

VIVID WITH HIS MEMORY

Mrs Aldrich Tells Book's Story—Unseen Hand Guided Her in Order of Dead Poet's Verses.

Vitalized and vivid with the memory of the late Thomas Bailey Aldrich is the recently issued little volume, "The Shadow of the Flowers." But even more beautiful than the book itself is the story that brought it to public view.

Made up as it is of passages from Mr Aldrich's poems, in which some flower is named, one is easily carried back to a remembrance of the old colonial garden in which played the "Bad Boy," only he wasn't such a bad boy after all.

One always instinctively pauses on Mt Vernon st in front of the white classic doorway of marble with its queer, crooked turns, which was the home of the late poet for something more than 30 years, and where his wife still lives. Its architecture is Grecian, and considered the best of its type in Boston.

Almost unconsciously the writer found herself looking for the wreath of violets with its purple ribbons which hung there on the day of Mr Aldrich's death.

In speaking of this to Mrs Aldrich she said:

"I find myself always with the cheerful expectancy of his presence. Indeed, his presence is always with me."

"Then that accounts for the elusive, almost intangible, and spiritual quality of the 'Shadow of the Flowers,' the writer exclaimed eagerly. "Will you not tell me his story?"

"The little tale is a very simple one," she explained. "When the memorial at Portsmouth which is the old home of the poet's grandparents, the Bailey house, where he was reared and where he spent much of his time until after the death of his grandparents, was being planned. Mrs George Tyson of the association volunteered to restore the garden.

Influence of an Unseen Hand.

"She was anxious to put there only the old-fashioned flowers such as it originally had, and so she asked me for a list. I knew my husband had mentioned all of them at one time or another in his poems. One day I sat down with a volume intending to go through it and merely mention the flowers named.

"In making the list I found the lines enclosing the flower in nearly every case so much a part of the flower itself that I copied them out, as in gathering the actual flowers of the garden. I would have surrounded each with leaves belonging to it.

"Throughout the process of selection I seemed to be guarded by the influence of an unseen hand. I turned over the leaves, back and forth. Where I had numbered a page 4, something prompted me to replace it with No. 8. Where I found No. 6, I was told to move it back to 5, and so on throughout the entire list.

"In the end, I found that, without intention on my part, the lines, in their sequence, shadowed forth subtly yet clearly, not only a story, but a double story. In it was revealed the story not only of the changing seasons of the year, but of the seasons of a poet's life from childhood and through youth and love to old age and death."

Here as a child, in loving, curious way, He watched the bluebirds' coming, learned the date

Of hyacinth and goldenrod, and made Friends of those little redmen of the elms, And shyly added to their Winter store, Of hazel nuts. No harmless thing that breathed, Footed or winged, but knew him for a friend.

But this is not all, for after Mrs Aldrich recognized the significance of her selections and had consented to have them printed in a memorial book, it occurred to her that she lacked a title. Many were thought of, but soon discarded. Finally, with the need of more paper in her mind, she reached down into a drawer, but found none.

the home of the Bad Boy, Mr Aldrich does not speak of the garden," said his wife, "but he has often told me of the inexhaustible territory of pleasure and play it was—at times swarming with Indians in ambush—behind every bush and tree—then, presto, change! it was transformed into an English forest through which rode Robin Hood and his men.

"Again the pirates had it—Capt Kidd burying his treasure in the moonlight—Jeanne d'Arc proudly riding on her white steed with banners flying—and here many times was solemnized the marriage of Pocahontas and Capt Smith.

"The happy days of his boyhood spoke to him from every timber of that old home. There was not an inch in the house or a spot in the garden that did not have its story to tell."

Mrs Aldrich wrote the "Shadow of the Flowers" at her husband's desk—once belonging to Charles Sumner, in his study on the top floor where everything is still placed as its master left it. The big, leather-covered chair has been pushed back, since his was the last form to fill it.

Priceless Literary Relics.

On the desk there is a picture of a sweet, laughing baby, Thomas Bailey Aldrich's grandchild, born a month after his grandfather's death, for whom he is named.

A few feet from the desk stands a small mahogany chest—the gift of the son, containing pipe and tobacco, just as he had placed them on the last day he was in the study. Rising from the depths of a blue delft jar is a long-stemmed pipe, similar to that which the Orientals use.

Although his priceless collection of autograph manuscripts, first editions and literary relics are in the Aldrich Memorial Museum, the walls of the study and the three libraries of his home are book-lined and filled with autographed portraits of famous men. One wonders how space could possibly have been found for those now at Portsmouth.

As Mrs Aldrich paused before a large oil painting of the poet, the writer was reminded that it had been said that Lowell himself was not more remarkable for perennial youthfulness. Far more than Lowell, Mr Aldrich looked astonishingly young, "a habit," as he used to say, remarked Mrs Aldrich, "acquired in youth."

Blond, erect and ruddy, with a peculiar alertness of bearing, he seemed even at his death to defy mortality, to be himself as immortal as a lyric.

Not far from the painting hangs an

autograph picture of Dr Henry van Dyke by Alexander. Below are the words:

O, who will walk a mile with me,
Along life's sunny way,
A comrade blithe and full of glee,
Who dares to laugh out loud and free,
And let his frolic fancy play,
Like a happy child, thro' the flowers gay,
That filled the field, that brings the way
When he walks a mile with me.

Forever and a Day.

The singularly deep attachment that existed between Mr and Mrs Aldrich during his life is best told in his poem "Forever and a Day," published in a book dedicated to her.

They were rarely apart, but one day she was preparing for a brief visit to New York.

"How long shall you be gone?" he asked her.

Intending to be away not more than a couple of days, she answered laughingly: "O, I don't know—a week perhaps."

The first morning's mail after her arrival in New York brought her the following lovely poem:

I little know or care
If the blackbird on the bough
Is filling all the air
With his soft crescendo now;

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