; and, since it has no terrors for her, it surely is an angel of mercy. We can anticipate the close of her sweet life:—

“So fades the summer cloud away;
 So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
 So gently shuts the eye of day;
 So dies a wave along the shore.”

I thank you, dear Susy, for your kindness and attention to my grandparents; and really I do not know how you could be spared from the village for any length of time. The thermometer in many a sitting-room would fall several degrees in your absence. Not to be personal, Susy, what a great gift a sunny, cheerful disposition is! One such spirit in a family is an antidote to almost every evil, and it circulates through a neighbourhood neutralizing the vinegar and gall that is likely to mingle in its constitution.

In looking over one of my old school-

books the other day, out dropped a pressed flower, which I recognised as a member of the Dell family. I remember when I gathered it—the last time we sat there before I came away. The process of embalming with tears is very successful. It retains its colour and fragrance remarkably. When the season comes round I hope we three shall meet again in those old trysting-places. The triple link that binds us had almost parted. Should we have been united in heaven?

NELLIE.

February 14.

MANY thanks, dear grandmother, for May's further leave of absence. Unless you had urged it she would not have consented to remain; but of course your wish is her pleasure. She is enjoying every moment of the time, admires the city, and all the sights and sounds of much interest she can tell you about. Last evening uncle took her to a concert. Aunt preferred remaining at home with me, as I am not allowed to go out in the evening yet. I gain strength rapidly, and am able to resume nearly all my accustomed duties of regular attendance at school and study, excepting music. An hour and a half at the piano is a greater demand than my strength will allow. Returning health has an exhilarating effect upon me such as I never felt before; and, if gratitude to the great Source of life and blessings rises correspondingly, I shall be happy indeed. My appetite, which

required coaxing at one time, is now only too keen for comfort, and those delicious tit-bits you sent, dear grandmother, are taken on allowance.

I am delighted to hear that you are getting along so comfortably at home, and that grandfather and the rheumatism have parted company. When the family circle is small each member is a character; and May, who would be missed in a crowd, must be more than missed at home. Susy writes me that she is a daily visitor there, and oftener, sometimes. She is the best substitute I can think of, and the sweetest girl I know.

Margarette is again a weekly visitor at our house, (I mean as a scholar;) for while I was sick she came every day to inquire for me, and the anxiety and feeling she manifested proved her susceptible, affectionate nature. I told her to bring her little sister along with her some time. She accepted the invitation very promptly, and we invited her to join her sister every week.

Mrs. Beach and her daughter spent a day with us last week. Miss Alice brought a fine collection of drawings and paintings for

my amusement. Some were sketches from nature; and one took my fancy so completely—"The By-Road"—that she asked me to accept it. Such a fine work of art seems almost too valuable to bestow upon a stranger. As such, I can never think of her again.

I can hardly realize that more than half of the term has gone. Only five weeks remain. If I live, I shall be at home to welcome the first spring birds,—perhaps in time to enjoy a Roseville snow-storm. I have not forgotten how to make snowballs nor lost my taste for sled-riding; though I have been quite out of practice this winter in those accomplishments.

The last four months have passed pleasantly with me. I might almost include those weeks in the darkened chamber. The kind ministrations of friends, and—may I hope?—the presence of Him who raised me from that sick bed, more than compensated for the pain and weakness. The peculiar enjoyment of convalescence everybody knows that has been restored from sickness. I wonder it has never been sung; Susy

could make a theme of it if she had ever experienced its pleasure.

May says she shall be with you next week without fail, and begs to be excused from writing and for not letting me tell the day, as, for once in her life, she should like to make a sensation and surprise you a little, (you know she was always roguish;) so I suppose I am in honour bound to keep the secret.

NELLIE.

February 20.

MAY will be the bearer of despatches this week. She is busy in and out of the chamber, dodging from closet to bureau, clearing pegs and drawers preparatory to packing;—a very exciting business for her, and rather a gloomy one to me. The trunk on the floor, ticketed "Roseville," looks invitingly commodious and well-ventilated—might do to take passage in. One month more, Providence permitting, and I shall be "homeward bound."

Uncle proposes that I should remain here another term. I refer the question to my dear grandparents, at the same time hinting that if I should be a successful candidate next fall for the seminary the intervening months ought to be spent at home. I have acquired some knowledge of Latin, so that I can keep along, with Cousin Fred's assistance; have improved somewhat in music, and shall be able to help May in her's.

I feel some hesitation about making objections to uncle's proposals, lest I might seem ungrateful. It has troubled me sometimes what return to make for his and aunt's kindness. The only one in my power is gratitude; and, if I should fail there, please, grandmother, tell me exactly what my duty is.

I told uncle I thought of going to the —— Seminary; he asked me if I could not pick up enough learning nearer home? I said it was your wish that I should go there, and gave him a circular of the institution to look over.

"Well, Nellie," said he, "when you graduate, what degree will you answer to?—mistress of science, arts, morals, and domestic economy?" I told uncle in plain terms that I must qualify myself for a teacher, and that was one of the highest schools for that object, as well as to make useful members of society.

At that he drummed on the table abstractedly, and said, "A teacher! Is that your wish, my dear,—independent of circumstances?"

I told him that it had always been my desire to have a good education, and, as that was the pleasantest road to independence for me, it was my duty to follow it; that I thought it more honourable to help one's self, if need be, than to fall back upon others; that the occupation of a teacher is elevating and influential, if chosen only as a means of good to others, and was a fit way of filling up time usefully.

You see, grandmother, I strung a few of your ideas together, and uncle declared that I had made my maiden speech, and since then he calls me "Professor Nellie."

I can guess what his cross-questioning meant. He is a noble, generous man, and would share his fortune with us willingly, if need be, which will hardly be the case while health and youth remain.

The trunk is ready to lock. May has done credit to your instructions in packing, grandmother; there's hardly a spare place for a letter.

The cars go at seven in the morning; it is now ten at night.

NELLIE.

February 27.

AFTER you and your trunk had turned the corner, dear May, instead of taking to my chamber and nursing the blues, I walked around the Common with aunt, made a call or two, and came back in spirits to bear the loneliness of your absence. I confess to a choking sensation when I went to our chamber, and coaxed Bessie to share my mattress for one night, which she did in consideration of a story in the morning. Accordingly, at five o'clock A. M. I was aroused by a vigorous shaking and shouting by Miss Bess, who presented her claim before I was quite ready to meet it. In vain did I plead for extension of payment. The little Shylock was inexorable; and, after subduing my peevishness and clearing the cobwebs from my brain and eyes, I fulfilled my promise, which I shall be careful not to repeat.

Bessie is a sweet pet, though; her rose-bud lips might tempt a honey-bee, and her

sunny curls challenge a butterfly-chase. Sometimes I fear she will be called for early, as Charley was.

I was dozing in my chair the other evening before the lights were brought in, when she came into the parlour and felt her way along to my chair. It was about her bedtime, and I thought she had come for a kiss; but, instead of that, she had a secret to deposit with me, and she thought perhaps it would be safer under cover of the night.

She wanted me to help her learn the Sermon on the Mount and surprise father and mother. So I took her on my lap, and she repeated the two first verses after me till she could say them alone. She has now learned the Beatitudes, and I advised her to say them to her father and mother; which she did to their surprise and delight. She took her idea of learning the Sermon on the Mount from hearing me say that you and I, May, learned it very early, and that it was a favourite portion of Scripture with grandfather.

I made a pleasant call this afternoon on Mrs. Jenkins; found her seated comfort-

ably before a cheerful fire, knitting and reading. She says she has the best of company with her always, pointing to a row of books on the mantel-piece. "And they furnish the treat," said she, with a knowing look; "and a rich one it is, too." She inquired for you, May, particularly. I gave her the good-by you left for her; and she sent her love to you. She says, "If she could only work as she once did, she shouldn't be worried about the future." Her purse is nearly empty, and now she "must lean her whole weight on the dear Lord," she says.

There is an institution here, called the "Old Ladies' Home,"—a comfortable retreat for those who have outlived their friends and means; and the payment of one hundred dollars by each secures to them a good home for life. Many who would shrink from the alms-house are glad to spend their last days at the "Home." The church of which Mrs. Jenkins is a member will, no doubt, with her consent, place her there.

I am glad, May, that you have seen my

school-friends and others. Emma and Harriet came home to dine with me yesterday. I hope we shall have a visit from them both next summer. I have stipulated with Harriet for the month of June; Emma's movements are more uncertain.

Ever your

NELLIE.

March 4.

UNCLE permitted me to read the letter you wrote to him, dear grandfather. It answered my wishes exactly. You and grandmother have the very best way of saying and doing every thing. Uncle is quite satisfied with your disposal of his proposition, and willing, under your version of the circumstances, to have me return home in March.

I was delighted with your proposal to them to spend the next season with us, though I am afraid there will be insuperable objections to it. My plan is for aunt and Bessie to come for the summer; for uncle to stay at the cottage through the week and take the cars Saturday evening for Roseville, as it is too far from Boston to come and go daily; but Aunt Martha is such a devoted wife I am afraid she will object to that arrangement. They have promised a long visit at any rate; and I

may get uncle on my side by making out a case of health for aunt to have some change of air on account of her bad headaches.

I cannot turn from those who have such claims upon my gratitude without regret; and the thought of being re-united to them soon is delightful.

I feel sorry to leave Margarete and her family, for they have found their way very far into my heart, and I think they are equally attached to me. Margarete makes rapid progress in every thing she undertakes, and her sister Nora is quite tractable. They enjoy so much the Wednesday afternoons that it would be hard for them to give them up. I must talk with Hatty about it. Perhaps she will take them under her patronage.

We are much pleased to see the improvement in their home. It is comfortably furnished and warmed; and good clothing, wholesome food, and some attention to neatness, have put a new face on affairs. I asked Margarete if she went regularly to Sunday-school? She said, "Yes," and proposed repeating some of her lessons. I was

surprised at her memory and understanding. She repeated with fluency the four first chapters in John's Gospel; and said she meant to learn the whole Gospel.

I regret, too, leaving my Bible-class and its honoured teacher. I know of nothing that can supply its place to me altogether.

NELLIE.

Boston, March 17.

NEXT week I expect to see you all in Roseville; but I cannot wait till then to say all that is in my heart.

I would not have believed it possible, when I cried myself to sleep in this chamber six months ago, that I should have tears to shed at parting from it, which now appears quite probable. Every day I am reminded that I must leave dear friends behind me. Little parties are made for me; keepsakes come and go, and nameless tokens of love are exchanged. Yesterday Emma put a casket in my hand, which contained an exquisite painting on ivory of a Greek female head, executed by herself, and set in gold; it makes a beautiful ornament. Miss Wingate has given me her miniature, and Harriet her's. I shall turn from the school-room with a full heart. Mr. Walker is a true gentleman, a kind

friend, and as a teacher has no superior in Boston.

I have taken a list of correspondents, which will put spare time to good use. Miss Wingate says she shall be most happy to introduce me to her friends in the seminary, which will be very pleasant. (You see I expect to pass examination.)

When I told Margarette I was going home, she hid her face in her apron, and would not be pacified for some time. I wasn't a very skilful comforter, however, for our tears fell together; but I promised her she should hear from me:—that she could see aunt often, who loves her about as well as I do; and that Hatty Meyer had agreed to keep up the Wednesday afternoon school for herself and Nora. She says she can never love anybody as well as me; but she will try to be good and learn for my sake. That was saying a great deal; but I do not doubt she felt it all at the time, poor child!

I have persuaded uncle that it is best for aunt to try the air of our hills for those bad headaches of her's; and if it agrees with

her better than that nearer home we may hope to keep her through the summer. In that case, Mrs. Beach and her daughter may be induced to visit us, which I know would please you all as well as me.

To-morrow evening I expect to receive my friends. It bears, I suppose, the sad name of a "take-leave party;" but I shall exert myself to have it pass off pleasantly. I wish you were here, May, to help make rainbows on the clouds.

The pleasure that I have looked forward to so long of seeing you all is near, and I cannot be unhappy. Six months from Roseville has introduced me to pleasant scenes and delightful associations, without weaning me at all from the old. Farewell till we meet.

NELLIE.

THE END.

