

**AFTERMATH; PART  
SECOND OF "A  
KENTUCKY CARDINAL"**

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Aftermath; part second of "A Kentucky cardinal" by James Lane Allen

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**JAMES LANE ALLEN**

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AFTERMATH  
PART SECOND OF  
"A KENTUCKY CARDINAL"

BY  
JAMES LANE ALLEN  
AUTHOR OF  
"THE BLUE-GRASS REGION OF KENTUCKY"  
"FLUTE AND VIOLIN" ETC.



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1899

### Dedication

This to her from one who in childhood used to stand  
at the windows of her room and watch for the Cardinal  
among the snow-buried cedars.

# AFTERMATH

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PART SECOND OF "A KENTUCKY CARDINAL"

## I

I WAS happily at work this morning among my butterbeans—a vegetable of solid merit and of a far greater suitability to my palate than such bovine watery growths as the squash and the beet. Georgiana came to her garden window and stood watching me.

"You work those butterbeans as though you loved *them*," she said, scornfully.

"I do love them. I love all vines."

"Are you cultivating them as vines or as vegetables?"



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"It makes no difference to nature."

"Do you expect me to be a vine when we are married?"

"I hope you'll not turn out a mere vegetable. How should you like to be my Virginia-creeper?"

"And what would you be?"

"Well, what would you like? A sort of honeysuckle frame?"

"Oh, anything! Only support me and give me plenty of room to bloom."

I do not always reply to Georgiana, though I always could if I chose. Whenever I remain silent about anything she changes the subject.

"Did you know that Sylvia once wrote a poem on a vegetable?"

"I did not."

"You don't speak as though you cared."

"You must know how deeply interested I am."

"Then why don't you ask to see the poem?"

"Was it on butterbeans?"

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"The idea! Sylvia has better taste."

"I suppose I'd better look into this poem."

"You are not to laugh at it!"

"I shall weep."

"No; you are not to weep. Promise."

"What am I to promise?"

"That you will read it unmoved."

"I do promise—solemnly, cheerfully."

"Then come and get it."

I went over and stood under the window. Georgiana soon returned and dropped down to me a piece of writing-paper.

"Sylvia wrote it before she began to think about the boys."

"It must be a very early poem."

"It is; and this is the only copy; please don't lose it."

"Then I think you ought to take it back at once. Let me beg of you not to risk it—" But she was gone; and I turned to my arbor and sat down to read Sylvia's poem, which I found to be in-

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scribed to "The Potato," and to run as follows:

"What on this wide earth  
That is made or does by nature grow  
Is more homely yet more beautiful  
Than the useful Potato?"

"What would this world full of people do,  
Rich and poor, high and low,  
Were it not for this little-thought-of  
But very necessary Potato?"

"True, 'tis homely to look on,  
Nothing pretty even in its blow,  
But it will bear acquaintance,  
This useful Potato.

"For when it is cooked and opened  
It's so white and mellow,  
You forget it ever was homely,  
This useful Potato.

"On the whole it is a very plain plant,  
Makes no conspicuous show,  
But the internal appearance is lovely  
Of the unostentatious Potato.

"On the land or on the sea,  
Wherever we may go,  
We are always glad to welcome  
The sound Potato."\*

\*The elder Miss Cobb was wrong in thinking this poem Sylvia's. It was extant at the time