

**BROKEN LINKS AND  
SOUTHERN SOLDIERS:  
WITH MISCELLANEOUS  
SKETCHES AND POEMS**

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Broken Links and Southern Soldiers: With Miscellaneous Sketches and Poems by Laura A. Colbert

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**LAURA A. COLBERT**

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SKETCHES AND POEMS**



DEDICATED,  
WITH TENDER DEVOTION,  
TO  
THE NAME AND MEMORY  
OF  
MY IDOLIZED HUSBAND,  
JOHN RANDOLPH COLBERT.  
ALSO,  
TO MY KIND AND HONORED PARENTS,  
MOSES AND ADELINE SPIVEY.

Broken Links and Southern Soldiers,  
WITH MISCELLANEOUS  
*SKETCHES AND POEMS.*

BROKEN LINKS  
AND  
SOUTHERN SOLDIERS.

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"Fresh roses, red roses." But the echoes dropped dead;  
And in vain the tides listened—the song's soul had fled.  
It had sung its bright prophecy, spent its sweet breath.  
Thou, too, hast thy rose—silent death!

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CHAPTER I.

TWO o'clock. The sun could not find a break in the thick veil of cloud, through which to issue a ray of cheer; all was gloom without and within. A dull, heavy rain had been falling all day, rendering, if possible, more torturing the agony that wrestled within. An idolized sick one waited beside the invisible gulf, while tender ones were striving to draw her away, and hold her from the arms of the wooer. Their hope was anchorless; still they held to the shaking shaft; they would not quit the wreck until the cold waves

should wash them from their hold, and cast them upon the roaring ocean of black despair. Repeatedly during the day the devoted husband had begged her to say that she knew him, but the livid lips gave back no word. The little daughter would caress the bloodless hand, and sob, "My mamma," but the answering voice did not come to soothe her. Good grandma watched and waited; her big heart was full of love, pity, and sorrow, for this was but the rehearsal of her life: how often she had watched the silent waving of the death angel's wing, and beheld the mortal moth, in its placid paleness, ready to fill a nook in the hollow bosom of earth!

Two hours later the mantle-clock rang four, slowly and mournfully. The sufferer was growing restless; the hour was near. Once more the eyelids unclosed, the lamp of reason burned, the lips moved, and the sweet voice breathed audibly, "Heaven—home." That was all; the spirit retired, the breath ceased, and a great hush fell upon the hearts of the mourners. The husband kneeled beside the couch of his cold earth, and grandma drew the child away and received her grief into her own bosom. Mrs. Marly had been all that her husband's heart had ever thought to ask. She was his best, his dearest, his tenderest friend: ever gentle, amiable, and confiding—capable of advising with him in his deepest perplexities; so



faithful in piety, and so truly a glorious standard of womanly excellence. No wonder that his great heart was so swollen with his unspoken anguish. He knew he would miss her, but he could not tell how much, not until her pleasant manners were no more, and her tender greetings, her beaming smiles, and calm, lovable dignity sleeping the unbroken sleep. No, he could not tell, not until he was weary with waiting for "the sound of a voice that was hushed, and the touch of a hand that was still." When the grave had received its treasure, and sealed its lips forever; when there was no white face to gaze upon, and no cold form to clasp; when there was nothing left but a bare mound of earth to weep over, and unanswering memory to appeal to, then would come the heaviest grief—the grief without signs or symbols, that no weeping heart has ever yet fully expressed. O, indeed, this is the leaden grief that hurls a mourner into appalling midnight, and makes the soul feel that it can never rise again; never look upon the world of sunshine, or enjoy the fragrance of flowers; never listen to the melodious trilling of happy birds, or hear the voice of laughter, without seeking to roam away and hide itself with its solemn woe. But God doth not suffer his trusting ones to remain so always, for after awhile, when the eyes have wept until they may shed no more tears, he sendeth the Comforter to anoint the aching

wounds with the balm of resignation, and to lead the spirit into new action and amid new thought, finding something still for waiting hands to do. The sparrows do not fall without His care: "We are of more value than many sparrows."

## CHAPTER II.

ELMA LEE was ten years old when her mother, Mrs. Marly, died. She was an only one, and the darling light of her mother's and step-father's life. Grandma Marly, too, thought there was no other child like unto this one. She inherited her mother's amiability, discretion, and strength of character, and was every inch a beautiful miniature of the coming woman. When her mother lived, she was taught at home, and was by no means defective in educational progress. When she was thirteen years old, Mr. Marly urged his mother to consent to her absence, for he wished to place her in a distant school, to which he had long been partial. 'T was a sore trial to the old lady, but for the child's good she sacrificed her pleasure, and aided essentially in preparing her wardrobe. Grandma felt very lonely when Elma was gone, but the little girl-woman wrote often to her, and tried to make her glad with the spices of school-girl fol-de-rols; and the old lady enjoyed it all, and blessed her baby as the rarest of all babies. She