smiling quietly, as if only taking a drive on that lovely winter's morning.

"You are more cheerful than I am, Captain Brown," said the undertaker.

"Yes," he answered gently; "*I ought to be.*"

He had given up all for love of the slaves— his home, his sons, himself— and now he had come to the border of that beautiful country where Jesus is the King.

Truly he did well to be cheerful.

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;
And He died to make men holy— let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on."

George Thompson and William Garrison were personal friends of Mr Alcott, and no one could have been more calculated to stir up enthusiasm than the former, whose manly bearing and intellectual conversation we well remember. He was an old man when we knew him in 1871, but hale and handsome to the last. The slave trade was ancient history then, but he could still warm to the subject, though the gallant fight which he had waged and won against the "diabolical traffic in human flesh" seemed wellnigh forgotten in the overwhelming grief in which he was plunged by the death of his son. In spirit, however, they frequently communicated. Spiritualism may or may not be a dangerous fable and a blasphemous deceit,

but to him it was in those days a source of great comfort, and he often spoke to us of the consolation which he derived from these conversations with another world.

Louisa has headed 1860 in her Journal as "a year of good luck," but it seems to have been one of exceptional struggle, from which, however, she came out victorious. A series of sensational stories had up to this time brought "grist to the mill," but in the after-days she did not like to think of them, though they were never coarse or unseemly.

Crude and highly seasoned they doubtless were, but if ever an end justified a means, these early productions had ample justification, for they brought many needful comforts to the family for whom she wrote these "pot-boilers"; and, as she so pathetically says, "I know God is always ready to hear, but heaven is so far away in the city, and I so heavy, that I can't fly up to find Him."

In this year Mr Alcott was appointed Superintendent of Schools in Concord, and though the salary attached to the office was not large, it gave him congenial work, and was a civic recognition of his character and abilities, in which his family basked with exceeding joy. 'The Atlantic' now began to take her stories, and she was better paid than heretofore, so that we can sympathise in the cheery hopefulness with which she writes to a friend at this time: "Father continues to stir up

the schools like a mild pudding-stick, Mother to sing Hebron among her pots and pans, Anna and the Prince Consort [Mr and Mrs J. Pratt] to bill and coo in the little dovecot, Oranthy Bluggage [herself] to launch ships on the Atlantic and make a huge blot of herself in working the vessel, Abby [May] to teach the fine arts and play propriety for the family, and the old house to put its best foot foremost, and hoot at the idea of ever returning to the chaos from which it came."

In April 1861 the little village of Concord was shaken to its foundations by the departure of many of its sons for the war, and Louisa longed more than ever that she had been born a boy. "As I can't fight, I will content myself with working for those who can," she says bravely, and in the intervals which literary and household work allowed, she busied herself with making "comforts for men at the front." We all know nowadays, alas! what that phrase means, and can easily imagine the enthusiasm with which the willing fingers worked. For John Brown's daughters were now boarding with the Alcotts, and the children of "St John the Just" were received with open arms by such "a regular anti-slavery set."

As the needles darted to and fro, it needs no imagination to realise how the busy workers would talk of Harper's Ferry, of Lincoln and of Grant, and of the possible consequences of this terrible strife.

The Civil War between the Northern or Federal, and the Southern or Confederate, States lasted for four years, and had it not been for the skill and firmness displayed by Lord Palmerston, it is more than probable that England also would have been embroiled. The real cause of the contest was the question of slavery, which was as strongly opposed by the Northern as it was supported by the Southern States. The eleven Confederate States were sufficiently powerful to make their secession from the Union a very serious matter, especially when, by the blockading of the cotton ports by the Northerners, all the raw material from the Southern States was withheld from England. The consequences were terrible to the mill-hands in Lancashire, and the cotton famine which ensued cost the English nation no less than £2,000,000, in spite of the fact that supplies of cotton from India and Egypt were imported long before the end of the war in 1865.

By the complete victory of the North over the South, slavery was for ever abolished, while by the wise and discreet action of President Lincoln the integrity of the Union was preserved.

In his own speeches we have the frank avowal, "My paramount object is to save the Union, and not to save or destroy slavery"; and as Walt Whitman says, "He had faults, and showed them in the Presidency, but honesty, goodness, shrewdness, con-

science, and a new virtue (unknown to other lands, and hardly yet really known here, but the foundation and tie of all, as the future will grandly develop) — Unionism — in its truest and amplest sense — formed the hard-pan of his character. These he sealed with his life. The tragic splendour of his death, purging, illuminating all, throws round his form, his head, an aureole that will remain and will grow brighter through time, while history lives and love of country lasts."

Since that date Unionism has indeed "grandly developed," until in England it is almost synonymous with patriotism and imperialism. The "Peace Congress" has come and gone. Its results are yet to be tested; but as Senator Walcott in his speech at the Washington Senate House so strikingly said, when speaking of the mutual relations of England and America, "Blood is thicker than water, and until a great quarrel divides us— which Heaven forbid!— may these two great nations, of the same speech, lineage, and traditions, stand as brothers shoulder to shoulder in the interests of humanity, by a union-compelling peace."

Much against her own inclination, Miss Alcott was persuaded in 1862 to open a kindergarten school, but the routine of teaching was not at all to her taste. Her own education had been very unmethodical, and though she thoroughly understood children and loved them well, she instinct-

ively disliked the necessary discipline of a school too much, ever to become a successful teacher. After five months' trial she joyfully returned to literary work, and "reeled off" stories in the intervals between Sewing-bees and Lint-picks for the "boys" at the war.

It is no wonder that with natural gifts which eminently qualified her for a nurse she should presently think of volunteering in that capacity. Her proffered services were gladly accepted, and in December 1862 we find her installed in a small military hospital at Georgetown, near Washington.

She was there for only six weeks, but they were weeks of thrilling interest, for she loved her work, and her patients found in her an unfailing comforter and friend.

But the crowded, ill-ventilated ward was ill suited to one who had always been accustomed to a simple and wholesome life, and at the end of that six weeks she was stricken down with typhoid fever in its worst form. She says, "I was never ill before this time, and never well afterwards."

The 'Hospital Sketches' written on her recovery "made a great hit," and were perhaps one of the turning-points in her career, not so much for their own literary excellence as for the widespread interest which they excited both in the subject and in the writer. They were "noticed, talked of, and inquired about," and certainly paved the way for

the production of Moods,' the copyright of which she sold for a handsome sum.

So 1865 dawned triumphantly, and after a short visit to Boston the dream of her life was fulfilled, and she set sail for Europe. During this visit to Boston she was able to enjoy everything, and came in for much attention as the writer of 'Moods,' which, however, met with diverse criticism on account of the unusual freedom with which matrimonial difficulties were discussed in its pages. The city was in the midst of its public rejoicing over the taking of Richmond, after seven days of strenuous fight, when, on the 15th of April, the dastardly murder of Abraham Lincoln plunged the whole nation into sadness.

"Never before that startled April morning," says Dr O.W. Holmes, "did such multitudes of men shed tears for the death of one they had never seen, as if with him a friendly presence had been taken away from their lives, leaving them colder and darker. He left behind him a fame beyond that of any conqueror, the memory of a grace higher than that of outward person, and of a gentlemanliness deeper than mere breeding."

Although she was at this time thirty-three years of age, the heart of Louisa Alcott was full of youthful buoyancy, and the Journal of her European tour shows us how keenly she enjoyed every step of the way. London especially was a great delight

to her, and in seeing the places and people of whom she had so often heard and read, the "free and jolly" days passed only too quickly.

July 1866 found her harder at work than ever, for things at home had got into arrears while the chief bread-winner was away, and she returned to find her mother looking "old and sick and tired." So there was much to do— nursing, sewing, and writing short stories, for which she received numerous orders, but somewhat inadequate payment. A chance suggestion of her publisher was to the effect that she should write a girls' book, and in spite of her predilection for boys she determined to try. In 1868 the book came out, and little indeed did she imagine what the result of that effort would be, for her own modest estimate of 'Little Women' was only, "It reads better than I expected; but we really lived most of it, and if it succeeds, that will be the reason of it."

We who, thirty-eight years later, are still rejoicing in its publication, can scarcely remember the hearty welcome with which it was greeted. Probably no book of the kind has met with such immediate and enormous success. There is an indefinable charm about it,--- the pathos is so very pathetic, the humour so intensely humorous. There is in it a breeziness which is wholesomely bracing, a strong common-sense which is infectious, and a brave goodness which tones and glorifies the whole. No

moral sandwiches are contained in its pages, but the whole book teems with incidents, and the reality with which they are invested testifies to the pen of an expert. Her long apprenticeship to literary work now stood her in good stead, and there is no chapter in 'Little Women' with which we could willingly dispense. It is identified with the pleasantest hours of many a child, and her older readers have cause to thank her for hints and phrases which have become familiar as household words.

If some of our English fiction is as well read in America as in England, it is no less certain that 'Little Women' is as popular in Europe as it is on the other side of the Atlantic It has been translated into several languages, and in Holland especially she is so much esteemed that her Dutch translator says, "Miss Alcott was and is so much beloved here by her books, that you could scarce find a girl that had not read one or more of them."

Though none of her books has attained as much popularity as 'Little Women,' and its sequel, 'Good Wives'— published in 1869— there is probably no writer, whether English or American, who is better loved by those for whom she specially wrote. If stern and childless critics may say that the fine line between colloquial ease and slang is sometimes passed, we are ready to forgive it for the sake of

the purity of her sentiments and the touches of tenderness which redeem the exuberance of her expressions.

Success was to her no selfish dream, but a means to an end, and that end the comfort of her family, and especially of the mother whom she loved so deeply. Over 1,000,000 copies of her works have been already sold, and still they sell and will continue to sell, for no writer has yet risen to take her place.

As she says somewhere, "The 'little women' helped their rejected sisters to good places where once they went a-begging," and people began to haunt the house of the now noted authoress, whose work never abated, in spite of ill-health and low spirits. A delightful trip to Europe with her sister May and a friend, in 1870, did much to restore her usual hopefulness; but while she was in Rome the news of the death of her beloved brother-in-law, Mr John Pratt, came as a terrible shock, and she at once set to work on 'Little Men,' in order that she might provide fresh funds for the widowed Nan and the two boys, to whom she at once decided, "I must be a father now." The home in Concord, where they subsequently lived, was partially bought by Louisa, who supplemented the savings of Mr Pratt in order to secure a home for his widow and children. In June of 1871 she returned to Concord, but the dampness of the climate tried her