

COM A JONS ON THE ROAD.

Life's milestones, marking year on year,
Pass over as swift as we near
The final so at the silent end
To which our faded footsteps tend.
A year once seemed a century,
Now like a day it hurries by,
And doubtless our hearts oppress,
And all the way is weariness.

Ah! how glad and gay we were,
Youth's sap in all our veins afloat,
When long ago with spirits high,
A happy careless company,
We started forth, when every thing
Wore the green glory of the spring,
And all the fair wide world was ours,
To gather as we would its flowers!

Then life almost eternal seemed,
And death a dream so vaguely dreamed,
That in the distance scarce it threw
A cloud-shade on the mountains blue,
That rose before us soft and fair,
Clothed in ideal hues of air,
To which we meant in after-time,
Strong in our manhood's strength, to climb.

How all has changed! Years have gone by,
And of that joyous company
With whom our youth first journeyed on,
Who—where are they? Alas, not one!
Love earliest loitered on the way,
Then turned his face and slipped away,
And after him with footsteps light
The little Graces took their flight,
And all the careless joys that lent
Their revelry and merriment
Grew silent, and, ere we knew,
Had smiled their last and sad "adieu."

Hope faltering then with doubtful mind
Began to turn and look behind,
And we, half questioning, were fain
To lo lo with her back again,
But fate still urged us on our way
And would not let us pause or stay.
Then to our side with plaintive eye,
In place of Hope came Memory,
And murmured of the past and told
Dear stories of the days of old,
Until its very dross seemed gold,
And Friendship took the place of Love,
And strove in vain to us to prove
That Love was light and insincere—
Not worth a man's regretful tear.

Ah! all in vain—grant 'twas a cheat,
Yet no voice ever was so sweet—
No presence like to Love's who threw
Enchantment over all we knew;
And still we listen with a sigh,
And back, with fond tears in the eye,
We gaze to catch a glimpse again
Of that dear place—but all in vain.

Preach not, stern Philosophy!
Nought we can see, or right we see,
Will ever be so pure, so glad,
So beautiful, as what we had.

Our steps are sad—our steps are slow—
Nothing is like the long ago,
Gone is the keen, intense delight—
The perfume faint and exquisite—
The glory and the effluence
That balmed the enraptured sense,
When Faith and Love were at our side,
And common life was defiled.

Our shadows that we used to throw
Behind us, now before us grow;
For once we walked towards the sun,
But now, Life's full meridian done,
They change, and in their chill we move,
Further away from Faith and Love.
A chill is in the air—no more
Our thoughts with joyous impulse soar,
But creep along the level way,
Waiting the close of the day,
The future holds no wondrous prize
This side Death's awful mysteries;
Beyond, what waits for us who know?
New Life, or infinite repose?

—W. W. Story, in *Blackwood*.

HOTSPUR ON A FOP.

My legs, I did deny no prisoners;
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
And nothing stronger than rain-water
With forty miles, came there a certain lord,
Trimly dressed, nobly, in fact, with a cut-
away coat.
Flashy neck-tie, and pants louder than the
Band-wagon of a circus, including the band;
He was fresh as a bridegroom—
To speak truly, he was a trifle too fresh.
His chin, which I advised him to wipe off,
Was newly reaped, and showed like
stubble-land at harvest-time.
He was scented like ice-cream
At a church-fun—with vanilla, musk,
Rose-water, cologne, hair-oil, etcetera,
And I can not pretend what else.
Twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouce-et-bout (see Webster's Unabridged)
Which, ever and anon, he gave his nose,
And still he smiled and talked, and, as
The soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He called them untalented knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corpse
Between the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and snobbish terms,
Such as "Aye, weally!" "Did you evah!"
He addressed me among the rest—
Demanded my prisoner's in her Majesty's
Behalf. I then, all smarting with
My wounds, being galled to be so pestered
With a seven-by-nine popgun.
Out of my grief and my impatience,
I lifted him one about the wheel-house,
And you might have heard his little
Coat-tails crack as he passed
Over into the next county.
This had, I thought, of his, my lord,
Disturbed my Dutch, and I beseech you
Let not his mysterious disappearance
Come between my love and your high majesty.
—Old City Derrick.

"AS COMPANION TO A LADY."

"I'm very sorry, Miss, but I'm only
a poor woman myself, and if you can't
pay the rent of this room, I don't see as
you can afford the rent of the one up
stairs."

Here the landlady rubbed her nose
viciously upon her apron, and stared
straight out of the very dirty window.

As this was evidently a challenge for
me to reply, I said, as firmly as I could,
a few words which brought out the reason
for the woman's visit that morning.

"Am I to understand, then, that you
wish me to leave?"

"If you please, Miss, at the end of the
week, for there's the gent on the first
floor would like to have this bed-room."

"Very well, Mrs. Ruddock," I said;
"I will find a room elsewhere."

"Thanky, Miss," she said, sharply;
and giving her nose another vicious rub,
she left me to my thoughts—and my tears.

For I was weak, faint and heart-sick,
and the coins in my purse had dwindled
down, so that if I did not succeed in ob-
taining an engagement in a very few
days I had no resource but to creep back
to the country and avow my failure.

Just three months since and we were
all so happy in the little country vicar-
age; and then, in visiting one of his
people, my poor father caught a dan-
gerous fever, while in tending him my
dear mother was stricken with the same
complaint, and ere three weeks had
passed Minna and I sat in the little study
alone, in deep black; for the struggle
had been brief, and those we loved lay
together in the green church-yard, and
we were only intruders now in the little
vicarage that had been our home.

We were nearly penniless, too, but a
brother-clergyman of my father's, quite
as poor, came forward and offered us a

temporary home till, as he said, some
opening should occur for us.

I gladly accepted it for Minna; but
for myself, I was determined to try
great London, and, unaided, battle for
myself. In two years John Murray was
to come back from Australia to fetch me
for his wife, and till then I would be in-
dependent. So the day came at last
when, with many tears, we two girls
had to separate, and with aching heart
I left the old Lincolnshire home, and
reached the great dreary void of Lon-
don early one afternoon.

I was not long in finding a place
where I could stay, in the shape of a
second-floor front room in one of those
heart-aching streets near the Found-
ling—streets that echo from morning to
night with mournful cries uttered by
venders whose goods it is impossible to
surmise, and with the dismal echoing
tones of the various organs. So painful
were these last to me, that often of an
evening, when I have returned from a
weary, disheartening search for an en-
gagement, and sat alone and hungry,
fearing to spend my money in anything
beyond the tea and bread and butter up-
on which I existed, these doleful strains
—cheering, maybe, to some—have had
such an effect upon me that I have sat
and sobbed till, utterly worn out, I have
fallen asleep, to wake, perhaps, hours
after, to find it very late, and crawl
shivering off to bed.

As the weeks passed on and my ad-
vertisements and fees paid to the various
registry offices had been without effect,
I used to crawl back to my room, grow-
ing more and more disheartened. I
was always a plain, sorrow-looking girl,
and now in my fast-wearing black I be-
gan to feel that I was day by day grow-
ing more shabby and weary-looking,
and that my feeble chances of obtaining a
post were growing less and less.

I used to sit and ask myself whether I
had tried hard—and I knew I had—but
it was always the same. Whether I ad-
vertised for a situation as governess, or
went from a registry office to offer my-
self as companion to a lady, it was al-
ways the same. I noticed a look of dis-
appointment as soon as I entered the
room, for I was neither pretty nor
bright-looking, and my mournful black
helped to sadden my aspect. It was al-
ways the same—the lady did not think
I should suit her, and in blank disap-
pointment I had to return.

And now it had come to this—that
my landlady had grown as tired of me
as the people at the registry offices,
where I had more than once been told
rudely that I was not likely to get a
place as governess or companion, but
had better look lower. That afternoon,
evidently suspicious of my ability to
pay, and perhaps disgusted with my
miserable way of living, and afraid I
should be left an invalid upon her hands,
she had—rudely, it seemed to me—re-
quested me to leave.

In my present circumstances I was
utterly prostrated by the news, for I dared
not take lodgings elsewhere; and I could
see nothing now but to sell a portion of
my scanty wardrobe and go back to
beg for assistance from my father's
friend.

What a change! and how soon had
my hopes of independent action been
blighted! I was heart-sick as I felt how
that in that great city there was wealth
being squandered and luxury around
me while I was literally starving; for
my poor living was telling upon me
fast. What should I do? What should
I do?

It was with weary iteration I had said
those words and wept till tears came no
more, and a dull, stolid feeling of des-
pair had come upon me. I had almost
shrunk away in the streets from the
bright-faced, happy girls I passed, and
at times I found myself asking what had
been my sin that I should be thus pun-
ished.

I lay awake that night for many hours,
watching the light from the street lamp
playing upon my ceiling; and at last,
towards morning, the remembrance of
words I had often heard came to me
with a sad sense of repose, trust and
restfulness, and I believe I fell asleep at
last with a smile upon my lips, repeat-
ing a portion of that comforting sen-
tence ending, "Are you not much bet-
ter than they?"

It was a bright, sunny morning
when I awoke, to hear some one knock-
ing at my door, and, hurrying on a few
things, I answered.
"Ah! I was just going to take 'em
down again," said my landlady harshly.
"Some folks can afford to lay in bed
all day; I can't. Here's two letters for
you. And mind this, Miss Laurie; I
never bargained to come tramping up
to the top of the house with letters and
messages for you."

"I am very much obliged, Mrs. Rud-
dock," I said gently, as I took the let-
ters with trembling hands, while, mut-
tering and complaining, their bearer
went down stairs. It seemed very hard
then, but I believe it was the woman's
habit, and that she was not bad at heart,
but warped and cankered by poverty,
hard work, and ill-usage from a drunken
husband, whom she entirely kept.

One letter I saw from a glance was
from Minna, the other was in a strange
crabbed hand; and I longed to read
them; but exercising my self-denial, I
dressed, lit my fires, and prepared my
very frugal breakfast before sitting
down and devouring Minna's news.

What right had I to murmur as I did
last night, I asked myself, when she was
evidently so happy and contented? and
then I opened with fluttering hand, the
other letter, and was puzzled by it at
first; but at last I recalled the fact that
three weeks before I had answered an
advertisement in the *Times*, where a la-
dy wanted a companion.

The note was very brief and curt and
ran as follows:

"If Miss Laurie is not engaged she can call

upon Mrs. Langton Porter, 47 Morton Street,
Park Village South, at 11 o'clock to-morrow
(Thursday)."

"At last!" I said to myself joyfully,
and with beating heart I prepared my-
self for my journey, for the appointment
was for that morning.

Just as I had pretty well timed myself
for my walk a sudden squall came on,
the sky was darkened and snow fell
heavily, and in place of a morning in
spring we seemed to have gone back in-
to winter, for the snow lay thickly in a
very short time, and the branches of
the trees in the squares were whitened.

Weak as I was, this disheartened me,
but I fought my way bravely on, and
just at 11 rang timidly at the door of an
important looking house, and was su-
perciliously shown, by a stout tall foot-
man in drab livery, into a handsomely
furnished room. Every thing in the
place I noticed was rich and good; heavy
curtains hung by window and door,
skins and Eastern rugs lay on the po-
lished wood floor, and a tremendous
fire blazed in a great brass fire-place,
and the flames danced and were reflect-
ed from the encaustic tiles with which it
was surrounded.

"I'll take your note in," said the foot-
man, as I handed it. "You can sit
down."

I preferred to stand, and as soon as I
was alone I shivered with fear and cold,
as I caught a glance of my pale, sorrow-
ful face in a great mirror. Every moment
I expected to see the owner of the place,
but I remained standing wearily for an
hour, and then I sighed and turned
wistfully to look at the door, wonder-
ing whether the footman had taken in the
note which I had given him as my
passport.

I started, for close behind me, hav-
ing entered unheard, was a rather plump
tall lady in black. She was dressed as
if for going out, and well wrapped in
furs.

"Oh! you are waiting," she said,
harshly, and a shade of displeasure
crossed her face as she looked full at
me till my eyes dropped. "There,
Miss—Miss—Miss—"

"Laurie," I suggested.

"Yes, yes; I know," she said, sharp-
ly; "it is in my note. Pray, why in the
name of common sense did you not sit
down? Take that chair. Now, then,
have you been companion to a lady be-
fore?"

"No, ma'am," I replied; and then,
in answer to her questions, all very
sharply given, I told her so much as
was necessary of my story.

"I don't think you will suit me,"
she said; "I've had misery enough,
and I want some one cheerful and pleas-
ant, a lady whom I can trust and who
will be a pleasant companion. There,
I'm sure there is not such a body
in London, for the way I've been im-
posed upon is dreadful! I've had six in
six months, and the number of applica-
tions I have had nearly drove me out
of my senses. I have had one since you
wrote to me—a creature whose sole idea
was herself. I want one who will make
me her first consideration. I don't
mind what I pay, but I want some one
tall and lady-like; and you are not pret-
ty, you know."

I shook my head sadly.
"Humph! Well!" she went on,
"you won't be so giddy, and be al-
ways thinking of getting married. There,
you need not blush like that; it's what
all the companions I have had seem to
think about. You don't, I suppose!"
"I am engaged to be married," I
said, hanging down my head, "in a
couple of years."

"Ho! Well, he mustn't come here,
for I'm a very selfish, pragmatical old
woman; and if I engaged you—which I
don't think I shall do—I should want
you all to myself. What is he?"

"A settler—abroad," I faltered.

"Ho! That's better; and perhaps
he'll settle there altogether without
you."

I looked at her indignantly, and she
laughed.

"Ah! I know, my good girl. I haven't
lived to eight and forty for nothing.
How old are you?"

"Twenty," I said, shivering, for her
rough way repelled me, and I longed to
bring the interview to an end.

"Why, the girl's cold," she said,
roughly. "H'm, twenty! Here,
go up to the fire, and have
a good warm; it's dreadful weather.
There! pull off your bonnet and
jacket. Put them on that chair, and go
closer to the fire; I've a deal to say to
you yet, for I'm not going to engage
any young person and have to change
directly."

I obeyed her, trembling while the while,
for I was very weak; and she went on
asking me questions and making com-
ments.

"I don't like your appearance at all;
you look pale and unhealthy. Not a bit
like a girl from the country."

"I am very sorry," I said; "but, in-
deed, ma'am, I have excellent health."

"Then your face tells stories about
you. You play, of course?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You're warm now. Go and play
something. Can you sing?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then sing, too; and look here, Miss
—Miss—"

I was about to tell her my name, but
remembering the last rebuff I was silent.

"Now look here, my good young
lady, how am I to remember your
dreadful name? What is it?"

"Laurie, ma'am," I replied.

"Of course it is; I remember it quite
well. Now go and play and sing some-
thing, and mind, I don't want my ears
deafened with fireworks, and the drums
split with parrot-shriek bravuras. Sing
something sweet and simple and old-
fashioned, if you can," she added un-
graciously.

I crossed the room and sat down to

the magnificent piano, and for the next
five minutes I seemed to be far away,
down in the old home, as I forgot where
I was, in singing my poor dead father's
favorite ballad, "Robin Adair;" while,
as I finished, I had hard work to keep
back the tears.

"Ho—bin A—dair," she sang, as I
rose, in a not unpleasing voice. "Now
let me hear you read. I always make
my companion read to me a great deal;
and mind this, I hate to hear any drone
like a school-girl. Go over there into
the corner of the window and stand
there. Take that book; you'll find the
mark left in where Miss Belleville—bah!
I believe her name was Stubbs and her
father a green-grocer—left off. Now
then, begin."

She pushed a lounge-chair close up to
the window and sat down with her
hands in her muff, while I stood there,
feeling like a school-girl and ready to
drone, as I began to read with faltering
voice what happened to be Thackeray's
most beautiful chapter—The death of
poor old Colonel Newcombe. I know
my voice trembled at times, and a
strange sense of choking came upon me
as I went on battling, oh, so hard to
read those piteous heart-stirring lines!
But I was weak and suffering, I was
faint with hunger and exertion, sick
with that despair of hope deferred, and
at last the room, with its costly fur-
niture, seemed to swim round before me,
a cold perspiration bathed my face, and
with a weary sigh I caught feebly at
the curtains and then fell heavily upon
the polished floor.

I have some faint memory of being
lifted and wheeled in a chair whose cas-
tors I heard chirrup to the front of the
fire, and then, as my senses began to
return, I seemed to feel arms around
me and a pleasant voice saying, half
aloud:

"And she just lost her poor father,
too—to set her to read such a thing as
that! I declare I'm about the wicked-
est, most thoughtless and unfeeling
woman under the sun."

Then there was the refreshing odor of
a vinaigrette, and the sick feeling be-
gan to pass away.

"I beg pardon," I faltered, try-
ing to rise.

"I beg yours, my dear," she said,
tenderly. "Sit still, sit still. Now,
then, try and drink that."

Some sherry was held to my lips, and
then I was almost forced to eat a bi-
cuit. They, however, rapidly revived
me, and I found Mrs. Porter had torn
off her bonnet and mantle and was kneel-
ing by my side.

"That's better, my dear," she said,
smiling at me, as she passed her arm
round me and drew me nearer to her
and kissed me in a gentle, motherly
way. And now this was too much, for
I was weak and hysterical. I could
fight against harshness, but her tender
words and ways unlocked the flood-
gates of my grief, and I laid my head
down and sobbed as if my heart would
break.

An hour later, after she had literally
forced me to partake of the breakfast
that was ordered up; she sat beside me,
holding my hand, and more than once
I saw the tears steal down her pleasant
face as she won from me, bit by bit, the
story of my troubles and my bitter strug-
gles here in town.

At last I rose to go, trembling and ex-
pectant. Would she engage me? It
was more than I dared to hope.

"Sit still, my child," she said tender-
ly. "It has pleased God to make me—
a childless, widowed woman—His
steward over much wealth, and if I did
not make this a home for one of His
tempest-smitten lambs I should be a
worse woman than I think I am. Stay
with me; we shall be the best of friends."

I stayed—stayed to know her real
worth and to win her motherly love—
stayed to find, when John Murray re-
turned, that his love was greater for my
sister than for me, and patiently resign-
ed my love to her, and then battled with
a long illness when they had gone to-
gether to the far-off home. But every
day gave me a new lesson on not judg-
ing too hastily. That is ten years since;
and I am still in my peaceful happy
home, though only "as companion to a
lady."—*Cassell's Magazine*.

The Sagacity of Ants.

Prof. Leidy, in a recent article, states
that, in order to ascertain whether a
house he had just entered was (as he
suspected) seriously infested with red
ants, he placed a piece of sweet cake in
every room. At noon every piece was
found covered with ants. A cup of tur-
pentine oil being provided, each piece
was picked up with forceps, and the
ants tapped into the oil. The cake was
replaced, and in the evening was again
found covered with ants. The same
process was gone through the following
two days, morning, noon and night.

The third day the number of ants had
greatly diminished, and on the fourth
there were none. He at first supposed
the ants had all been destroyed, but in
the attic he observed a few feasting on
some dead house-flies, which led him to
suspect that the remaining ants had be-
come suspicious of the sweet cake. He
accordingly distributed through the
house pieces of bacon, which were after-
wards found swarming with ants. This
was repeated with the same result for
several days, when, in like manner with
the cake, the ants ceased to visit the
bacon. Pieces of cheese were next tried
with the same result, but with an un-
doubted thinning in the number of ants.
When the cheese proved no longer at-
tractive, dead grasshoppers were sup-
plied from the garden. These again
proved too much for the ants, but after
a few days' trial neither grasshoppers
nor any thing else attracted them; nor
has the house been infested with them
since.

FASHION NOTES.

—Checked cotton braids are used for
trimming linen dresses.

—The military jacket is one of the
latest styles for young ladies.

—Among the novelties for young
girls are hats ornamented with hand
painting.

—Garden-hats are of lightly-woven
straw, trimmed with grasses and wild
flowers.

—New styles in stationery are orna-
mented with grotesque old English fig-
ures in color.

—A recent extravagance among fash-
ionable ladies in New York is the use of
gold hair-pins.

—Pretty princess dresses for the lit-
tle ones are made with square neck and
short sleeves.

—Among the absurdities for children
are the wide collars and cuffs similar to
those worn by their mothers.

—Double-washed torchon is a novelty
in laces, and is used principally for
trimming lingerie and dresses which
can be washed.

—Young ladies wear caps like those
of the Roman peasant women; little
oblong pieces of Swiss or organdy deco-
rated with lace and ribbons, and long
gold-headed pins are used to pin them
on.

—Black grenadine dresses have faint
tints of yellow and old gold introduced
in their trimmings; sometimes in the
shape of pipings, sometimes in ribbons
set under the ruffles of French lace.

—Japanese pins with a fan, and a
mouse watching a fly, or a silver bow,
arrows and quiver, are among the new-
est patterns in sterling silver for long
scarf-pins, and chatelaines have the top
of the hook enameled with some pretty
design or a painting in enamel set in
glass.

—There are so many styles now in
wear that all tastes can be gratified.
There is the princess dress, the cuirass
waist, and the habit and polonaise.
There are waists cut out in points on the
borders, rounded basque waists, either
open or imitating openings, with vests,
or long, swallow-tail coats, with long
faile vests in bright, contrasting colors.

—Pretty aprons are to be worn this
season by little girls up to the age of
15. Some of these are in dotted Swiss
Valenciennes or torchon insertions and
lace set in the bibs and bretelles. Some
of the mull and nainsook aprons have
edges of colored lace, and bows of rib-
bon combining the two shades of the
lace. A great many specimens are
found in all the leading dry-goods
houses.

—Black is to be worn a great deal
this year; it is taking quite as prom-
inent a part as white in the season's
fashions. With this, silver jewelry is
very effective; silver band bracelets are
now worn quite wide, with little po-
lished knobs or balls set closely on the
edges. Large medallion pendants and
lockets, also sterling silver, are found at
the principal jewelers'; and handsome
pins and ear-rings; some of these in the
shape of round platters with bee-hives
on them in frosted work, others with
Japanese patterns.

—Great favor is shown this year for
all the Scotch zephyr goods, or soft-f-
inished ginghams, which resemble
foulards. There is an endless variety of
designs, from the plain goods in all the
shades of gray, beige, and ecru, and in
all plain designs up to the gaily tinted
Stuart tartan. The English chevrons
are also much employed for ladies and
children's seaside dresses, being thor-
oughly well adapted for all changes of
the weather, and much worn by En-
glish ladies for this reason.

—Country hats for young girls are
made of coarse straw, trimmed with a
full wreath of wild flowers and wild
strawberries with natural leaves and
dark mosses. Another style shows the
black and rough-and-ready coarse straw
hat drooping over the face, with the
back brim upturned; placed inside is a
large Alsatian bow of black velvet or
Jaquemiot red ribbon, and a long ostr-
ich feather curls over the crown. The
Tyrolean shape for children is now,
turned up on one side; the Alpine peak,
sailor, jockey, and Scotch hats make up
the remainder of the styles for the little
people.

She Knew Her Business.

When Collins went home to dinner
Monday he found the house tenantless,
the cook stove cold, and there was a
lonesome look about that part of the
Monday washing still left in the tubs in
the summer kitchen. Hurrying through
to the back yard he saw his wife braced
against the fence, holding to the end of
a broken clothes-line to keep the newly
washed garments from the ground.

"You've got here at last, have you?"
exclaimed the wife as she caught sight
of him.

"Yes, I'm here—what's the matter?"
he repeated.

"Here I've been holding this broken
line for over an hour—over a full hour,
sir!" she snapped. "I was determined
to die right here before I'd let these
clothes down!"

"But why didn't you call some one?"
he innocently inquired. "There's that
new family next door—the woman would
have come over in one minute."

"Woman next door, you big idiot,
you! Hasn't she been peeking around
and peeking around for two weeks to
see my wash, and d'ye think I'd give
her a chance to come over here and see
for herself whether the sleeves of my
nightgown were pieced down with un-
bleached cotton? You don't know any
thing, sir, and you make tracks for a
piece of rope, sir!"

"Well, I swan!" growled Collins, as
he "tracked."—*Boston Times*.