THE FATAL PASSION.—A DRAMATIC SKETCH.
BY WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

HENRY GRAY. CHESTER. WILLIAM GRAY, the father. MURRAY, friend to Gray. VINCENT. MARY. ADELINE.

ACT I.—SCENE I.
A Wood.—HENRY. (Alone.)

How like a part too deeply fixed in me,
A shadow where the substance lies behind,
Is this sweet wood. I cannot grasp my thought,
But see its well around me in these trees,
These layers of glistening leaves, and swimming full
In the blue, modulated heaven o'er all.
I would embrace you kindred tenements,
Where dwells the soul by which I deeply live.
But ye are silent; they call you emblems,
The symbols of creation, whose memory
Has failed in its behest, and so ye stand
Merely dumb shadows of what might have been,
Or hints of what may beyond these days.

(Enter Chester and observes Henry.)

CHES. (to himself.)
I love these moods of youth, I love
Might of untamed nature battling with despair.
How firmly grasps the iron-handed earth
The youthful heart, and lugs it forth to war
With calm, unmoving woods, or silent lakes,
Making it dastard in the sun's light dance.
Brave on, ye unsharked saplings, soon your boughs
Shall wing the arrows of red manhood's life,
And then, as your low depths of ignorance
Unfold, how shall you wonder at your youth.
How flaunt the banners in the light of morn,
How torn and trailing when the day-god set a.
'T is a brave sight with all sails up, to see
The shining bark of youth dash through the foam,
And sickening to the most, to look upon
Her planks all started, and her rigging split,
When she hugs closely to the beach in age.
But I console myself for my gray hairs,
By spinning such warm fantasies in my brain,
That I become a little thing again,
And totter o'er the ground, as when I whirled my top.

(Enter Mary.)

MARY. I willingly would know what Chester does,
And Mr. Gray, I trust, will but forgive me.
I rarely venture in these forest walks,
Where leads that prithee? (To Henry.)

HEN. 'T is by the lake, which gleaming like a sword,
One edge of this green path, a peacock lancer,
Crosseys in sport, and then descends away,
And vanishes among the outspread moors.
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CHES. And Mr. Gray, sweet Mary, knows the path,
All paths that frolic in these devious woods,
For his sworn friends with squirrels, steals their nuts,
Divides with other beasts their favorite meat.
Can show you hungry caves, whose blackening jaws
Breathe out a little night into the air,
Will stand you on the dizzy precipice,
Where all whirls round you like a whizzing wheel.
In truth his skill is perfect, so farewell.
(Exit Chester.)

SCENE II.

HENRY AND MARY.—(By the Lake.)

MARY. Those hills you say are lofty.
HEN. Most lofty.
I have clomb them, and there stood gazing
On villages outspread, and larger towns
Gleaming like sand-birds on the distant beach.
I love the mountains, for a weight of care
Falls off his soul, who can overlook this earth.
And there you passed the night?

MARY. I have passed weeks
Upon their very tops, and thought no more
To fall upon the low, dark days of earth.
Above, the clouds seemed welcome faces to me,
And near the raging storms, came giant-like,
And played about my feet.
Yet even there,
I feared for my own heart, lest I should grow
Too careless of myself.

CHES. Ah! Mary alone,—indeed, has Henry Gray
Shot like a rocket in the rayful air?
A brilliant youth, at least his eyes are bright.

SCENE III.

C H E S T E R A N D M A R Y .—(Outskirts of Town.)

MARY. He is a student at the college.
CHES. Mark you, he is a student, and knows the trick.
He has a brother too, Vincent, a gay
Free, dashing animal, or so I hear.
But I hate characters at second-hand.
You know they are towns-people; ’tis an old,
And comfortable family, I hear
Pest on't, my brains won't hold much matter now,
I am too old for gossip.
MARY. Has he a sister?
CHES. Who wants that good device? it is a part
Of every comfortable family.
MARY. My father's mansion, will you enter?
CHES. No, Mary, not to-night. (Mary goes in.)
(Exit Chester.)
(Ches. alone.) What comes of this,
When two youths come together, but woman
Rarely loves,—a play upon the word. So, So!
As I grow old, I lose all reasoning.
I hunt most nimble shadows, and have grown
A perfect knave for picking out old seams.
(Enter William Gray.)

GRAY. Good evening Mr. Chester. I call it evening,
For I see you walk, and they say here your gait
Is nightly.
CHES. I have seen Henry now, and Mary came,
He had not known her,—strange!
GRAY. Mary, the banker's daughter; a girl of promise.
CHES. They are old friends of mine, banker and all.
I've held him on my arm, and made him quake
At jingling coppers. He's richer now-a-days.
GRAY. 'T would please me to make more of them.
CHES. I will contrive it. There are times in life,
When one must hold the cherry to his lips,
Who faints to pluck a fair maid by the ear.
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ACT II. — SCENE I.

ADELINE AND VINCENT. — (Mr. Gray's House.)

VIN. She is a lovely girl.
ADE. And rich as lovely.
VIN. I wish I knew her better.
ADE. One day is not enough, friend Vin., to know
The mind of woman; many days must go,
And many thoughts.
VIN. You will assist me, Adeline.
ADE. So far as in me lies, — I know not Mary.
VIN. But the sex is in your favor.
ADE. I know not that.

ENTER HENRY.

HEN. You made a good report on botany.
VIN. I'm glad you think so. 'T is a fair study,
To spy into the pretty hearts of flowers,
To read their delicacies, so near to.
But Vincent, science at the best
Demands but little justice at my hands,
It has its masters, has its oracles,
I am content to gather by the wall,
Some little flowers that sport a casual life,
To hover on the wing; who comes? — 'T is Chester.

(Exit Chester.)

HEN. What can one make of figures? I can see
The fair girl weeping by the moonlight lake.

CHESTER. Canst thou not feel the thick sobs in thy throat,
That swell and gasp, till out your eyes roll tears
In miserable circles down your cheeks?

HEN. I see a woman weeping by the lake;
I see the fair round moon look gently down,
And in the shady woods friend Chester's form,
Leaning upon his old, bent maple stick.

CHESTER. What jest ye? Dare you, Henry Gray, to mock
A woman's anguish, and her scalding tears,
Does Henry Gray say this to his friend Chester,
Dares he speak thus, and think that Chester's scorn
Will not scoff out such paltry mockery?

HEN. Why how you rage; why Chester, what a flame
A few calm words have lighted in thy breast.
I mock thee not, I mock no woman's tears,
Within my breast there is no mockery.

CHESTER. True, true, it is an old man's whim, a note
Of music played upon a broken harp.
I fancied you could read this woman's tears,
Fest o'er, I am insane; I will go lock me up.

(Exit Chester.)

HEN. (alone.) Ye fates, that do possess this upper sphere,
Where Henry's life hangs balanced in its might,
Breathe gently o'er this old, fond, doting man,
Who seems to cherish me among his thoughts,
As if I was the son of his old age,
The son of that fine thought so prodigal.
O God, put in his heart his thought, and make
Him hear to that repose thou meetest me.
Ye sovereign powers that do control the world,
And inner life of man's most intricate heart,
Be with the noble Chester; may his age
Yield brighter blossoms than his early years,
For he was torn by passion, was so worn,
So wearied in the strife of fickle hearts,
He shed his precious pearls before the swine.
And, God of love, to me render thyself,
So that I may more fairly, fully give,
To all who move within this ring of sky,
Whatever life I draw from thy great power.
Still let me see among the woods and streams,
The gentle measures of unfaltering trust,
And through the autumn rains, the peeping eyes
Of the spring's loveliest flowers, and may no guile
Embosom one faint thought in its cold arms.
So would I live, so die, content in all.

SCENE III.
Mary's Room. Midnight.

MARY, (alone.) I cannot sleep, my brain is all on fire,
I cannot weep, my tears have formed in ice,
They lie within these hollow orbs congealed,
And flame and ice are quiet, side by side.
[ Goes to the window.
Yes! there the stars stand gently shining down,
The trees wave softly in the midnight air;
How still it is, how sweetly smells the air.
O stars, would I could blot you out, and fix
Where ye are fixed, my aching eyes;
Ye burn for ever, and are calm as night.
I would I were a tree, a stone, a worm;
I would I were some thing that might be crushed;
A pebble by the sea under the waves,
A mote of dust within the streaming sun,

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A Dramatic Sketch.

Or that some dull remorse would fasten firm
Within this rim of bone, this mind's wander.
Come, come to me ye hugs of secret woe.
That hide in the hearts of the adulterous false,
Has hell not one pang left for me to feel?
I rave; 'tis useless, 'tis pretended rage;
I am as calm as this vast hollow sphere,
In which I sit, as in a woman's form.
I am no woman, they are merry things,
That smile, and laugh, and dream away despair.
What am I? 'Tis a mouth, a mouth has gone,
Since I stood by the lake with Henry Gray.
A mouth! a little mouth, thrice ten short days,
And I have lived and looked. Who goes? 'tis Chester,
I must,—he shall come in.

[She speaks from the window. Chester enters.

CHES. You keep late hours, my gentle Mary.

MARY. Do not speak so. There is no Mary here.

Hush! (Holds up her finger.) I cannot bear your voice;
'Tis agony
To me to hear a voice, my own is dumb.

Say,— thou art an old man, thou hast lived long,
I mark it in the tottering gait, thy hair,
Thy red, bleared eyes, thy miserable form,
In thy youthful days,—thou art a man,
I know it, but still men are God's creatures,—

Say, tell me, old man Chester, did thine eyes
Ever forget to weep, all closed and dry?

Say, quick, here, here, where the heart beats, didst feel
A weight, as if thy cords of life would snap.
As if the volume of the blood had met,
As if all life in full conspiracy
Had met to press thy fainting spirit out? —

Say, say, speak quickly; hush! hush! no, not yet,
Thou canst not, thou art Chester's ghost, he's dead,
I saw him, 'twas a month ago, in his grave.

Farewell, sweet ghost, farewell, let's bid adieu.

[Chester goes out, weeping.

'Tis well I am visited by spirits.
If 't were not so, I should believe me mad,
But all the mad are poor deluded things,
While I am sound in mind. 'Tis one o'clock,
I must undress, for I keep early hours.
The Fatal Passion,

SCENE IV.

The Wood.—HENRY AND MURRAY.

HEN. I cannot think you mean it; 'tis some dream Of your excited fancy. You are easily excited. You saw a nodding aspen, For what should Mary's figure be to you? MUR. It was her figure, I am persuaded. They tell strange tales, they say she has gone mad, That something's crazed her brain. HEN. Is that the story? I have been mad myself. Sometimes I feel that madness were a good, To be elated in a wondrous trance, And pass existence in a buoyant dream; It were a serious learning. I do see The figure that you speak of, 'tis Mary. MUR. I'll leave you then together. (Enter Mary.)

HEN. (To Mary.) You have the way alone; I was your guide Some weeks ago, to the blue, glimmering lake. Trust these scenes greet happily your eyes.

MARY. They are most sweet to me; let us go back And trace that path again. I think 'twas here We turned, where this green sylvan church Of pine hems in a meadow and some hills. HEN. Among these pines they find the crow's rough nest, A lofty cradle for the dusky brood.

MARY. This is the point I think we stood upon. I would I knew what mountains rise beyond, Haste ever gone there? HEN. Ah! ye still, pointing spires of native rock, That, in the amphitheatre of God, Most proudly mark your duty to the sky, Lift, as of old, ye did my heart above. Excuse me, maiden, for my hurried thought. 'T is an old learning of the hills; the bell! Ah! might the porter sometimes sleep the hour. [Exit Henry.

The Sun is Setting.

MARY. 'T is all revealed, I am no more deceived, That voice, that form, the memory of that scene! I love thee, love thee, Henry; I am mad, My brain is all on fire, my heart a flame, You mountains rest upon my weary mind; The lake lies beating in my broken heart.

INTIOR OR HIDDEN LIFE.*

Professor Upham, who for about seventeen years has sedulously occupied the chair of moral philosophy at Bowdoin College, in this volume, presents an additional proof of the spontaneous love which entitles him to that office, as well as of his sincere regard for the well being of all mankind. The basis of his work is the position that the human soul, every human being, may be holy. Strange proof of occasional default that men should ever think otherwise! As might naturally be expected, however, from the author's occupation, his work manifests more precision in style, than most productions on similar subjects in former

* Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life, designed particularly for the consideration of those who are seeking assurance of faith and perfect love. By Thomas C. Upham; Boston: D. S. King; 1843. 12mo. pp. 464.