CHAPTER XIV.

THE MINISTER'S WOOING, 1857-1859.

DEATH OF MRS. STOWE'S OLDEST SON.--LETTER TO THE DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND.--LETTER TO HER DAUGHTERS IN PARIS.--LETTER TO HER SISTER CATHERINE.--VISIT TO BRUNSWICK AND ORR'S ISLAND.--WRITES "THE MINISTER'S WOOING" AND "THE PEARL OF ORR'S ISLAND."--MR. WHITTIER'S COMMENTS.--MR. LOWELL ON THE "MINISTER'S WOOING."--LETTER TO MRS. STOWE FROM MR. LOWELL.--JOHN RUSKIN ON THE "MINISTER'S WOOING."--A YEAR OF SADNESS.--LETTER TO LADY BYRON.--LETTER TO HER DAUGHTER.--DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE.

Immediately after Mrs. Stowe's return from England in June, 1857, a crushing sorrow came upon her in the death of her oldest son, Henry Ellis, who was drowned while bathing in the Connecticut River at Hanover, N. H., where he was pursuing his studies as a member of the Freshman class in Dartmouth College. This melancholy event transpired the 9th of July, 1857, and the 3d of August Mrs. Stowe wrote to the Duchess of Sutherland:--

DEAR FRIEND,--Before this reaches you you will have perhaps learned from other sources of the sad blow which has fallen upon us,--our

darling, our good, beautiful boy, snatched away in the moment of health and happiness. Alas! could I know that when I parted from my Henry on English shores that I should never see him more? I returned to my home, and, amid the jubilee of meeting the rest, was fain to be satisfied with only a letter from him, saying that his college examinations were coming on, and he must defer seeing me a week or two till they were over. I thought then of taking his younger brother and going up to visit him; but the health of the latter seeming unfavorably affected by the seacoast air, I turned back with him to a water-cure establishment. Before I had been two weeks absent a fatal telegram hurried me home, and when I arrived there it was to find the house filled with his weeping classmates, who had just come bringing his remains. There he lay so calm, so placid, so peaceful, that I could not believe that he would not smile upon me, and that my voice which always had such power over him could not recall him. There had always been such a peculiar union, such a tenderness between us. I had had such power always to call up answering feelings to my own, that it seemed impossible that he could be silent and unmoved at my grief. But yet, dear friend, I am sensible that in this last sad scene I had an alleviation that was not granted to you. I recollect, in the mournful letter you wrote me about that time, you said that you mourned that you had never told your own dear one how much you loved him. That sentence touched me at the time. I laid it to heart, and from that time lost no occasion of expressing to my children those feelings that we too often defer to express to our dearest friends till it is forever too late.

He did fully know how I loved him, and some of the last loving words he spoke were of me. The very day that he was taken from us, and when he was just rising from the table of his boarding-house to go whence he never returned, some one noticed the seal ring, which you may remember to have seen on his finger, and said, How beautiful that ring is! Yes, he said, and best of all, it was my mother's gift to me. That ring, taken from the lifeless hand a few hours later, was sent to me. Singularly enough, it is broken right across the name from a fall a little time previous. . . .

It is a great comfort to me, dear friend, that I took Henry with me to Dunrobin. I hesitated about keeping him so long from his studies, but still I thought a mind so observing and appreciative might learn from such a tour more than through books, and so it was. He returned from England full of high resolves and manly purposes. "I may not be what the world calls a Christian," he wrote, "but I will live such a life as a Christian ought to live, such a life as every true man ought to live." Henceforth he became remarkable for a strict order and energy, and a vigilant temperance and care of his bodily health, docility and deference to his parents and teachers, and perseverance in every duty.

. . . Well, from the hard battle of this life he is excused, and the will is taken for the deed, and whatever comes his heart will not be pierced as mine is. But I am glad that I can connect him with all my choicest remembrances of the Old World.

Dunrobin will always be dearer to me now, and I have felt towards you and the duke a turning of spirit, because I remember how kindly you always looked on and spoke to him. I knew then it was the angel of your lost one that stirred your hearts with tenderness when you looked on another so near his age. The plaid that the duke gave him, and which he valued as one of the chief of his boyish treasures, will hang in his room--for still we have a room that we call his.

You will understand, you will feel, this sorrow with us as few can. My poor husband is much prostrated. I need not say more: you know what this must be to a father's heart. But still I repeat what I said when I saw you last. Our dead are ministering angels; they teach us to love, they fill us with tenderness for all that can suffer. These weary hours when sorrow makes us for the time blind and deaf and dumb, have their promise. These hours come in answer to our prayers for nearness to God. It is always our treasure that the lightning strikes. . . . I have poured out my heart to you because you can understand. While I was visiting in Hanover, where Henry died, a poor, deaf old slave woman, who has still five children in bondage, came to comfort me. "Bear up, dear soul, she said; you must bear it, for the Lord loves ye." She said further, "Sunday is a heavy day to me, 'cause I can't work, and can't hear preaching, and can't read, so I can't keep my mind off my poor children. Some on 'em the blessed Master's got, and they's safe; but, oh, there are five that I don't know where they are."

What are our mother sorrows to this! I shall try to search out and redeem these children, though, from the ill success of efforts already made, I fear it will be hopeless. Every sorrow I have, every lesson on the sacredness of family love, makes me the more determined to resist to the last this dreadful evil that makes so many mothers so much deeper mourners than I ever can be. . . .

Affectionately yours,

H. B. STOWE.

About this same time she writes to her daughters in Paris: "Can anybody tell what sorrows are locked up with our best affections, or what pain may be associated with every pleasure? As I walk the house, the pictures he used to love, the presents I brought him, and the photographs I meant to show him, ail pierce my heart, I have had a dreadful faintness of sorrow come over me at times. I have felt so crushed, so bleeding, so helpless, that I could only call on my Saviour with groanings that could not be uttered. Your papa justly said, 'Every child that dies is for the time being an only one; yes--his individuality no time, no change, can ever replace.'

"Two days after the funeral your father and I went to Hanover. We saw Henry's friends, and his room, which was just as it was the day he left it.

"'There is not another such room in the college as his,' said one of his classmates with tears. I could not help loving the dear boys as they would come and look sadly in, and tell us one thing and another that they remembered of him. 'He was always talking of his home and his sisters,' said one. The very day he died he was so happy because I had returned, and he was expecting soon to go home and meet me. He died with that dear thought in his heart.

"There was a beautiful lane leading down through a charming glen to the river. It had been for years the bathing-place of the students, and into the pure, clear water he plunged, little dreaming that he was never to come out alive.

"In the evening we went down to see the boating club of which he was a member. He was so happy in this boating club. They had a beautiful boat called the Una, and a uniform, and he enjoyed it so much.

"This evening all the different crews were out; but Henry's had their flag furled, and tied with black crape. I felt such love to the dear boys, all of them, because they loved Henry, that it did not pain me as it otherwise would. They were glad to see us there, and I was glad that we could be there. Yet right above where their boats were gliding in the evening light lay the bend in the river, clear, still, beautiful, fringed with overhanging pines, from whence our boy went upward to heaven. To heaven--if earnest, manly purpose, if sincere,

deliberate strife with besetting sin is accepted of God, as I firmly believe it is. Our dear boy was but a beginner in the right way. Had he lived, we had hoped to see all wrong gradually fall from his soul as the worn-out calyx drops from the perfected flower. But Christ has taken him into his own teaching.

"'And one view of Jesus as He is,
Will strike all sin forever dead.'

"Since I wrote to you last we have had anniversary meetings, and with all the usual bustle and care, our house full of company. Tuesday we received a beautiful portrait of our dear Henry, life-size, and as perfect almost as life. It has just that half-roguish, half-loving expression with which he would look at me sometimes, when I would come and brush back his hair and look into his eyes. Every time I go in or out of the room, it seems to give so bright a smile that I almost think that a spirit dwells within it.

"When I am so heavy, so weary, and go about as if I were wearing an arrow that had pierced my heart, I sometimes look up, and this smile seems to say, 'Mother, patience, I am happy. In our Father's house are many mansions.' Sometimes I think I am like a gardener who has planted the seed of some rare exotic. He watches as the two little points of green leaf first spring above the soil. He shifts it from soil to soil, from pot to pot. He watches it, waters it, saves it through thousands of mischiefs and accidents. He counts every leaf, and marks

the strengthening of the stem, till at last the blossom bud was fully formed. What curiosity, what eagerness,--what expectation--what longing now to see the mystery unfold in the new flower.

"Just as the calyx begins to divide and a faint streak of color becomes visible,--lo! in one night the owner of the greenhouse sends and takes it away. He does not consult me, he gives me no warning; he silently takes it and I look, but it is no more. What, then? Do I suppose he has destroyed the flower? Far from it; I know that he has taken it to his own garden. What Henry might have been I could guess better than any one. What Henry is, is known to Jesus only."

Shortly after this time Mrs. Stowe wrote to her sister Catherine:--

If ever I was conscious of an attack of the Devil trying to separate me from the love of Christ, it was for some days after the terrible news came. I was in a state of great physical weakness, most agonizing, and unable to control my thoughts. Distressing doubts as to Henry's spiritual state were rudely thrust upon my soul. It was as if a voice had said to me: "You trusted in God, did you? You believed that He loved you! You had perfect confidence that he would never take your child till the work of grace was mature! Now He has hurried him into eternity without a moment's warning, without preparation, and where is he?"

I saw at last that these thoughts were irrational, and contradicted

the calm, settled belief of my better moments, and that they were dishonorable to God, and that it was my duty to resist them, and to assume and steadily maintain that Jesus in love had taken my dear one to his bosom. Since then the Enemy has left me in peace.

It is our duty to assume that a thing which would be in its very nature unkind, ungenerous, and unfair has not been done. What should we think of the crime of that human being who should take a young mind from circumstances where it was progressing in virtue, and throw it recklessly into corrupting and depraving society? Particularly if it were the child of one who had trusted and confided in Him for years. No! no such slander as this shall the Devil ever fix in my mind against my Lord and my God! He who made me capable of such an absorbing, unselfish devotion for my children, so that I would sacrifice my eternal salvation for them, He certainly did not make me capable of more love, more disinterestedness than He has himself. He invented mothers' hearts, and He certainly has the pattern in his own, and my poor, weak rush-light of love is enough to show me that some things can and some things cannot be done. Mr. Stowe said in his sermon last Sunday that the mysteries of God's ways with us must be swallowed up by the greater mystery of the love of Christ, even as Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians.

Papa and mamma are here, and we have been reading over the "Autobiography and Correspondence." It is glorious, beautiful; but more of this anon.

Your affectionate sister,

HATTIE.

ANDOVER, August 24, 1857.

DEAR CHILDREN,--Since anniversary papa and I have been living at home; Grandpa and Grandma Beecher are here also, and we have had much comfort in their society. . . . To-night the last sad duty is before us. The body is to be removed from the receiving tomb in the Old South Churchyard, and laid in the graveyard near by. Pearson has been at work for a week on a lot that is to be thenceforth ours.

"Our just inheritance consecrated by his grave."

How little he thought, wandering there as he often has with us, that his mortal form would so soon be resting there. Yet that was written for him. It was as certain then as now, and the hour and place of our death is equally certain, though we know it not.

It seems selfish that I should yearn to lie down by his side, but I never knew how much I loved him till now.

The one lost piece of silver seems more than all the rest,--the one lost sheep dearer than all the fold, and I so long for one word, one

look, one last embrace. . . .

ANDOVER, September 1, 1857.

MY DARLING CHILDREN,--I must not allow a week to pass without sending a line to you. . . . Our home never looked lovelier. I never saw Andover look so beautiful; the trees so green, the foliage so rich. Papa and I are just starting to spend a week in Brunswick, for I am so miserable--so weak--the least exertion fatigues me, and much of my time I feel a heavy languor, indifferent to everything. I know nothing is so likely to bring me up as the air of the seaside. . . . I have set many flowers around Henry's grave, which are blossoming; pansies, white immortelle, white petunia, and verbenas. Papa walks there every day, often twice or three times. The lot has been rolled and planted with fine grass, which is already up and looks green and soft as velvet, and the little birds gather about it. To-night as I sat there the sky was so beautiful, all rosy, with the silver moon looking out of it. Papa said with a deep sigh, "I am submissive, but not reconciled."

BRUNSWICK, September 6,1857.

MY DEAR GIRLS,--Papa and I have been here for four or five days past. We both of us felt so unwell that we thought we would try the sea air and the dear old scenes of Brunswick. Everything here is just as we left it. We are staying with Mrs. Upham, whose house is as wide, cool,

and hospitable as ever. The trees in the yard have grown finely, and Mrs. Upham has cultivated flowers so successfully that the house is all surrounded by them. Everything about the town is the same, even to Miss Gidding's old shop, which is as disorderly as ever, presenting the same medley of tracts, sewing-silk, darning-cotton, and unimaginable old bonnets, which existed there of yore. She has been heard to complain that she can't find things as easily as once. Day before yesterday papa, Charley, and I went down to Harpswell about seven o'clock in the morning. The old spruces and firs look lovely as ever, and I was delighted, as I always used to be, with every step of the way. Old Gotchell's mill stands as forlorn as ever in its sandy wastes, and More Brook creeps on glassy and clear beyond. Arriving at Harpswell a glorious hot day, with scarce a breeze to ruffle the water, papa and Charley went to fish for cunners, who soon proved too cunning for them, for they ate every morsel of bait off the hooks, so that out of twenty bites they only secured two or three. What they did get were fried for our dinner, reinforced by a fine clam-chowder. The evening was one of the most glorious I ever saw--a calm sea and round, full moon; Mrs. Upham and I sat out on the rocks between the mainland and the island until ten o'clock. I never did see a more perfect and glorious scene, and to add to it there was a splendid northern light dancing like spirits in the sky. Had it not been for a terrible attack of mosquitoes in our sleeping-rooms, that kept us up and fighting all night, we should have called it a perfect success.

We went into the sea to bathe twice, once the day we came, and about

eight o'clock in the morning before we went back. Besides this we have been to Middle Bay, where Charley, standing where you all stood before him, actually caught a flounder with his own hand, whereat he screamed loud enough to scare all the folks on Eagle Island. We have also been to Maquoit. We have visited the old pond, and, if I mistake not, the relics of your old raft yet float there; at all events, one or two fragments of a raft are there, caught among rushes.

I do not realize that one of the busiest and happiest of the train who once played there shall play there no more. "He shall return to his house no more, neither shall his place know him any more." I think I have felt the healing touch of Jesus of Nazareth on the deep wound in my heart, for I have golden hours of calm when I say: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." So sure am I that the most generous love has ordered all, that I can now take pleasure to give this little proof of my unquestioning confidence in resigning one of my dearest comforts to Him. I feel very near the spirit land, and the words, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," are very sweet.

Oh, if God would give to you, my dear children, a view of the infinite beauty of Eternal Love,--if He would unite us in himself, then even on earth all tears might be wiped away.

Papa has preached twice to-day, and is preaching again to-night. He told me to be sure to write and send you his love. I hope his health

is getting better. Mrs. Upham sends you her best love, and hopes you will make her a visit some time.

Good-by, my darlings. Come soon to your affectionate mother.

H. B. S.

The winter of 1857 was passed quietly and uneventfully at Andover. In November Mrs. Stowe contributed to the "Atlantic Monthly" a touching little allegory, "The Mourning Veil."

In December, 1858, the first chapter of "The Minister's Wooing" appeared in the same magazine. Simultaneously with this story was written "The Pearl of Orr's Island," published first as a serial in the "Independent."

She dictated a large part of "The Minister's Wooing" under a great pressure of mental excitement, and it was a relief to her to turn to the quiet story of the coast of Maine, which she loved so well.

In February, 1874, Mrs. Stowe received the following words from Mr. Whittier, which are very interesting in this connection: "When I am in the mood for thinking deeply I read 'The Minister's Wooing.' But 'The Pearl of Orr's Island' is my favorite. It is the most charming New England idyl ever written."

"The Minister's Wooing" was received with universal commendation from the first, and called forth the following appreciative words from the pen of Mr. James Russell Lowell:--

"It has always seemed to us that the anti-slavery element in the two former novels by Mrs. Stowe stood in the way of a full appreciation of her remarkable genius, at least in her own country. It was so easy to account for the unexampled popularity of 'Uncle Tom' by attributing it to a cheap sympathy with sentimental philanthropy! As people began to recover from the first enchantment, they began also to resent it and to complain that a dose of that insane Garrison-root which takes the reason prisoner had been palmed upon them without their knowing it, and that their ordinary watergruel of fiction, thinned with sentiment and thickened with moral, had been hocussed with the bewildering hasheesh of Abolition. We had the advantage of reading that truly extraordinary book for the first time in Paris, long after the whirl of excitement produced by its publication had subsided, in the seclusion of distance, and with a judgment unbiased by those political sympathies which it is impossible, perhaps unwise, to avoid at home. We felt then, and we believe now, that the secret of Mrs. Stowe's power lay in that same genius by which the great successes in creative literature have always been achieved,--the genius that instinctively goes right to the organic elements of human nature, whether under a white skin or a black, and which disregards as trivial the conventional and factitious notions which make so large a part both of our thinking and feeling. Works of imagination written with an aim to

immediate impression are commonly ephemeral, like Miss Martineau's 'Tales,' and Elliott's 'Corn-law Rhymes;' but the creative faculty of Mrs. Stowe, like that of Cervantes in 'Don Quixote' and of Fielding in 'Joseph Andrews,' overpowered the narrow specialty of her design, and expanded a local and temporary theme with the cosmopolitanism of genius.

"It is a proverb that 'There is a great deal of human nature in men,' but it is equally and sadly true that there is amazingly little of it in books. Fielding is the only English novelist who deals with life in its broadest sense. Thackeray, his disciple and congener, and Dickens, the congener of Smollett, do not so much treat of life as of the strata of society; the one studying nature from the club-room window, the other from the reporters' box in the police court. It may be that the general obliteration of distinctions of rank in this country, which is generally considered a detriment to the novelist, will in the end turn to his advantage by compelling him to depend for his effects on the contrasts and collisions of innate character, rather than on those shallower traits superinduced by particular social arrangements, or by hereditary associations. Shakespeare drew ideal, and Fielding natural men and women; Thackeray draws either gentlemen or snobs, and Dickens either unnatural men or the oddities natural only in the lowest grades of a highly artificial system of society. The first two knew human nature; of the two latter, one knows what is called the world, and the other the streets of London. Is it possible that the very social democracy which here robs the novelist of so much romance,

so much costume, so much antithesis of caste, so much in short that is purely external, will give him a set-off in making it easier for him to get at that element of universal humanity which neither of the two extremes of an aristocratic system, nor the salient and picturesque points of contrast between the two, can alone lay open to him?

"We hope to see this problem solved by Mrs. Stowe. That kind of romantic interest which Scott evolved from the relations of lord and vassal, of thief and clansman, from the social more than the moral contrast of Roundhead and Cavalier, of far-descended pauper and nouveau riche which Cooper found in the clash of savagery with civilization, and the shaggy virtue bred on the border-land between the two, Indian by habit, white by tradition, Mrs. Stowe seems in her former novels to have sought in a form of society alien to her sympathies, and too remote for exact study, or for the acquirement of that local truth which is the slow result of unconscious observation. There can be no stronger proof of the greatness of her genius, of her possessing that conceptive faculty which belongs to the higher order of imagination, than the avidity with which 'Uncle Tom' was read at the South. It settled the point that this book was true to human nature, even if not minutely so to plantation life.

"If capable of so great a triumph where success must so largely depend on the sympathetic insight of her mere creative power, have we not a right to expect something far more in keeping with the requirements of art, now that her wonderful eye is to be the mirror of familiar

scenes, and of a society in which she was bred, of which she has seen so many varieties, and that, too, in the country, where it is most naive and original? It is a great satisfaction to us that in 'The Minister's Wooing' she has chosen her time and laid her scene amid New England habits and traditions. There is no other writer who is so capable of perpetuating for us, in a work of art, a style of thought and manners which railways and newspapers will soon render as palæozoic as the mastodon or the megalosaurians. Thus far the story has fully justified our hopes. The leading characters are all fresh and individual creations. Mrs. Kate Scudder, the notable Yankee housewife; Mary, in whom Cupid is to try conclusions with Calvin; James Marvyn, the adventurous boy of the coast, in whose heart the wild religion of nature swells till the strait swathings of Puritanism are burst; Dr. Hopkins, the conscientious minister come upon a time when the social prestige of the clergy is waning, and whose independence will test the voluntary system of ministerial support; Simeon Brown, the man of theological dialectics, in whom the utmost perfection of creed is shown to be not inconsistent with the most contradictory imperfection of life,--all these are characters new to literature. And the scene is laid just far enough away in point of time to give proper tone and perspective.

"We think we find in the story, so far as it has proceeded, the promise of an interest as unhackneyed as it will be intense. There is room for the play of all the passions and interests that make up the great tragi-comedy of life, while all the scenery and accessories will

be those which familiarity has made dear to us. We are a little afraid of Colonel Burr, to be sure, it is so hard to make a historical personage fulfill the conditions demanded by the novel of every-day life. He is almost sure either to fall below our traditional conception of him, or to rise above the natural and easy level of character, into the vague or the melodramatic. Moreover, we do not want a novel of society from Mrs. Stowe; she is quite too good to be wasted in that way, and her tread is much more firm on the turf of the "door-yard" or the pasture, and the sanded floor of the farmhouse, than on the velvet of the salôn. We have no notion how she is to develop her plot, but we think we foresee chances for her best power in the struggle which seems foreshadowed between Mary's conscientious admiration of the doctor and her half-conscious passion for James, before she discovers that one of these conflicting feelings means simply moral liking and approval, and the other that she is a woman and that she loves. And is not the value of dogmatic theology as a rule of life to be thoroughly tested for the doctor by his slave-trading parishioners? Is he not to learn the bitter difference between intellectual acceptance of a creed and that true partaking of the sacrament of love and faith and sorrow that makes Christ the very life-blood of our being and doing? And has not James Marvyn also his lesson to be taught? We foresee him drawn gradually back by Mary from his recoil against Puritan formalism to a perception of how every creed is pliant and plastic to a beautiful nature, of how much charm there may be in an hereditary faith, even if it have become almost conventional.

"In the materials of character already present in the story, there is scope for Mrs. Stowe's humor, pathos, clear moral sense, and quick eye for the scenery of life. We do not believe that there is any one who, by birth, breeding, and natural capacity, has had the opportunity to know New England so well as she, or who has the peculiar genius so to profit by the knowledge. Already there have been scenes in 'The Minister's Wooing' that, in their lowness of tone and quiet truth, contrast as charmingly with the humid vagueness of the modern school of novel-writers as 'The Vicar of Wakefield' itself, and we are greatly mistaken if it do not prove to be the most characteristic of Mrs. Stowe's works, and therefore that on which her fame will chiefly rest with posterity."

"The Minister's Wooing" was not completed as a serial till December, 1859. Long before its completion Mrs. Stowe received letters from many interested readers, who were as much concerned for the future of her "spiritual children," as George Eliot would call them, as if they had been flesh and blood.

The following letter from Mr. Lowell is given as the most valuable received by Mrs. Stowe at this time:--

CAMBRIDGE, February 4, 1859.

MY DEAR MRS. STOWE,--I certainly did mean to write you about your

story, but only to cry bravissima! with the rest of the world.
I intended no kind of criticism; deeming it wholly out of place, and in the nature of a wet-blanket, so long as a story is unfinished. When I got the first number in MS., I said to Mr. Phillips that I thought it would be the best thing you had done, and what followed has only confirmed my first judgment. From long habit, and from the tendency of my studies, I cannot help looking at things purely from an æsthetic point of view, and what I valued in "Uncle Tom" was the genius, and not the moral. That is saying a good deal, for I never use the word genius at haphazard, and always (perhaps, too) sparingly.
I am going to be as frank as I ought to be with one whom I value so highly. What especially charmed me in the new story was, that you had taken your stand on New England ground. You are one of the few persons lucky enough to be born with eyes in your head,--that is, with something behind the eyes which makes them of value. To most people the seeing apparatus is as useless as the great telescope at the observatory is to me,--something to stare through with no intelligent result. Nothing could be better than the conception of your plot (so far as I divine it), and the painting-in of your figures. As for "theology," it is as much a part of daily life in New England as in Scotland, and all I should have to say about it is this: let it crop out when it naturally comes to the surface, only don't dig down to it. A moral aim is a fine thing, but in making a story an artist is a traitor who does not sacrifice everything to art. Remember the lesson that Christ gave us twice over. First, he preferred the useless Mary to the dish-washing Martha, and next, when that exemplary moralist and

friend of humanity, Judas, objected to the sinful waste of the Magdalen's ointment, the great Teacher would rather it should be wasted in an act of simple beauty than utilized for the benefit of the poor. Cleopatra was an artist when she dissolved her biggest pearl to captivate her Antony-public. May I, a critic by profession, say the whole truth to a woman of genius? Yes? And never be forgiven? I shall try, and try to be forgiven, too. In the first place, pay no regard to the advice of anybody. In the second place, pay a great deal to mine! A Kilkenny-cattish style of advice? Not at all. My advice is to follow your own instincts,--to stick to nature, and to avoid what people commonly call the "Ideal;" for that, and beauty, and pathos, and success, all lie in the simply natural. We all preach it, from Wordsworth down, and we all, from Wordsworth down, don't practice it. Don't I feel it every day in this weary editorial mill of mine, that there are ten thousand people who can write "ideal" things for one who can see, and feel, and reproduce nature and character? Ten thousand, did I say? Nay, ten million. What made Shakespeare so great? Nothing but eyes and--faith in them. The same is true of Thackeray. I see nowhere more often than in authors the truth that men love their opposites. Dickens insists on being tragic and makes shipwreck.

I always thought (forgive me) that the Hebrew parts of "Dred" were a mistake. Do not think me impertinent; I am only honestly anxious that what I consider a very remarkable genius should have faith in itself. Let your moral take care of itself, and remember that an author's writing-desk is something infinitely higher than a pulpit. What I call

"care of itself" is shown in that noble passage in the February number about the ladder up to heaven. That is grand preaching and in the right way. I am sure that "The Minister's Wooing" is going to be the best of your products hitherto, and I am sure of it because you show so thorough a mastery of your material, so true a perception of realities, without which the ideality is impossible.

As for "orthodoxy," be at ease. Whatever is well done the world finds orthodox at last, in spite of all the Fakir journals, whose only notion of orthodoxy seems to be the power of standing in one position till you lose all the use of your limbs. If, with your heart and brain, you are not orthodox, in Heaven's name who is? If you mean "Calvinistic," no woman could ever be such, for Calvinism is logic, and no woman worth the name could ever live by syllogisms. Woman charms a higher faculty in us than reason, God be praised, and nothing has delighted me more in your new story than the happy instinct with which you develop this incapacity of the lovers' logic in your female characters. Go on just as you have begun, and make it appear in as many ways as you like,--that, whatever creed may be true, it is not true and never will be that man can be saved by machinery. I can speak with some chance of being right, for I confess a strong sympathy with many parts of Calvinistic theology, and, for one thing, believe in hell with all my might, and in the goodness of God for all that.

I have not said anything. What could I say? One might almost as well

advise a mother about the child she still bears under her heart, and say, give it these and those qualities, as an author about a work yet in the brain.

Only this I will say, that I am honestly delighted with "The Minister's Wooing;" that reading it has been one of my few editorial pleasures; that no one appreciates your genius more highly than I, or hopes more fervently that you will let yourself go without regard to this, that, or t'other. Don't read any criticisms on your story: believe that you know better than any of us, and be sure that everybody likes it. That I know. There is not, and never was, anybody so competent to write a true New England poem as yourself, and have no doubt that you are doing it. The native sod sends up the best inspiration to the brain, and you are as sure of immortality as we all are of dying,--if you only go on with entire faith in yourself.

Faithfully and admiringly yours,

J. K. LOWELL.

After the book was published in England, Mr. Buskin wrote to Mrs. Stowe:--

"Well, I have read the book now, and I think nothing can be nobler than the noble parts of it (Mary's great speech to Colonel Burr, for instance), nothing wiser than the wise parts of it (the author's

parenthetical and under-breath remarks), nothing more delightful than the delightful parts (all that Virginie says and does), nothing more edged than the edged parts (Candace's sayings and doings, to wit); but I do not like the plan of the whole, because the simplicity of the minister seems to diminish the probability of Mary's reverence for him. I cannot fancy even so good a girl who would not have laughed at him. Nor can I fancy a man of real intellect reaching such a period of life without understanding his own feelings better, or penetrating those of another more quickly.

"Then I am provoked at nothing happening to Mrs. Scudder, whom I think as entirely unendurable a creature as ever defied poetical justice at the end of a novel meant to irritate people. And finally, I think you are too disdainful of what ordinary readers seek in a novel, under the name of 'interest,'--that gradually developing wonder, expectation, and curiosity which makes people who have no self-command sit up till three in the morning to get to the crisis, and people who have self-command lay the book down with a resolute sigh, and think of it all the next day through till the time comes for taking it up again.
Still, I know well that in many respects it was impossible for you to treat this story merely as a work of literary art. There must have been many facts which you could not dwell upon, and which no one may judge by common rules.

"It is also true, as you say once or twice in the course of the work, that we have not among us here the peculiar religious earnestness you

have mainly to describe.

"We have little earnest formalism, and our formalists are for the most part hollow, feeble, uninteresting, mere stumbling-blocks. We have the Simeon Brown species, indeed; and among readers even of his kind the book may do some good, and more among the weaker, truer people, whom it will shake like mattresses,--making the dust fly, and perhaps with it some of the sticks and quill-ends, which often make that kind of person an objectionable mattress. I write too lightly of the book,--far too lightly,--but your letter made me gay, and I have been lighter-hearted ever since; only I kept this after beginning it, because I was ashamed to send it without a line to Mrs. Browning as well. I do not understand why you should apprehend (or rather anticipate without apprehension) any absurd criticism on it. It is sure to be a popular book,--not as 'Uncle Tom' was, for that owed part of its popularity to its dramatic effect (the flight on the ice, etc.), which I did not like; but as a true picture of human life is always popular. Nor, I should think, would any critics venture at all to carp at it.

"The Candace and Virginie bits appear to me, as far as I have yet seen, the best. I am very glad there is this nice French lady in it: the French are the least appreciated in general, of all nations, by other nations. . . . My father says the book is worth its weight in gold, and he knows good work."

When we turn from these criticisms and commendations to the inner history of this period, we find that the work was done in deep sadness of heart, and the undertone of pathos that forms the dark background of the brightest and most humorous parts of "The Minister's Wooing" was the unconscious revelation of one of sorrowful spirit, who, weary of life, would have been glad to lie down with her arms "round the wayside cross, and sleep away into a brighter scene."

Just before beginning the writing of "The Minister's Wooing" she sent the following letter to Lady Byron:--

ANDOVER, June 30, 1858.

MY DEAR FRIEND,--I did long to hear from you at a time when few knew how to speak, because I knew that you did know everything that sorrow can teach,--you whose whole life has been a crucifixion, a long ordeal. But I believe that the "Lamb," who stands forever in the midst of the throne "as it had been slain," has everywhere his followers, those who are sent into the world, as he was, to suffer for the redemption of others, and like him they must look to the joy set before them of redeeming others.

I often think that God called you to this beautiful and terrible ministry when He suffered you to link your destiny with one so strangely gifted, so fearfully tempted, and that the reward which is to meet you, when you enter within the veil, where you must soon pass,

will be to see the angel, once chained and defiled within him, set free from sin and glorified, and so know that to you it has been given, by your life of love and faith, to accomplish this glorious change.

I think very much on the subject on which you conversed with me once, --the future state of retribution. It is evident to me that the spirit of Christianity has produced in the human spirit a tenderness of love which wholly revolts from the old doctrine on the subject, and I observe the more Christ-like any one becomes, the more impossible it seems for him to accept it; and yet, on the contrary, it was Christ who said, "Fear Him that is able to destroy soul and body in hell," and the most appalling language on this subject is that of Christ himself. Certain ideas once prevalent certainly must be thrown off. An endless infliction for past sins was once the doctrine that we now generally reject. The doctrine as now taught is that of an eternal persistence in evil necessitating eternal punishment, since evil induces misery by an eternal nature of things, and this, I fear, is inferable from the analogies of nature, and confirmed by the whole implication of the Bible.

Is there any fair way of disposing of the current of assertion, and the still deeper undercurrent of implication, on this subject, without one which loosens all faith in revelation, and throws us on pure naturalism? But of one thing I am sure,--probation does not end with this life, and the number of the redeemed may therefore be infinitely

greater than the world's history leads us to suppose.

The views expressed in this letter certainly throw light on many passages in "The Minister's Wooing."

The following letter, written to her daughter Georgiana, is introduced as revealing the spirit in which much of "The Minister's Wooing" was written:--

February 12, 1859.

MY DEAR GEORGIE,--Why haven't I written? Because, dear Georgie, I am like the dry, dead, leafless tree, and have only cold, dead, slumbering buds of hope on the end of stiff, hard, frozen twigs of thought, but no leaves, no blossoms; nothing to send to a little girl who doesn't know what to do with herself any more than a kitten. I am cold, weary, dead; everything is a burden to me.

I let my plants die by inches before my eyes, and do not water them, and I dread everything; I do, and wish it was not to be done, and so when I get a letter from my little girl I smile and say, "Dear little puss, I will answer it;" and I sit hour after hour with folded hands, looking at the inkstand and dreading to begin. The fact is, pussy, mamma is tired. Life to you is gay and joyous, but to mamma it has been a battle in which the spirit is willing but the flesh weak, and she would be glad, like the woman in the St. Bernard, to lie down with

her arms around the wayside cross, and sleep away into a brighter scene. Henry's fair, sweet face looks down upon me now and then from out a cloud, and I feel again all the bitterness of the eternal "No" which says I must never, never, in this life, see that face, lean on that arm, hear that voice. Not that my faith in God in the least fails, and that I do not believe that all this is for good. I do, and though not happy, I am blessed. Weak, weary as I am, I rest on Jesus in the innermost depth of my soul, and am quite sure that there is coming an inconceivable hour of beauty and glory when I shall regain Jesus, and he will give me back my beloved one, whom he is educating in a far higher sphere than I proposed. So do not mistake me,--only know that mamma is sitting weary by the wayside, feeling weak and worn, but in no sense discouraged.

Your affectionate mother, H. B. S.

So is it ever: when with bold step we press our way into the holy place where genius hath wrought, we find it to be a place of sorrows. Art has its Gethsemane and its Calvary as well as religion. Our best loved books and sweetest songs are those "that tell of saddest thought."

The summer of 1859 found Mrs. Stowe again on her way to Europe, this time accompanied by all her children except the youngest.