

THE YOUTHFUL DAYS
OF
Josephine Mansfield,
THE
BEAUTIFUL BOSTON GIRL.

HER BIRTH AND PARENTAGE; SCHOOL-DAYS AND YOUTHFUL
INDISCRETIONS; EXULSION FROM HOME; "JOSIE" IN
CALIFORNIA; HER MARRIAGE AND THEATRICAL
CAREER, AND A SKETCH OF HER LIFE UP
TO THE TIME OF THE
ASSASSINATION OF JAMES FISK, Jr.



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Life of Helen Josephine Mansfield.

Her Birth and Parentage.

HELEN JOSEPHINE MANSFIELD, the beautiful adventuress, who has recently attained a world-wide notoriety in consequence of the assassination of James Fisk, jr., was born on Kingston street, Boston, Massachusetts, December 15, 1847.

Her parents, before marriage, were employed in the establishment of the Boston Transcript, where the acquaintance which resulted in marriage was formed. Joseph Mansfield, the father of Helen Josephine, — or “Josie,” as she has been familiarly called, — being a young man of considerable natural talent, worked his way upward from an apprentice through the various branches of his profession with commendable rapidity. The mother was employed as a “feeder” upon the printing press.

When Josie was about three months old, the family removed to a boarding house at No. 13, Lincoln street. Here they remained a short time, and afterwards took up their residence in a similar establishment in the house now numbered 15, in Crescent place, where they continued to reside until the breaking up of the establishment, some six months afterward.

At this period of her existence, Josie was considered a

very unpromising child, so far as personal beauty was concerned, in consequence of the peculiar appearance of her nasal organ, which, owing to an unusual depression between the eyes, gave that important feature of the female countenance the semblance of a "turn-up"; but with time, — as is usually the case with very young children, — this irregularity of feature disappeared in a great degree, and the then infant Josephine is now classed among the most beautiful women of the day.

The Mansfields resided in Boston, and its immediate vicinity, until the breaking out of the "California fever" of 1849-50, when the husband, — having been dissatisfied with his marriage from the first, and being in straitened circumstances at the time, — departed for the "Land of Gold," leaving behind an uncongenial matrimonial partner, and the youthful Josephine, then in the third year of her age.

Assassination of Her Father.

Mr. Mansfield's career in California was for a time eminently successful, as in 1853, he had become editor of the Stockton "Republican" newspaper, and also possessed an interest in the establishment, to which a job office was attached; but his life was soon afterward brought to a sudden termination by the bullet of an assassin. An account of the tragedy was published in the papers of the day, and was to the following effect:

The murdered man had become involved in a newspaper quarrel with a rival sheet, — the Stockton "Journal," owned

and edited by a Southerner named Tabor, — in relation to the city printing, and the wordy warfare was ended by Tabor meeting Mansfield one morning and shooting him down in the public streets. The murderer was arrested, tried, and sentenced to be hanged; but, owing to some inexplicable cause, he escaped the halter he so richly deserved.

Josie's School Days.

During the husband's absence in California, Mrs. Mansfield and her daughter resided in Boston, Chelsea, at Lawrence, and at the time of his death in Charlestown, Mass. Here they lived alone, on Pleasant street; but afterwards removed to Mystic street, near the Bunker Hill Monument. Josie attended school in Charlestown, and was a great favorite among her schoolmates, especially the boys, on account of her beauty and lively disposition; and although not expensively dressed, she managed to attract more attention than any other girl in the city, and doubtless was the cause of many a heartache among the then counter-jumpers of Main street. With dark eyes, and dark brown, wavy hair, ruddy cheeks and a plump, finely developed figure, set off to the best advantage by the style of costume then in vogue, — short dress, high-heeled boots, and the never-to-be-forgotten "tilting skirt," — she presented a picture of female beauty that would undoubtedly have induced Gustave Doré, the artist-hero of the hour, to sit in a snow-bank for an indefinite period in the pleasing occupation of transferring her likeness to his sketch-

book. But deprived as she was of those restraining influences not to be expected from her gay and dashing mother, and being allowed to spend her leisure hours in her own way, her tendencies became somewhat "rapid," and she probably wore out more heel-taps and sidewalk bricks than any girl of her age in either of the adjoining cities.

Her Mother's Second Marriage and Divorce.

Mr. Charles Mansfield, a brother of the murdered Californian, resided in Charlestown at the time, and, according to a reliable paper published in that city, seems to have taken a great interest in the fair widow, and eventually "offered her a home. The offer was accepted, and Mrs. Mansfield and her daughter were comfortably installed at the residence of her brother-in-law. As he was a bachelor, a house-keeper had charge of his domestic affairs, and for some time after Mrs. Mansfield's advent there was no change. But Mrs. Mansfield was extremely attractive, was lively, genial, intelligent, and altogether such a lady as could make home pleasant in the sight of the lonely Benedict. We are far from saying that the widow ever used uncommon exertions, or in the least went out of the way to render the dwelling of right permanently her own, but certain it is, that no great length of time elapsed before her protector expressed a desire to have her recognized as his wife. The charming widow consented, and in accordance with the wishes of the groom, a quiet wedding followed, which was witnessed only by a few persons. Mr. Charles

Mansfield was a thorough business man, intensely interested in the successful conduct of his affairs in the neighboring city. He left home early in the morning, seldom returned to dinner, but remained away until evening came on. His tastes were thoroughly domestic, he loved the fireside, and rarely stayed from it unless to call on some favorite neighbor, or spend a few hours with his bachelor friends. Balls, operatic and theatrical performances he wholly eschewed. It was the old story over again. Diversity of tastes led to the destruction of conjugal felicity. The pleasure-loving wife absented herself often from home. Nearly every forenoon or afternoon saw her stylishly arrayed for street promenade, and it was observed that her visits to Boston were frequent and long. Mr. Mansfield's distrust of his wife was stimulated by the discovery of letters which indicated that a clandestine correspondence was being carried on between his matrimonial partner and her admirers. His suspicions had also been quickened by the tales which had reached his ears concerning the number and style of her visitors. Proceedings for a divorce were immediately instituted by Mr. Mansfield, and a decree was readily obtained on the strength of the testimony submitted."

YOUTHFUL INDISCRETIONS.

The same paper also published the following in regard to Josephine:—

"During this period Helen Josephine, the partner of Fisk's revelries, was an inhabitant of her mother's dwell-

ing, and though extremely young, was proved to be perfectly able to imitate her mother's behavior. The surroundings of her youth were such as to accurately fit her for her subsequent career. She lived in publicity, and was entirely without the guardianship of prudent counselors. Her conduct at length became so scandalous, and she grew to be so thoroughly obnoxious in the neighborhood, that means were taken to have her dealt with by the police; but her stepfather saved her from this ignominy by sending her from town. She was despatched to a boarding-school in the country, from which she departed for California."

Passing strange, in a neighborhood where school-houses abounded, and where church spires vied with the granite shaft beneath whose shadow she resided, that one poor child, "without prudent counsellors," should be obliged to choose between ignominy and exile,—between the tender mercies of the police and the "*home*" which awaited her on the shores of the Pacific! And was she the *only* one to bring scandal upon "the neighborhood?" And was no pitying hand stretched forth to *her* rescue? And did she go forth in tears, like Hagar of old, or did her dark eyes flash back the indignant scorn with which "the neighborhood" witnessed her expulsion? Far better for her had the neighborhood to whom she was "so thoroughly obnoxious" consigned her to any ignominy which malice could suggest, rather than she should have been forced to take the one fatal journey of her life, — to California and her mother.

In California.

Poor Josie's boarding school days must have been of short duration, as she was married in San Francisco when but seventeen years of age. Her mother had sailed for California soon after the divorce from her second husband, where she soon managed to secure a third conjugal partner, in the person of one Warren, and, on the arrival of Josie in San Francisco, Warren and his wife are said to have put her personal attractions to good account by practising the "roping-in" game upon men of wealth and position, — enticing them to their abode, and then, by threats of exposure or assassination, extorting large sums of money from their victims. Although subjected to the evil influences of this worthy pair but for a limited period, it may be easily imagined that the youthful Josephine acquired sufficient knowledge of the ways of the world to eminently qualify her for the life of an adventuress, which she finally adopted.

Josie's Marriage.

While in San Francisco, Josephine formed the acquaintance of Frank Lawlor, an actor of considerable repute in California as well as in the Atlantic States, which finally grew into a mutual attachment, and a marriage took place between the parties on the first of September, 1864. On the termination of the husband's engagements in California, the newly married pair came to New York, where they arrived in the January following. But their marriage

proved an unhappy one, and a separation ensued, which eventually terminated in a divorce after about two years of married life.

Her Theatrical Career.

On the final separation from her husband, and being left to her own resources, Mrs. Josie Lawlor endeavored to gain a livelihood upon the stage; and although possessed of a fine presence, ample self-possession, a clear head and comprehensive intellect, good memory and a great love of fame, yet, being deficient in the power of imitation, and also being endowed with a large amount of individuality, thereby rendering it impossible for her to identify herself with any other character than that of Josie Lawlor, she naturally failed to rise in her chosen profession, and, after several futile attempts in New York and other cities, she relinquished a career which promised nothing but failure.

Her Relations with Fisk.

Like humanity in general, Mrs. Lawlor required food and lodgement, and her situation becoming desperate, it is said that her friends applied to Col. Fisk in behalf of the "unfortunate actress." The Colonel, with his well known liberality, generously responded, although it is asserted he had at that time no acquaintance with the object of his bounty. Subsequently she obtained, through an actress named Wood, an introduction to her benefactor, and Josephine at once saw in the gallant Colonel, whose proverbial tastes were so much in consonance with her

own, the man who was to gratify her love of luxury and ease, ornament and display, as well as her ambition for distinction and her uncontrollable desire to be a leader rather than a follower in all the fashionable frivolities of the day. Nor was her perspicacity at fault; for Fisk immediately "took a great fancy to her," fitted up a splendid suit of rooms for her on Lexington avenue, and was a constant visitor at the house, to which the following note, — the first of the celebrated Fisk-Mansfield correspondence, — is directed: —

MRS. JOSIE LAWLOR, 42 Lexington avenue:—Come. Will you come over with Fred and dine with me? If your friends are there bring them along. Yours truly, J. F., jr

With the funds supplied by her rich admirer, Josie soon commenced to cut quite a figure in New York, and frequently rode out in great style. Indeed, she seems to have overstepped the bounds of propriety, even as interpreted by the magnificent Fisk himself. It appears that she had visited the offices of the Erie Railroad, at the Grand Opera House, in such magnificent array as to completely demoralize the clerks and astonish all present, and was rewarded for her attempt to add lustre to the magnificence of the prince's dominions by receiving next day the following remonstrance: —

Strange you should make my office or the vicinity the scene for a "personal." You must be aware that harm came to me in such foolish vanity, and those that could do it care but little for the interest of the writer of this.

Yours, truly,

JAMES FISK, JR.

This slight check upon Josie's vanity undoubtedly produced a scene upon the next visit of the Colonel to his lady love, but a reconciliation was doubtless effected by this little missive:—

5TH AVENUE HOTEL.

Dolly:—Enclosed find money. Bully morning for a funeral!

Josie's admirer proved as she had anticipated, a generous protector; for he eventually established her in an elegant residence on 23rd street, near the Grand Opera House, furnished it in magnificent style, and supplied her with everything which taste could desire or wealth procure, and for a time everything was serene.

But this position of affairs did not suit the ambitious Josie; she craved wealth, and endeavored to induce Fisk to make a settlement upon her. But, notwithstanding his infatuation for the lovely adventuress, the Colonel evidently distrusted her, and declined to grant her request. A quarrel ensued; but probably, as Josie was not the woman to give up a settled purpose, the following note met with a favorable response:—

FEBRUARY 10, 1870.

MY DEAR DOLLY:—Will you see me this morning? If so, what hour?

Yours truly, ever,

JAMES.

And that a reconciliation had taken place, the following would seem to indicate:—



10TH OF MARCH.

DEAR DOLLY — Enclosed find \$75, which you need ; do not wait dinner for me to-night ; I cannot come.

Yours truly, ever, JAMES.

Meanwhile, Stokes the assassin, a fashionable young married man, who had at one time some business transactions with Fisk, and by whom he was introduced into Josie's establishment, was a constant visitor at the house, and seems to have used his best endeavors to supplant Fisk and ingratiate himself into her favor. He had much the advantage of his rival in personal appearance, being a genteel, finely-formed young man, and no doubt an understanding existed between the two that Josephine should obtain a large sum of money from Fisk, as a settlement upon herself, and then desert him for her new lover. At all events, she is said to have frequently threatened to go off with Stokes unless the desired settlement was made. Fisk still declined to accede to her demands, and on the 29th of January, 1870, she sent him a letter saying their relations were ended.

On receiving this note, Fisk went to Stokes and requested him to discontinue his visiting at Josie's ; but this he would not consent to promise, but proposed to allow Josie herself to decide between them. Fisk assented to the proposition ; but the calculating Josie declined to arbitrate in the matter, she seeing no reason why they should not all be friends, neither concerning himself about the doings of the other. But Fisk was inexorable in the stand

he had taken, and said, "It won't do, Josie! You can't run two engines on one track in contrary directions at the same time." The following is Fisk's reply to Josie's letter of dismissal:—

SUNDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 1, 1870.

MY DEAR JOSIE—I received your letter. The tenor does not surprise me much. You alone sought the issue, and the reward will belong to you. I cannot allow you to depart believing yourself what you write, and must say to you, what you know full well, that all the differences could have been settled by a kiss in the right spirit, and in after days I should feel very kindly toward you out of memory of the great love I have borne for you. I never was aware that you admitted a fault. I have many—God knows, too many—and that has brought me the trouble of the day. I will not speak of the future, for full well I know the spirits you take it in. You know me, and the instincts of your heart will weigh me out in the right scale. I will give you no parting advice. You have been well schooled in that, and can tell chaff from wheat, and probably are as strong to-night as the humble writer of this letter. The *actions* of the past *must* be the right way to think of me; and from them, day by day, I hope any comparison which you may make from writing in the future will be favorable for me. A longer letter from me might be much of an advertisement of my weakness, and the only great idea I would impress on your mind is how wrong you are when you say that I have "grown tired of you." Wrong, wrong! Never excuse yourself on that in after years. Don't try to teach your heart that, for it is a lie, and you are falsifying yourself to your own soul.

No more. Like the Arabs, we will fold our tents and

quietly steal away, and when we spread them next, we hope it will be where the "woodbine twineth," over the river Jordan, on the bright and beautiful banks of heaven. From yours, ever.

JAMES.

A few days after the receipt of this letter, Josie seems to have regretted her hasty action, sent for Fisk to call upon her, finally went to see him, and the quarrel was apparently "made up." But having become aware of the fact that she was in the habit of telegraphing for Stokes to come to her house during his own absences from the city, Fisk again became jealous, deserted her for Mademoiselle Montaland, a Parisian actress, and Stokes' star was again in the ascendant. A short time afterward, however, Josie again wrote to Fisk, alluding to some "great exposure," and received the following cutting reply:—

NEW YORK, OCT. 1, 1870.

Mrs. MANSFIELD: . . . As far as the great exposure you speak of is concerned, that is a dark entry upon which I have no light, and as I fail to see it, I cannot of course understand it.

. . . But what think you of a woman who would veil my eyes, first by a gentle kiss, and afterward, night and day, for weeks, months and years, by deceit and fraud to lead me through the dark valley of trouble, when she could have made my pathway one of roses, committing crimes which a devil incarnate would shrink from, while all this time I showed to her, as to you, nothing but kindness, both in words and actions, laying at your feet a soul, a heart, a fortune and a reputation which had cost by

night and day twenty-five years of perpetual struggle, and which, but for the black blot of having in an evil hour linked itself with you, would stand out to-day brighter than any ever seen upon earth. But the mist has fallen, and you appear in your true light, and you have the audacity to call your sainted mother to witness your advice to me. You accuse her of leading you on and of ever standing ready to make appointments for you. The tone of your letter is such that you seem willing to shoulder the load of guilt under which an ordinary criminal would stagger. I believe you have arrived at that state when no amount of guilt will disturb your serenity or prevent you having sweet dreams. How I worship the night I said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" The few weeks that have elapsed since that blessed hour, how I bless them for the peace of mind they have brought me! Again the world looks bright and I have a being. I send you back a ring; and, were I to write anything about it, the words would be only too decent for the same, were they couched in the worst of language. So I say, take it back. I had a few pictures of you, but they have found a place among the nothings which fill the waste basket under my table. I am aware that in your back parlor hangs the picture of the man who gave you the wall to hang it on; and rumor says you have another in your chamber. The picture up stairs send back to me. Take the other down, for he whom it represents has no respect for you.

In answer to which Josie wrote as follows:—

OCTOBER, 1870.

JAMES FISK, JR. — That your letter had the desired effect you can well imagine. I am honest enough to admit it cut me to the quick. In all the annals of letter-writing I may

say it eclipsed them all. . . . I freely admit I never expected so severe a letter from you. I, of course, feel that it was unmerited; but, as it is your opinion of me, I accept it with all the sting. You have *struck home*, and I may say, turned the knife around. I will send you the picture you speak of at once. The one in the parlor I will also dispose of. I know of nothing else here that you would wish. I am anxious to adjust our affairs. I certainly do not wish to annoy you, and that I may be able to do so I write you this last letter. You have told me very often that you held some twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars of mine in your keeping. I do not know if it is so; but that I may be able to shape my affairs permanently for the future that a part of the amount would place me in a position where I never would have to appeal to you for aught. I have never *had one dollar from any one else*, and arriving here from the Branch, expecting my affairs with you to continue, I contracted bills that I would not otherwise have done. I do not ask for anything I have not been led to suppose was mine, and do not ask you to settle what is not entirely convenient for you. After a time I shall sell my house, but for the present think it best to remain in it. The money I speak of would place me where I should need the *assistance* of no one. The ring I take back as fairly as I gave it you; the mate to it I shall keep for company. Why you should say I obtained this house by robbery I cannot imagine; however, you know best. I am sorry that your associations with me were detrimental to you, and I would gladly, with you (were it possible), obliterate the last three years of my life's history; but it is not possible, and we must struggle to outlive our past. I trust you will take the sense of this letter as it is meant.

And elicited the following in reply : —

NEW YORK, OCT. 4, 1870.

. . . I would have the language of my former letter and the sentiments therein expressed stamped upon your heart as my deep-seated opinion of your character. No other construction must be put upon my words. I turn over the first page of your letter ; I pass over the kind words you have written ; have I not furnished a satisfactory mansion for others' use ? Have I not fulfilled every promise I have made ? Is there not a stability about your finances to-day (if not disturbed by vultures) sufficient to afford you a comfortable income for the remainder of your natural life ? You say you have never received a dollar from any one but me, and you *will never* have another from me, until want and misery bring you to my door, except, of course, in fulfilment of my sacred promise, and the settlement of your bills up to three weeks ago, at five minutes to eleven o'clock. You need have no fear as to my sensitiveness regarding your calling on any one else for assistance, as I find the word "*assistance*" underlined in your letter to make it more impressive on my mind. . . . You will therefore excuse me if I decline your modest request for a still further disbursement of \$25,000. . . . You say that you hope I will take the sense of your letter. There is but one sense to be taken out of it, and that is an "epitaph" to be cut on the stone at the head of the grave in which Miss Helen Josephine Mansfield has buried her pride. Had she been the same proud-spirited girl that she was when she stood side by side with me — the power behind the throne — she would not have humbled herself to ask a permanency of one whom she had so deeply wronged. . . . I took in the full intent and meaning of your letter, and felt that it was "robbery," and nothing

else. . . . Now, pin this letter with the other. The front of this is the back of that, and you will have a telescopic view of yourself and your character as you appear to me to-day; and then instead of trying to answer this letter from your disorganized brain, or writing from the dictation of those around you to-day, simply take a piece of paper and write on it the same as I do now, so far as we are now, or ever may be, "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes. Amen."

Notwithstanding these bitter letters, Fisk always softened towards Josie whenever she approached him. He evidently could not bear the idea of giving her up entirely, and continued addressing long letters to her, one of which contained the following *ultimatum* in regard to Stokes: —

"I will not countenance even your impression on my mind until the door is closed behind him forever. For what you can gain from me you probably cannot afford to do that; so let me advise you —, nourish him and be careful. Nothing is so bad for you as changes. He loves you; you love him. You have caused me all the misery you could. Cling to him. Be careful what you do, for he will be watchful. How well he knows *you cheated me*. He will look for the same. And now, as I know precisely how you stand from your own lips, I will treat him differently. Although you would not protect him, I will. While he is there, and until his memory is buried forever, never approach me, for I shall send you away unseen. Ever be careful that you do not have the feeling that you can come back to me, for there is a wide gulf between you and me. I would not hold a false hope out to you. I shall not trouble you more in this letter. You have the only idea I can express to you. You know when you can see me

again, if ever. The risk for you is too great. Loving, and suited as you are, cling to him for the present, and when your nature grows tired of that, throw him off. And so along until it is time for you to be weary, and to be 'put into your little bed' forever, you must rest contented."

Finding she could not obtain from Fisk the desired settlement which was to shield her from want when time should have marred her beauty, Josie, probably entertaining a preference for Stokes, listened to the voice of the tempter and delivered up to him Fisk's letters, to be used as a means of extorting money from the latter. Various suits took place between the parties, until Fisk was prosecuted for libel by Josephine, in causing a former servant of hers to make an affidavit to the effect that he overheard Stokes and his mistress talk about "the scheme for getting money from Fisk."

The personal appearance of Josie upon the trial of this cause is thus described:—

"Imagine a woman, much above the medium height, young and vivid, with full, dashing figure, yet not gross, with deep, large, almond-shaped black eyes, luxuriant purple-black hair, worn in massive coils—tempting mouth, lips not too pronounced, and yet not insipid, magnificent teeth, clear pearl and pink complexion, oval face, and nose not *retroussée*, and yet not straight—with a quiet, lady-like walk and action—soft voice and winning smile. Dress such a woman in dark silk, flounced with deep Valenciennes, a flowing silk jacket, beautifully embroidered with white braid, with a plain gold cross to set off the exquisite contour of her neck, and a dark green

Tyrolese hat falling partially over her forehead, surmounted by a waving ostrich feather, and you have Mrs. Helen Josephine Mansfield as she appeared in the court room."

The following is a description of her toilet upon another occasion while in court:—

"Her delicate white hands were encased in faultless lavender kid gloves, and over her magnificent tournure of dark hair was perched a jaunty little Alpine hat, with a dainty green feather placed thereon. Her robe was of the heaviest black silk, cut *à la impératrice*, and having deep flounces of the heaviest black lace over Milanaise bands of white satin. At her snowy throat, the only article of jewelry on her person, a small gold pin, glistened and heightened the effect. Her hair was worn *à la Cleopatre*, and a superb black velvet mantle covered her shoulders."

On the several cross-examinations to which Josie was subjected, it is reported that on those points which involved only her character as a woman she was perfectly calm and collected; but when questioned in regard to the alleged scantiness of her wardrobe before her acquaintance with Fisk, she completely broke down and burst into tears, and it is supposed that the sight of her weakness and tears moved Stokes to rage, and was one of the causes which led him a few hours afterward to commit the crime of murder.

On learning of the death of Fisk, Josie is said to have uttered an exclamation of horror and to have fallen fainting into the arms of an attendant. Another proof that she is not entirely heartless, and once entertained a lively

affection for her husband, is manifest in the deep feeling she exhibited on testifying to his final desertion of her.

That she was generous to a fault while receiving money from Fisk will be seen in the subjoined extract from one of his letters :—

“You may not be to blame for entertaining the idea that you have shown great kindness to Miss——and others, and that they are under great obligations to you for favors conferred. The habit of constantly imagining that you were the real author of all the benefits bestowed upon others would naturally affect a much better balanced brain than yours, and in time you would come to believe that you alone had the power to distribute the good things to those around you, utterly forgetful of him who was behind the scenes entirely unnoticed. Can you blame, then, those from whose eyes the veil has fallen, and who see you in your true light as the giver of others’ charities.”

It is stated that Josephine is entirely without means, having mortgaged her house for nearly its full value to pay the expenses of her suits with Fisk.

Since the fearful tragedy at the Grand Central Hotel, but little is positively known of her. She has lived in complete seclusion, and undoubtedly has had ample opportunity to ruminate upon her own eventful career ; and should her memory have reverted to her innocent childhood, she might have exclaimed, with an erring sister in sorrow :

Where is the promise of my years,
Once written on my brow?
Ere errors, agonies and fears
Brought with them all that speaks in tears,
Ere I had sunk beneath my peers?
Where sleeps that promise now?

Nought lingers to redeem those hours,
 Still, still to memory sweet!
 The flowers to bloom in sunny bowers
 Are withered all, and evil towers
 Supreme above her sister powers
 Of sorrow and deceit.

I look along the columned years,
 And see life's riven fane,
 Just where it fell, amid the jeers
 Of scornful lips, whose mocking sneers
 Forever hiss within my ears
 To break the sleep of pain.

I can but own my life is vain —
 A desert void of peace;
 I missed the goal I sought to gain,
 I missed the measure of the strain
 That cools Fame's fever in the brain
 And bids Earth's tumult cease.

Myself! alas, for theme so poor,
 A theme but rich in fear;
 I stand a wreck on Error's shore,
 A spectre not within the door,
 A houseless shadow evermore —
 An exile lingering here!

Bad as Helen Josephine Mansfield is represented, some sympathy might with propriety be shown towards one whose infancy was neglected, who was without prudent counsellors in childhood, and "the surroundings of whose youth were such as to accurately fit her for her subsequent career."

