
The Careless Word.

Written for The Pine and Palm.

'Twas but a word, a careless word;
As thistle down it seemed as light;
It paused a moment on the air,
Then onward winged its flight.

Another lip caught up the word,
And breathed it with a haughty sneer;
It gathered weight as on it sped—
That careless word, in its career.

Then Rumor caught the flying word,
And busy Gossip gave it weight,
Until that little word became
A vehicle of angry hate.

And then that word was winged with fire,
Its mission was a thing of pain,
For soon it fell like lava drops,
Upon a wildly tortured brain.

And then another page of life
With burning scalding tears was blurred;
A load of care was heavier made—
Its added weight, that careless word.

That careless word, oh! how it searched
A fainting, bleeding, quivering heart;
'Twas like a hungry fire, that searched
Through every tender, vital part.

How wildly throbbed that aching heart;
Deep agony its fountain stirred;
It calmed, but bitter ashes mark
The pathway of that careless word.

—F. E. W. HARPER.

