

# *The Apothecary's Compound*

From a Physician's Note-Book

by Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.

At the age of five-and-twenty I graduated from one of the best medical schools in the country; and I do not think I stretch the truth when I say that no man had ever been more untiring in his efforts to obtain a thorough knowledge of all that should be understood by the true physician than I had been. I had entered upon my studies with a love for the profession, and as I progressed I loved it more and more; and when I finally received my diploma, and our old Professor of Anatomy and Surgery assured me that I was fit to practice anywhere, I was vain enough to believe that he spoke the truth; though now, in the prime of life, I am forced to confess that so far as the theory and practice of medicine is concerned, I have learned wonderful things since the day on which that bit of "sheep-skin" came into my hands.

With my diploma in one pocket, and a neat case of surgical instruments in another, and a black leather medicine trunk in my hand, I stopped to consider where I should settle. One of our professors advised me to go to Warrentville. He said it was a thriving place—a growing place—and he thought I might grow up with it, and, by due attention to my profession, become a very important part of it. I took his advice and went to Warrentville; and when I had had the opportunity to look about me I was perfectly satisfied with the landing I had made. The settlement was an old one; but the opening of the railroad, which had been completed only a few years before, had given a new impetus to the growth of the place; and as the town possessed one of the best water-powers in the country, that growth could not be else than permanent and healthy. There were already two physicians in the place, and there was also an apothecary and druggist who pretended to know something of pathology. My first visit I made to Dr. Corbett, who I found to be a genial old man, some three-score-and-ten years of age, and who had been in practice in Warrentville for more than forty years. When he had seen my diploma, and understood that two of the professors under whom I had studied had been old class-mates of his, his heart warmed towards me at once, and I knew that he was sincere when he told me he was glad that I had come to settle. So far as his need of worldly goods was concerned he cared not for further practice. He would like to have me take the labor off his hands, and so far as responsibility was concerned, he would be willing to share it with me—that is, he would consult with me at any time, and he would be glad to have me consult with him. When I asked him about Dr. Belknap, the other physician in the place, he shook his head and informed me that he had never met him in consultation.

"Not," said he, "because I distrust his ability, but simply because our systems of medicine are so widely different, and our estimations of pathological conditions so dissimilar, that we could never arrive at the same conclusion touching either diagnostics or methods of treatment. He is a gentleman as the world goes; but I am sorry that he has allowed himself to make some very unjust and ungenerous attacks upon my system of treatment. However, I care nothing for that; and I would advise that you, now in the morning of your professional career, firmly fix a resolution to pursue just such a course as your own judgment shall dictate regardless of what any man of another school may say or do. Select the good wherever you find it, and reject what you

may deem to be evil; no matter if the good is from the laboratory of an opposing school, and the evil one of the most cherished agents of your own pharmacy.

I spent half a day with Dr. Corbett, and the visit was one of pleasure and profit. I did not think it worth while to call upon Dr. Belknap; but as soon as I had secured and fitted up my office he called upon me, and I was certainly very much disappointed in the result—agreeably so. I found him not only intelligent and gentlemanly, but I also found that upon no essential point did we differ in our theories either of pathology or medicine. He held a diploma from a different school, but we both acknowledged the same primal teacher and governor—COMMON SENSE. I could very easily see where he and Corbett differed; and I could also see that the old physician had given me advice which he had not been willing to openly follow himself. When Dr. Belknap left me I was satisfied that he and I could always meet on friendly terms, and that there could be no difficulty in the way of our consulting together.

And now for the apothecary. His name was Luther McVaughn. I called upon him to obtain some medicine, and he did his utmost to please me; but I did not like him. Aye, more—I disliked him exceedingly; and the more he tried to show me the bright side of his character the more apparent was the dark side. He was a man of medium height, slight, but wiry in frame, and about five-and-thirty years of age. He was of very dark complexion, with straight, black hair, scanty black beard, and small, piercing black eyes, and I could not help believing that not many generations back there had been an Indian parent in his family. In general outline his head had what we commonly term the female form, but not so in local developments. The ears were broad and thin, standing out from the mastoid process in a peculiarly cautious manner; the seat of the perceptive faculties, directly over the eyes, was very prominent, while the reflective group was sadly deficient. And this slope of deficiency continued on, cutting off almost entirely the dwelling places of benevolence and veneration, leaving the summit of the skull at the seat of self-will and self-esteem. His nose, in profile, was of the Hebrew or commercial mould; but when seen in front view it was found to be too thin for any great work; yet it was most emphatically a money-getting nose. His voice was, if I may use the expression, a sort of button-hole voice—low, oily and insinuating. His vocal organs were never intended for any great range of power, but were made for use in corners and closets, and for producing tones that would not startle even a mouse if he desired to entrap the tiny marauder. I saw his handwriting, and I found it to be as delicate and regular and finely traced as the most perfect copperplate impressions that are to be found in our copy-books. It was one of those entirely mechanical, negative hands which indicate a character so secretive that only an expert physiognomist can read it. I said the man's complexion was dark, and I should have added that his face was bloodless. He was more than cool—he was cold-blooded; and I remember that I said to myself as I left his shop on the first visit, "God grant that I may never come in conflict with that man!"—little thinking then how soon I should be forced to cross his track.

On the next day after I had given my sign to the public gaze, as I sat in my office debating with myself whether it would be a good plan for me to call upon a few of the prominent citizens, a boy made his appearance and informed me that Dr. Corbett wanted to see me. When I reached the dwelling of the old physician I found him laid up with an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, and my first impression was that he had sent for me to prescribe for him; but he had done no such thing. He had perfect confidence in his own prescriptions; though I cannot resist the

temptation here to remark that he used for himself, as I learned before I left, a prescription which he would have been very reluctant to recommend to a patient. In short, the “old moss-covered bucket that hung in the well” yielded nearly all the medicine he took—outside and in. Dr. Belknap would have smiled had he known of this.

“Doctor,” said Corbett, as soon as I had taken a seat, and we had passed from the subject of his own ailment, “perhaps you have heard of Mr. Moses Parker?”

Of course I had heard of him, for he was one of the wealthiest men in the place.

“Perhaps,” resumed the old physician, “you have heard that he has been sick.”

I had heard so.

“Well, Doctor, I shall be obliged to get you to call upon him, for he certainly needs looking after, and I am utterly unable to move from my house. I had intended to have you visit him with me for the purpose of consultation; but that cannot be done until I get over this attack. However, I want you to see him, to examine his case critically, and let me know what you think about it.”

I asked Corbett what had been the result of his own diagnosis.

“I declare,” he replied, with an expression of sad perplexity, “I cannot give you any kind of satisfactory answer. When the man was first taken sick I thought I detected the typhoid symptoms, and I treated him accordingly; but I discovered in a few days that I had been mistaken, and I fancied that it was a case of inflammation of the stomach. Another critical examination revealed not only inflammation of the esophagus and stomach, but of the whole alimentary canal. This, in a few days, I succeeded in subduing; but my patient did not improve. He continued to fail; the pulse became low and irregular; the stomach rejected all kinds of proper nourishment; and the skin became cold and clammy to the touch. Mr. Parker has been what we might term a high liver, and I am forced to the conclusion that the digestive functions have given out,—in short, that he is paying a most severe penalty for former infractions of the physical laws. I have heard this morning that his niece has been taken sick. She has been unremitting in her care of her uncle, and I fancy she has broken down under the labor. You will find her a lovely girl, and your own instincts will lead you to help her all you can.”

After some further conversation I started for the residence of Moses Parker, which I found to be a large, Gothic mansion, with a splendid park in front, and with numerous outbuildings, each one of which was furnished equal to any ordinary dwelling-house. Here, certainly, was the opportunity I sought. If I succeeded here, with the wealthiest man of the town, all would be well with me.

I found Mr. Parker to be a man past three score, and possessing one of the finest physical structures I had ever seen. When I had examined his chest and limbs, and had noted those signs of the state of the liver which are discernable to the eye, I made up my mind that the failure of the digestive organs had not been the origin of his sickness. I explained to him why I had come,

and after I had conversed with him a little while I fancied that he was rather pleased with me, and that I was more than welcome.

“Perhaps,” said he, “you can help me. I do not think that Dr. Corbett understands my case. He thinks I have lived too high; but I give you my word, sir, that I never knew what it was to have victuals hurt me until I was taken down with this sickness.”

In reply I told him that I should not attempt to form an opinion until I had had opportunity for more investigation and observation. I saw plainly that his internal organs were weak and torpid, and that the whole system was extremely prostrated. His only diet for the past week had been a light beef-broth and small quantities of port wine.

“The wine,” said he, “is about all that I can keep upon my stomach.”

I suggested that old port wine might be too much for him—too bracing, as it was generally termed.

“O, no,” he cried, with considerable animation. “It is wine that was imported on purpose for me ten years ago. There is a bottle on the side-board. Try it for yourself. If you do not pronounce it good, then I am no judge. Try it to please me,” he added, as he saw that I hesitated.

I am no lover of wine, though I never absolutely refused it. I went to the side-board, and poured out half a glass and drank it. It was pure and good, and rather stout; but I told him that Sherry wine, slightly diluted, would be better for him. He said he didn’t love sherry so well, but if I said so he would try it.

After spending half an hour by his bedside I found myself almost hopelessly puzzled. According to his account he had frequent symptoms of vertigo; and at intervals there was sharp pain in the head, and a burning sensation in the stomach. Sometimes the pulse would be quick and feeble, and then slow and extremely irregular. At times his skin would be hot and parched, and at others, as I found it on this occasion, cold and clammy. And I noticed, too, that as the excitement consequent upon the appearance of a strange doctor wore off his face assumed a strangely anxious and uneasy expression. But this might be the result of anxiety on account of the sickness of his niece. He told me that I must go in and see her, and that I must help her all I could.

“She is an angel—my Addie is,” he said; “and she has watched with me until she has entirely broken herself down.”

As he spoke he reached up over his head and pulled a bell-cord, and presently a female nurse entered the room. She was a woman perhaps thirty years of age, and by many she would have been termed good-looking, and, by some, even handsome; but her face and her form were of that mould which never had any beauty for me. I will not attempt to describe her person. To me, who had mingled so much with the inmates of the hospitals of a great city, she bore the repulsive stamp of the voluntary outcast. She started when she saw me, and she certainly betrayed considerable uneasiness when she found my eye fixed upon her. I could not fail to notice it. Had she been an unsophisticated, modest girl, I might have judged that the appearance of a stranger

had so moved her; but as the signs of modesty were not upon her face I could attribute her emotion to no such cause.

“Margaret,” said Mr. Parker, “Doctor Corbett is sick, and this new doctor has come in his place. I want you to take him to Addie’s room.

The woman turned away, and I followed her. As were passing near the head of the broad staircase, I heard footsteps below, and upon looking down I saw a man crossing the lower hall. I caught but a momentary glimpse of him; but I could not be deceived. It was Luther McVaughn, the Apothecary! And Margaret saw him, too; and she glanced quickly back as though she would observe whether I had noticed him; but my eyes were not turned in that direction when she did so.

When we reached the chamber of the sick niece the woman simply introduced me as a physician who had come in place of Dr. Corbett, and then retired.

I could not, at first sight, determine whether Addie Parker was an angel or not; but I could determine that she was a very beautiful girl—one of the most beautiful, I thought, that I had ever seen. She was twenty years of age, and the mould of her face was perfect. It might be that sickness had lent a depth to the spirituality of that face, but sickness had not created it. Surely the old doctor had said truly when he told me that my own instincts would lead me to help her all I could. I sat down by her bedside, and very quickly observed that she was ready to trust me; and when I saw that she mutely appealed to me to help her I experienced a degree of anxiety that I had never before experienced in my life.

Was it that anxiety that made my head ache, and produced a dizziness and sickness? As I sat there, holding the wrist of my fair patient, I realized that a sudden and entirely unnatural sickness had come upon me. My first instinct of mind was to think if I had taken anything into my stomach which ought not to have been there, because in ninety nine cases in a hundred a headache may be traced to derangement of the stomach. That intricate nervous webwork of pneumogastriacs, connecting the stomach, the heart and brain in a common sympathy, will not bear much abuse without making the fact known. But I could think of nothing that I had eaten. Could it be possible that the very small quantity of wine I had drank could have produced such a result? I could not think so. However, by a strong effort I so far overcame the trouble as to bend my mind to the business in hand, and very soon I forgot my own ailment.

I was not long in satisfying myself that Addie Parker’s sickness was not the result of any overwork. Her symptoms were very much the same as those which had marked the disease of her uncle. The pulse was low and quick; the skin was cold; the tongue exhibited a slight tending to ulceration; and there was evidently more or less of inflammation along the whole alimentary canal.

“Doctor,” she said, with an eager, anxious look, “what ails me?”

I had been in a deep reverie when she spoke, and my thoughts had wandered from her to the man I had seen in the lower hall. Partly to evade a direct answer to her question—which answer

would simply have been an acknowledgement of utter ignorance on my part—and partly to satisfy a strange curiosity which possessed me, I passed directly to another subject. I still held her wrist, for it really appeared to me that she liked to have it rest there. The warmth of my hand probably imparted vital force, and it was not unlikely that she thus expressed a confidence in me, and a willingness to lean upon me for support.

“Are you acquainted with Luther McVaughn the Apothecary?” I asked.

“O, yes,” she replied. “He is my cousin.”

“How is that?”

“He was the son of uncle Moses’s sister.”

“And you were the child of a brother?”

“Yes, sir.”

I cannot say that any direct suspicion led me on in questioning my patient further, but I know that I was impelled by something more than idle curiosity.

“Has your uncle Moses any family of his own?” I asked.

“No, sir. He was married once, but his wife and child both died, and he has never married since.”

“What other near relatives has he beside yourself and Luther McVaughn?”

“None, Luther and I are both orphans and we were only children. Our parents died when we were quite young, and uncle Moses has been a father to us both.”

“But I should judge,” said I, trying to smile, “that Luther had been rather a wayward nephew.”

“I don’t know,” she answered. “He always seemed to be steady enough, and has never given uncle much trouble, but—”

“But he has never been a very loving nephew,” I suggested, as she hesitated.

“You are right, sir. And yet I cannot tell how it is. Of late years he hasn’t seemed like a cousin at all, though he has been very—very—kind to my uncle—sometimes. But please don’t talk of him anymore.”

“Of course not, if you do not wish it. But who is this woman that seems to be acting as nurse here?”

“Her name is Margaret Arnford.”

“Has she been long here?”

“Only about six months. She used to work for Luther, in his family, but when his wife died he did not want her anymore, and he let her come up here. She is a superior cook, and for that uncle took her.”

“Then your cousin Luther is a widower?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Has he any children?”

“No sir—not living. He had a daughter, but she died before her mother.”

“I suppose,” said I, with another attempt at smiling, “that your cousin Luther visits his uncle quite often.”

“No, sir, not very, though he comes up once in a while to inquire about him. But he is very kind and solicitous when he does come. I have thought—and I hope it is so—that Luther’s heart has warmed somewhat since Uncle Moses has been sick.”

I had another question upon my tongue when Addie Parker was suddenly attacked by nausea, and she desired that I should call the nurse, but instead of that I brought a large china washbowl, and raised her to a sitting posture. She vomited quite freely, and when the spasm had passed I laid her head back upon the pillow, and carried the bowl back to the toilette-stand. As I set it down I noticed a large, soft sponge close by, and the thought occurred to me that here was just the opportunity I needed above all others—the opportunity to find what was in the sick girl’s stomach. So I took the sponge and placed it in the basin, and it absorbed nearly all the contents. This I carefully rolled up in a napkin which lay at hand, and then I put the parcel into my hat.

I did not sit down again, but I went and stood by the bed, and told the fair sufferer that I would go to my office and see if I could fix up some medicine that would help her.

“But do you know what ails me?” she asked.

“I have some idea,” I replied, [“]but I could not explain it to you that you would understand it. It is now about noon. I will see you again before night, and until I do see you again I would prefer that you should take nothing upon your stomach—nothing at all—unless it be a little cold water.”

She promised that she would obey me, and with a word of hope and cheer I left the room, and went back to the uncle, and to him I said the same that I had said to the niece. I was going to fix him some medicine—I would come back before night—and I wanted him to take nothing upon his stomach until he saw me again. He might take a little pure, cold water if he was thirsty, but nothing more. If he wanted me to help him he must do as I told him. He promised, and I went away. I saw nothing of the apothecary as I left, and I supposed he had gone before me. I met Margaret Arnford in the lower hall, and I fancied that she looked as though she feared me. At all

events, if she could have known what was passing in my mind at the time, she would have had plenty of cause for alarm.

My first movement, when I reached my office, was to start a fire of charcoal in a small furnace in a rear apartment, which I had fitted up as a sort of private operating room and laboratory. Then I selected a crucible to which I could fit a cover, and having placed therein the saturated sponge which I had brought from the mansion with me, I fitted the cover on as tightly as possible, and then set it into the furnace. I allowed the crucible to reach a red heat, when I removed it from the fire and took off the cover.

Ah, there was no mistaking the odor that arose from the heated vessel. It was not so strong as would have been exhaled from the volatilized metal, but there was garlic enough in the smell to assure me that there had been arsenic upon Addie Parker's stomach.

And if there had been arsenic upon her stomach, there had been arsenic upon the stomach of her uncle.

And if there had been arsenic upon the stomach of Moses Parker, had there not been either arsenic, or some other poison, upon my own? I fancied that I could now understand how that small quantity of wine had so affected me.

My conclusions were soon formed, and may be stated in a few words: With Moses Parker and his niece both dead, Luther McVaughn would be the sole heir to his uncle's vast wealth. He had engaged Margaret Arnford to assist him in the work of bringing that wealth to his possession. He had prepared poison, and the woman had mixed it in the food and drink of the intended victims. Of course I need not tell the reader how I arrived at these conclusions, for that must be obvious to all. I was satisfied, from the various symptoms, that a part of the poison had been irritant and a part narcotic, but it had not been administered with much judgment, and I doubt if the apothecary had prepared it with any degree of skill. The intention had evidently been to so prepare and administer it that the progress of the disease should be gradual, and the presence of the destroying agent entirely hidden, but McVaughn probably understood but little of toxicology as a science, and the irritants had been given too freely.

I wondered how Corbett could have failed to detect the presence of poison; and yet, when I came to reflect, I was willing to confess that had not extraneous circumstances excited my suspicions I might have failed to detect the true cause of the disease by the symptoms. However, it was all very plain now, and my action must needs be speedy.

I prepared such remedies as I thought best adapted to the cases of my two patients, and then hastened back to the mansion. Mr. Parker had drunk considerable water during my absence, and I found him vomiting freely, which of course did him no harm. Margaret Arnford was with him; but she left when I came in; and after the old man had become quiet, I sat down and told him of the discovery I had made. I gave him a detailed account of the whole affair, so that when I had done he had no questions to ask. He followed me attentively, and he did not interrupt me; for I could see that as soon as the first film was torn away from the mystery he comprehended the whole. He was deeply moved—at times horrified—and his moans and sobs were agonizing.



When I had finished my story he remained a little while with his hands over his face, and his first words were:

“Can you save my Addie?”

“I can save you both,” I answered.

“Then go and look to Addie now. Do not tell her of this—not at present; but save her—oh, save her! I want to think.”

“But,” said I, “there is one thing that must be attended to immediately. I must have a faithful and competent cook and nurse in place of Margaret Arnford.”

“I will think of that while you are gone. You can come back pretty soon.”

I found Addie Parker asleep, and I did not disturb her; so I went back to my first patient.

“Well, well,” said the old man, when I had taken a seat by his side, “we must strike at the bottom of this affair; and the sooner we do it the better. I will call Margaret, and I want you to tell her just what she and Luther have been doing. I think she will confess the truth.”

I would have offered some objections to this summary proceeding, but he did not wait. He pulled the bell-cord, and the woman soon answered the summons.

“Doctor,” said Mr. Parker, as Margaret Arnford approached his bed, “will you lock that door, and put the key in your pocket?”

I did as directed; and the woman became alarmed.

“Now,” pursued Parker, still addressing me, “I want you to tell Margaret what you have discovered.”

“I can tell her that in a very few words,” said I. I then turned to the woman, who was trembling violently, and continued in a calm, confident tone, and with a fixed look into her blanched face:

“Margaret Arnford, not long ago Luther McVaughn and yourself entered into a horrid conspiracy to destroy the lives of this old man and his niece, the object being to obtain possession of wealth. McVaughn has prepared and furnished poison, and you have administered it. That very bottle, standing there upon the sideboard, contains some of the poison at this moment!”

The woman evidently tried to muster strength enough to deny the charge; but she could not do it. She was a coward, and she sank down upon her knees and begged of the old man to spare her. She declared, in a wild and incoherent manner, that Luther McVaughn was the villain—that he had concocted the scheme—that he had urged her into it—that he had threatened her if she did not help him—and that he had promised to make her his wife as soon as he gained his uncle’s property.

I cannot tell what more she said, only that she begged and prayed like one insane; but the old man made little reply. He directed me to unlock the door, and when I had done that he told Margaret that she might go to her room.

“You had better secure that woman,” I suggested, after she had gone.

“For what?” asked Parker.

“She will flee from your house, and give the alarm to McVaughn.”

The old man brushed his hand across his face, and then said, in faltering accents:

I never had but one sister, and I loved her very much. Luther McVaughn was her child. I cannot lift my hand against him. Doctor, if you would please me, give no more attention to those two unfortunate persons. Let your attentions be confined to my niece and myself, for I have full confidence in your skill and understanding. I will call another servant with whom we can make arrangements for a new nurse. Not a word of this to anyone until you have my permission.”

There were two bell-cords at the head of his bed. He pulled the second one as he ceased speaking, and the summons was ere long answered by a man-servant.

“John, do you think your sister Mary would be willing to come here and help us for a few weeks?”

“Certainly she would,” replied the man.

“Then go down and send Kate up to me, and then go after Mary as quickly as you can. Tell her that she must come tonight, because Margaret is going away.”

I found Kate to be quite an intelligent Irish girl, and my first direction to her was to prepare a goodly quantity of barley-water, and some very thin porridge of flour and milk. After this I saw Addie, and when I told her that I had discovered what ailed her, and that I was sure I could cure her, her face brightened wonderfully.

I remained until I had seen the barley-water and porridge prepared, and had given directions for its use, and then I went away to see Dr. Belknap. I wanted a proper vapor-bath, and I was fortunate enough to find him in possession of one, which he would lend to me with pleasure. I called a teamster and had the bath carried to the mansion, and then I went to Dr. Corbett’s; but I did not see him. His pain had evidently induced him to take a narcotic dose, and he was asleep—the first sleep, his wife told me, he had obtained for forty-eight hours.

On the following morning I made it in my way to look in at the apothecary’s shop, and I found Dr. Belknap there purchasing some medicine; but I did not see McVaughn. I came out with Belknap, and asked him if he knew where the proprietor was.

“If you mean Mr. McVaughn,” he replied, “I can simply inform you that he has sold out to Mr. Green. I was somewhat surprised when I heard of it this morning.”

“Has he left town?” I asked.

“Yes. Green informs me that he left last night. It seems, however, that he sold out the whole concern two weeks ago. I cannot conceive why he should have kept the transaction so private.”

I did not inform Belknap of the light which I possessed upon the subject.

When I reached the mansion I found Mr. Parker quite comfortable. According to my directions he had drank of the barley-water very freely, and the result had been that his stomach was pretty thoroughly washed out. I asked him where Margaret Arnford was, and he told me she had gone.

“She went last night,” he said, “as I thought she would, and as I wished that she should. I could not have punished her without exposing my sister’s child. If she has given warning to Luther, and he will also leave, I shall be content.”

“Then,” said I, “you may find rest, for your nephew has sold out and left the town.”

“Thank God for that!” ejaculated the old man, with clasped hands. “If my sister’s freed spirit can visit me as I think it does, I know she will not blame me. And now, doctor, let us try and forget that misguided, erring man.”

From this time I went at the work of healing in earnest. For Mr. Parker I used the vapor-bath myself—used it as freely as I dared; and I very soon instructed the new nurse so that she could use it for Addie. Those at all acquainted with the method of treatment will understand the object I had in view. By thus opening the external avenues of the system—by throwing open those millions of little gates—struggling nature was suffered to cast out the impurities, while what was taken into the stomach was calculated to strengthen and build up. The result was, that in a very few weeks the niece had entirely recovered; and ere long afterwards the uncle was in the same happy condition.

Dr. Corbett was rejoiced at my success. I was very careful to make him understand that he would have discovered the secret of the strange disease if his own ailment had not interrupted his investigations, while he took much credit to himself for having called me to attend in his place.

Of course the story of the poisoning leaked out, and there was an attempt on the part of some of the citizens to find McVaughn and his guilty paramour, but they were not found.

And furthermore, from that time I had plenty of practice in Warrenville.

And there is one thing more that may be mentioned. Addie Parker loved the man who had saved her, even before she was cured, and I once thought that the happiest day of my life was that on which she promised to become my wife, but I was mistaken. My married life has been almost an

uninterrupted season of perfect domestic bliss, and even now, in the full vigor of manhood, with half-a-dozen children about me, I can hold my dear one to my bosom and devoutly say, as Uncle Moses said years ago, “She is an angel, my Addie is!”

Just after the battle of Nashville, in which Thomas so effectually disposed of the Rebel army under Hood, I received a letter from one of our citizens who was serving in Thomas’s army. He wrote to me that he had seen Luther McVaughn—that McVaughn had been assistant surgeon in one of the western regiments, and on the afternoon of the last day of the battle of Nashville, he was shot through the head and instantly killed.

I read the letter to Uncle Moses, and when he heard it he bowed his head upon his hands, and I fancied that I heard him pronounce his sister’s name. In a little while he looked up, and said to me:

“Surely we may thank Heaven that the poor man has thus made some atonement for his sin, and for myself, I am willing to take that atonement as full and ample. May a merciful God forgive him as I do!”

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