

of peril that men have braved, divided with men the dangers and hardships of heroism but have never had an equal share of recognition and applause. So far as they are concerned this lack of equal public reward has been of small consequence; the best of them have not only not cared for it, but have shunned it. It is well to remember that the noblest heroes have never sought applause; and that popularity is much more dangerous to heroes than the foes they faced or the savage conditions they mastered in the splendid hour of daring achievement. Many heroes have been betrayed by popularity into vanity and folly and have lost at home the glory they won abroad. Heroic women have not cared for public recognition and do not need it; but it is of immense importance to society that the ideals of heroism should be high and true, and that the soldier and the explorer should not be placed above those whose achievements have been less dramatic, but of a finer quality. The women who have shown heroic courage, heroic patience, heroic purity and heroic devotion outrank the men whose deeds have had their inspiration in physical bravery, who have led splendid charges in full view of the world, who have achieved miracles of material construction in canal or railroad, or the reclaiming of barbarous lands to the uses of civilization. In a true scale of heroic living and doing women must be counted more heroic than men.

A writer of varied and brilliant talent and of a generous and gallant spirit was asked at a dinner table, one evening not many years ago, why no women appeared in his stories. He promptly replied that he admired pluck above all other qualities, that he was timid by nature and had won courage at the point of danger, and cared

for it as the most splendid of manly qualities. There happened to be a woman present who bore the name of one of the most daring men of the time, and who knew army life intimately. She made no comment and offered no objection to the implication of the eminent writer's incautious statement; but presently she began, in a very quiet tone, to describe the incidents of her experience in army posts and on the march, and every body listened intently as she went on narrating story after story of the pluck and indifference to danger of women on the frontier posts and, in some instances, on the march. The eminent writer remained silent, but the moment the woman withdrew from the table he was eager to know who the teller of these stories of heroism was and how she had happened upon such remarkable experiences; and it was noted that a woman appeared in his next novel!

The stories in this volume have been collected from many sources in the endeavour to illustrate the wide range of heroism in the lives of brave and noble women, and with the hope that these records of splendid or quiet courage will open the eyes of young readers to the many forms which heroism wears, and furnish a more spiritual scale of heroic qualities.

HAMILTON W. MABIE.

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Heroines Every Child Should Know

HEROINES EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

I

ALCESTIS

ASCLEPIUS, the son of Apollo, being a mighty physician, raised men from the dead. But Zeus was wroth that a man should have such power, and so make of no effect the ordinance of the gods. Wherefore he smote Asclepius with a thunderbolt and slew him. And when Apollo knew this, he slew the Cyclopes that had made the thunderbolts for his father Zeus, for men say that they make them on their forges that are in the mountain of Etna.

Zeus suffered not this deed to go unpunished, but passed this sentence on his son Apollo, that he should serve a mortal man for the space of a whole year. Wherefore, for all that he was a god, he kept the sheep of Admetus, who was the Prince of Pherae in Thessaly. And Admetus knew not that he was a god; but, nevertheless, being a just man, dealt truly with him.

And it came to pass after this that Admetus was sick unto death. But Apollo gained this grace for him of the Fates (who order of life and death for men), that he should live, if only he could find some one who should be willing to die in his stead. And he went to all his

kinsmen and friends and asked this thing of them, but found no one that was willing so to die; only Alcestis his wife was willing.

And when the day was come on the which it was appointed for her to die, Death came that he might fetch her. And when he was come, he found Apollo walking to and for before the palace of King Admetus, having his bow in his hand. And when Death saw him, he said:

"What doest thou here, Apollo? Is it not enough for thee to have kept Admetus from his doom? Dost thou keep watch and ward over this woman with thine arrows and thy bow?"

"Fear not," the god made answer, "I have justice on my side."

"If thou hast justice, what need of thy bow?"

"'Tis my wont to carry it."

"Ay, and it is thy wont to help this house beyond all right and law."

"Nay, but I was troubled at the sorrows of one that I loved, and helped him."

"I know thy cunning speech and fair ways; but this woman thou shalt not take from me."

"But consider; thou canst have but one life. Wilt thou not take another in her stead?"

"Her and no other will I have, for my honour is the greater when I take the young."

"I know thy temper, hated both of gods and of men. But there cometh a guest to this house, whom Eurystheus sendeth to the snowy plains of Thrace, to fetch the horses of Diomed. Haply he shall persuade thee against thy will."

"Say what thou wilt; it shall avail nothing. And now

I go to cut off a lock of her hair, for I take these first-fruits of them that die."

In the meantime, within the palace, Alcestis prepared herself for death. And first she washed her body with pure water from the river, and then she took from her coffer of cedar her fairest apparel, and adorned herself therewith. Then, being so arranged, she stood before the hearth and prayed, saying:

"O Queen Here, behold! I depart this day. Do thou therefore keep my children, giving to this one a noble husband and to that a loving wife."

And all the altars that were in the house she visited in like manner, crowning them with myrtle leaves and praying at them. Nor did she weep at all, or groan, or grow pale. But at the last, when she came to her chamber, she cast herself upon the bed and kissed it, crying:

"I hate thee not, though I die for thee, giving myself for my husband. And thee another wife shall possess, not more true than I am, but, maybe, more fortunate!"

And after she had left the chamber, she turned to it again and again with many tears.

And all the while her children clung to her garments, and she took them up in her arms, the one first and then the other, and kissed them. And all the servants that were in the house bewailed their mistress, nor did she fail to reach her hand to each of them greeting him. There was not one of them so vile but she spake to him and was spoken to again.

After this, when the hour was now come when she must die, she cried to her husband (for he held her in his arms, as if he would have stayed her that she should not depart.