



Mrs. M. Alexander.

GOING WEST;

OR,

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS.

A NOVEL.

BY

MRS. M. ALEXANDER,

AUTHOR OF "A WIDOW'S LIFE," "HERE AND HEREAFTER," "THE
OUTCAST RECLAIMED," "CHRISTIANITY AND INFIDELITY."

Through the broad prairies
I'll merrily ride.

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HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS.

A SECOND PARTY SENT TO THE WEST—THIRTY-EIGHT DESTITUTE BOYS AND A FAMILY OF SEVEN POOR PERSONS STARTED ON TUESDAY—BRIEF SKETCHES OF THE BOYS.

“In a special car attached to the express train for the west, which left the Erie railway station at Jersey City Tuesday night, were thirty-eight destitute boys and a family consisting of seven persons who were going to seek work and homes and a brighter future than they could hope for here. They were accompanied by Mr. James Brace, an agent of the Children’s Aid Society, but the expenses of their removal were defrayed by Mr. Whitelaw Reid, from funds which had been placed in his hands by charitable gentlemen to expend as he thought best in relieving the wants of the suffering in New York, with the requirement that what he did should be reported in detail in the Tribune. The boys who made up the party Tuesday are more than usually intelligent and thoughtful. Short sketches of the boys are given, their simple histories being related mainly in their own words.”—[From the New York Tribune, Friday, April 25, 1879.]

My story is confined mainly to the history of two boys we will call Joe Clifford and George Kent.

GOING WEST.

CHAPTER I.

THE STARTING.

“Through the broad rolling prairies
I’ll merrily ride,”

Sang the full, sweet tones of a tenor voice, as the singer walked rapidly down a beautiful street in New York and paused in front of a stately stone dwelling on Fifth avenue. Inside the iron gate, with marble posts, stood a lovely dark-haired little girl. He reached out his hand, and his firm voice quivered with tenderness as he said: “Good-bye, Birdie; I’m going west.” He was a tall boy, sixteen years of age, and bore the unmistakable stamp of energy in his manly form.

Birdie was the only daughter of a wealthy New York banker; she was nine years old, of slight form, with dark curls and large, sad-looking black eyes.

She looked straight at the golden-haired boy, and said seriously for a child of her age: “Why are you going west, Joe?”

Joe Clifford was the youth’s name. He replied, “I am tired of starvation, Birdie; the city is overcrowded, the professions and trades are overrun; here it is a mere hand to mouth ex-

istence, and always will be. I long for a place where I can stretch my arms and not be afraid of jogging some one in the sides. I long to see the mountains and feel the fresh winds from the prairies fanning my cheeks."

"Yes; but, Joe, I shall never see you again; you will forget Birdie when you have gone away."

"Forget you, Birdie!" and his voice grew low and tremulous; "*never* will I forget the sweet little girl that brought bread to my starving mother and her sick boy four years ago. To me in all this crowded city there are but three faces I shall care to remember: your sweet face and beautiful black eyes, my mother and Aunt Mary. Mother thinks it is best for me to go west, where I will have better opportunities for improving my condition in life. I feel that I can not attain wealth and position here in this crowded city, but out west, Birdie, there are great possibilities. Who knows but I may find a lump of gold and return to you in a few years a wealthy man. Gold, the great ultimatum of human ambition, the lever upon which the axle of the universe revolves, the standard by which man too often judges man."

"And, Joe, when you have gold, how much better will you be?"

"No better, Birdie, if I should judge by the many who have gold, but much better respected and more highly thought of by the world in general."

The child sighed wearily, and looked up at the massive stone front of her father's residence; then looking back at Joe, slowly and solemnly she said: "It is money—money—money; *always* money; papa worries about making it, and mamma worries about spending it, and now Joe is just like the others; he is going west to leave me."

"I would not leave you, Birdie, if I could help it; but New

York is overrun, and Mr. Reid proposes to help us boys to get homes in the west. Mother is almost heart-broken because I am going. I have saved all my earnings for weeks to leave with her and Aunt Mary. You must visit them, Birdie, in my absence; they will be very lonely."

"I will, Joe; but how are you to live out in that wild country; no mother, no friends, no Birdie to be good to you?"

"Do not discourage me, Birdie; I shall find friends, but none so dear as you and mother and Aunt Mary."

The dainty little form drew itself to its tallest height, while the midnight eyes grew strangely solemn, and the words she spoke were beyond her years; she said:

"Joe, you think we are dearest now, but some time you will forget us, in loving others. I hope whatever changes your new life may bring, it will bring you no love so dear as mine. I have but this to give you for a keepsake." As she said this she unclasped a necklace from her neck and removed a small gold cross from it, saying: "Keep this, Joe, when you are far away on the sunny plains, or 'neath the shade on the mountain side look at it, and think of Birdie, all alone in this crowded city. I will visit your mother, Joe; she looks so sad it makes my heart ache to see her. Where is your papa? Why don't he give you money, like my papa gives mamma money?"

Joe replied, "I guess my father is dead. It is a little strange that mother never told me about my father. I always took it for granted that he was dead, and asked no questions. I will ask mother, before I go, about father. Good-bye, sweet little Birdie; we may never meet again, but I shall carry your precious image with me to my grave."

Birdie Elliot reached up her tiny hands and clasped the golden head in them, and kissed Joe Clifford a farewell kiss

that he carried away to his western home, and bore in his memory years afterwards, as the first pure and precious kiss of the angel child he loved.

He returned to the humble tenement house where his mother and Aunt Mary lived.

Mrs. Clifford was a tall, finely formed lady, with golden hair and deep blue eyes; over her face were lines of care and sadness. She smiled faintly as Joe entered, and said:

"My son, this is, indeed, a trying day to me; there is only one thing could gain my consent to our separation; that is, the hope that you may better your condition in life."

"Yes, dear mother; and I have a hope that I may soon have a home for you and Aunt Mary. I have often wondered why you are so much alone. I never heard you speak of my father or your relatives. I have often wished to know about them, but feared to ask you as you always seemed to avoid the subject."

A crimson tide of blood flowed to the polished forehead of the lady as she replied: "Joe, I have purposely avoided the subject because it was painful to me, but I will now give you a sketch of my life and your birth. I was an only child; my parents died and left me in my infancy. My uncle received me into his family and cared for me until I was seventeen years of age. My aunt always begrudged me the kindness my uncle bestowed upon me. In my seventeenth year I met your father. It is the old-time story of woman's love and trust and man's treachery. He was much older than myself. He visited friends in the neighborhood where I lived, saw me, made love to me, and I, believing him, fled with him and was married to him. He afterwards told me it was only a mock marriage, as he already had a wife. I cursed him and fled from him. For awhile, I think, I must have been rav-

ing mad. The first I remember of was a cottage near New York, where I was cared for by your Aunt Mary. Your tiny head was nestled in my bosom, and I awoke to the consciousness that I was a mother without being a wife, and your only birthright a heritage of shame; a pauper born in a stranger's home and tended by the hand of charity; a homeless, nameless babe. I was kindly cared for by your Aunt Mary Grey, and when I was able to go out to work she took care of you; but for her kindness and help in my time of need I would have been taken to the hospital. I need not ask you, my son, to always care for your Aunt Mary. I know you will. Your earliest recollections are of poverty and privation, and yet I have every reason to believe your father a wealthy man. He furnished our home beautifully; for almost a year we lived, as I have sometimes imagined, the sinless live in paradise. After a time your father grew morose, and at times restless. He often came home under the influence of wine; at such times he would taunt me with infidelity and curse women as a class. I was heart-broken at first, but I urged him to give up wine; one day he returned worse than usual; he told me that I was not his wife, that he had a wife before ever he saw me, and he only made believe I was his wife, because I showed my preference for him so plain, and was so ready to elope with him. Oh! the misery, the suffering of that hour; the love of a life time was changed; the baleful burning fires of hate leaped to my eyes and scorched the red blood in my heart. Steadily, calmly, I stood before him, and told him I *hated* him; he had betrayed me. I left then, there and forever, with a curse on my lips. Years have gone by. I hid my shame, my dishonored life, amid the strangers in New York city. The associates of the unfortunates are not particular in regard to character. No one inquired of me who I was, or from whence

I came. I was but a unit in the great mass of human kind that drifts along the sea of time. I had done no willful sin. Day after day, I have toiled on, as only hopeless, helpless woman can toil, for our daily bread. I have never met Horace Clifford from that day until now. Sixteen long years have told their lengths; you are now entering into manhood's estate, and, my son, let your mother's suffering be a warning to you never to trifle with woman's affection. You do not resemble your father in feature and complexion, but you have his bearing, his manners, his expression. He was tall, dark and fine in appearance, and I have sometimes thought some deep trouble haunted him, which caused him to treat me so badly. Should you ever meet him and become known to him, treat him kindly for the sake of the love I once gave him."

"*Treat him kindly!*" The young face blazed with scorn and indignation, and the lips fairly hissed the words. "*Curse him.* I could take his heart's blood for the trouble, the suffering he has brought on you, my poor patient mother."

The young form quivered and glowed; a dangerous fire leaped from the blue eyes; it was well for the father he came not in contact with the son just then; he would have done him some deadly injury.

By a mighty effort he controlled himself, saying: "Dear mother, forgive me. I was so angry when I thought of his treatment of you, I could not restrain myself. I am half a notion not to go west and leave you now. I feel so sad at parting with you. Who will love and care for you as I will?"

"No one, my son, but it is better you go. I have sought to train you right, and impress your young mind with high and honorable principles. I feel the west is the place for you to expand your knowledge and improve your mind, as well as to improve your financial affairs."

Joe bade his mother and Aunt Mary adieu, with tears in his blue eyes and sadness in his heart. Many long months were to drag their weary lengths away e'er mother and son should meet again.

The boys crowded on the train with bright anticipations of western life; to them it was to be an arcadia on earth; it meant plenty to eat and room for breathing space.

One boy noticing Joe's serious face remarked, "Say, Joe, you ain't a grieving for the gal you left behind you, are you?"

Joe replied, "No, Henry, but I am thinking of my mother."

CHAPTER II.

THE MEETING.

There's beauty in the matchless face
And majesty in the young form.—*Author.*

Standing on the platform at the depot, at Jersey City, was a tall, dark-eyed man, with a mournful sadness in his eyes no words could express. He looked at the boys as they passed into the train. Suddenly he started and grew pale as Joe Clifford passed by him, entering the car. His companion noted his conduct and said:

"What disturbs you, Horace?"

He replied: "That face, Frank! I could almost have sworn that was Austria's face."

"Which face?" asked his friend.

"That one with the deep blue eyes and golden hair; it is the image of Austria in the hour she parted from me."

Here the speaker seemed almost broken down.

His friend replied, "Horace, you have grown misanthropical; you have lived on the memory of that first infatuation of your's until you fancy strange things; these are the boys going west, assisted by Mr. Whitelaw Reid, from the funds of the Children's Aid Society, and also by contributions from many benevolent gentlemen who do not wish to become known."

"Is that so! Then why do you reproach me for asking about that face? Who knows, that may be Austria's boy and mine. There was to be a child, and, oh God, it may be ours. Quick! inquire; find out."

But even as he spoke the engine gave a warning whistle and the train started on her westward course. The opportunity was lost. The face that had haunted him for years had passed like a phantom from his view and was speeding away to the toils and privations of a western farmer's life.

The two men returned to a fine hotel in New York. Horace Clifford's brow was overcast with gloom, and his heart heavy with a sadness he could not express. His friend, Frank Throop, tried to drive away his gloom and sad feeling; he remarked to him:

"Horace, why do you persist in such a course as you do? You have wealth, position, friends, everything to make you happy; you have only to choose from the highest ladies in New York society, and you can have a wife to reign over your elegant home and make you a happy man."

Horace answered impatiently: "Do not talk to me of a wife. I drove my sweet wife, my queenly Austria, from my home by cruel, unjust treatment. Oh, I thought to try her woman's love too far; fool, fool, that I was, I might have known she would suffer death rather than dishonor. I have cursed myself for years for that act. I was born to untold wealth; I never knew a wish which was not gratified. When I came to manhood's estate I was sought after for my wealth; I resolved to seek a wife in the humble walks of life, and one who would love me for myself. I found her in Austria Belmont; I married her and brought her from her humble home in New Hampshire to the city of New York. Here we lived a life of happiness, no language can express. She was an only

child ; her parents were dead. She was of good family, but poor. She was a slave to her aunt, at the place where I boarded one summer mid the Hampshire hills. I knew her to be a lady. I brought her to Belmont cottage, on the Hudson ; here for months we lived, happy as human beings ever are. I attended my club as usual one evening ; the conversation turned upon ' woman's love.' A devil in human shape sneered at woman's love and said it was only a myth. I boastingly replied, that woman's love once gained could not be turned aside from its object. He replied :

" I dare any man to say he can slight and abuse a woman and she will love him still ; she may submit to his will, and cling to him through her dependence on him, but her love will be turned to hate, and her sweetness to the bitterest gall."

" I refered him to cases where women had clung to men through the darkest disgrace. He admitted that woman would share man's disgrace and love him, but she would not accept disgrace at man's hands and love him still. I was so confident of my power to hold Austria's affection under all circumstances, that I boasted I knew a woman whose love would stand anything for the man she loved. I had of late been drinking too much ; the demon drink held me under its cursed power. I was mad, *mad* ever to treat her so. I drank more deeply, and when I returned home, often treated Austria badly. The curse of intemperance was over me ; the serpent had entered our garden, nor would it stop until it had trailed its slimy length along and left destruction in its pathway. She would look at me with sadness and wonder in her beautiful eyes, but never reproach me. I have lain awake at night and listened to her praying for me. My wicked heart exulted when I thought, *here* is a true woman's love ; nothing can drive her from me or change a love like hers. I

resolved to give her noble love one more trial, and then tell her all, and take her to my elegant home in the city so our child would be born in the home of my father.

"The last time I ever saw her I returned home from the city. She met me at the gate, her beautiful face aglow with gladness at my return. No one but a brute, a devil, could have acted as I did. I entered our home sullenly; paid no attention to the delicate little arrangements she had made for my enjoyment. Seems to me, Frank, I was at that time possessed with a fiend incarnate. I can not realize that I was so basely mean. I will relate it to you as a party witness to the scene.

"The man sat with devilish intent in his heart to try once more the purest, best heart that ever beat in woman's bosom. She spoke to him kindly, saying in endearing words, 'My husband.'

"He replied, 'Madam, you will please to keep such tender epithets for others beside me; I am no husband of yours.'

"Her fine eyes glowed and her lips quivered as she said, 'Horace, what do you mean?'

"Mean! Mean what I said! I repeat it again: you are no wife of mine.'

"Ah, cruel, bitter words. The love of her pure, guiltless heart was turned to seething, boiling hate. Blue flashes of quivering light gleamed from her eyes and burned with baleful fires her heart's red blood.

"Steadily, calmly she stood before him; her lip uttered no word; her fine form towered up and the cool steady defiance of a determined spirit gleamed in her eyes and quivered in her thin nostrils. Alas, his day had gone by, his power over her was lost and lost forever. The worm had been trodden on the last time, the camel's back had received the *one* pound too many and rebelled against its load.

"When *too late* the man discovered his error, he cried out, 'forgive me Austria, I only said that to try you.' The quivering nostrils stilled, but the blue eyes still wore their deadly gleam."

"'Forgive you, Horace? *Never!* and when the last hour of your miserable life draws to a close, and you stand face to face with God, in the presence of his angels and the redeemed of earth, my outraged woman's love will send up its lasting curse against you, and the cries of a lost soul, from the dismal abodes of despair, ring in your ears forever!' With this she turned and swept from the room with the haughty air of an injured princess.

"From that day until this I have never seen or heard of her. I have sought her far and wide. She was within one month's time of her confinement. There was a woman died at the hospital answering to the description of Austria; the babe was carried to the foundling hospital and died in a few days; but her clothes and effects did not correspond with Austria's. I have searched the world over; I have advertised in the papers for her—all of no avail. I am a helpless, ruined man. I drove from my home the only being I ever cared to love, to gratify the boasted words of a drunken mad man."

Here the speaker buried his face in his hands, and tears, the first that had passed his burning eyelids for years, crept down his wasted cheeks. He cried out "Oh, Austria, Austria! wherever you may be, you have been avenged; your curse has followed me, day and night, for sixteen long years; the heavy clouds of despair have settled over me, and I have no hope of ever meeting you again, my beloved wife."

While Horace Clifford was lamenting his loss and grieving over the sin he had committed in earlier years, Frank Throop, his bosom friend, was busily thinking how he might prove

his friendship for his friend. He thought it barely possible the face he had seen entering the train, westward bound, was the face of the son of the long-sought Austria.

He spoke, saying, "Horace, there is one thing we can do; that is, to procure a list of the names of the boys going west; by doing so, we can see if there is one by the name of Belmont."

This seemed to give faint hope to Horace Clifford. He was anxious to proceed immediately to the office of Mr. Whitelaw Reid to get a list of the names.

Fortunately, they procured the names without any difficulty, and in surveying the list the eye of Horace lighted on the name of Joe Clifford. The name seemed to possess a charm for him; he repeated it over and over, saying softly to himself, "Joe Clifford, Joe Clifford. She had a brother; his name was Joe Belmont. I have it now. Austria named our son after her brother."

He seemed to arrive at conclusions rapidly. He knew the high, proud nature of Austria so well he felt she would call their son by his father's name, as she firmly believed they were lawfully married—which they were. He resolved to start west the next morning and ascertain the destination of the boys, find Joe Clifford and learn the history of his life. He made known his intention to Frank Throop, and invited him to accompany him, which he readily consented to do. Frank was a man of means and leisure; he had been a true friend to Horace Clifford ever since they were boys. They had gone through Harvard together; graduated at the same time, and had remained bosom friends through all these years.

Frank's parents died while he was quite a youth. He had one sister, the pride and joy of his heart; she was two years

his senior. While he was at college she became acquainted with a foreigner—an Italian music master. He fell in love with her; married her; got possession of her property and carried her away to a foreign country. That was the last Frank had ever heard of her. For years he had sought for his lost sister, Georgia. He was fearful she had been ill-used, deprived of her property and left alone to die in a foreign land. He had nothing to prevent his accompanying his friend on a trip west, therefore he readily consented. He was a cheerful, genial, whole-souled fellow. He was a physician by profession, but only practiced through charity, as he had ample means without making a charge of his patients. They agreed to start on the morning train, so they separated to make preparations for their departure.

Dr. Throop went to the city hospital to make a farewell visit to his patients. One old woman who was in a dying condition said she had a confession to make before she died. She asked for a justice of peace to take her dying deposition. Dr. Throop procured one. She requested him to be a witness to what she had to say. She said:

“Fifteen years ago I lived in a small town in Italy; there came to my home to board an Italian music master and his American wife; during the year the woman gave birth to a girl babe. Her husband was out on the lake for a sail, when a sudden squall came on, capsized the boat and he was drowned. The distress of his death caused his wife’s sudden confinement, and a wee girl babe was born in a strange city, fatherless and almost motherless, as Georgia Kentrall came near dying at the time. She, however, recovered a little strength and determined to return to her home in New York, seek her brother Frank and spend the remainder of her life with him. She had several thousand dollars in money. She

employed the woman with whom she boarded to act as nurse for her and return to America with her. Georgia Kentrall died on board the vessel, leaving her little girl and her possessions in care of the Italian. The temptation proved too much for the weak principles of the nurse; she resolved to keep the money and claim the infant as her grandchild. She had in her possession a letter, directed to Mrs. Kentrall's brother—Dr. Frank Throop, of New York city; also a few trinkets. The money was stolen from her in a short time; the letter and trinkets she had kept, with the exception of a small gold locket, containing the picture of Mrs. Kentrall and her brother. This locket she had put upon the neck of Mrs. Kentrall's child. This child she had always dressed as a boy, and turned it loose with the slums of New York's vilest street vermin. The child was known by the name of George Kent, and was now a boot-black some where in the city. She was sixteen years of age, with large, black eyes and close cut black curls; she was tanned, and had the appearance of a delicate boy. On her right arm, near the shoulder, was a crimson scar in the shape of a letter V; it was caused by her mother seeing a wound on a boy's arm cut as a letter V, by falling on a sharp iron instrument."

Dr. Throop listened, distressed and silent. When she had finished, she called for a package that was under her pillow; produced the letter and trinkets, and gave them to the justice. He handed them to the doctor, saying, "They belong to you." The doctor took them and, with trembling fingers, opened the letter, which read as follows:

"GASCO, ITALY, June 14, 18—.

"DEAR BROTHER FRANK.—I have written to you quite a number of times, but have, as yet, received no answer. I fear I shall never

meet you again. I am very ill; my husband is dead; my babe, a little girl, is very delicate; I ask you, Frank, to take care of her. If I do not live to see you, be a father and mother to my little Georgia. She is so small and frail, I fear she, too, will die. She has black eyes and hair, and a deep red scar on her right arm, just at the shoulder, in the shape of a letter V. I have an Italian nurse, who will bring the child to you if I die.

"Dear brother, I was very happy in my married life, and would have been happy yet if my husband could have lived; but God knows best, and I feel I shall not long survive my lost husband. Farewell, I can not write longer.

"I am, now and ever, your sister,

"GEORGIA."

This was the letter his sister had written him sixteen years ago; her fingers had long since crumbled into dust; her dying request had been kept from her brother; and her child! where was it to-day? Her precious little baby a wandering vagrant in the streets of New York! He shuddered at the thought of what that innocent little girl would have to endure, cast out with the lowest of the low—a helpless waif in the vast ocean of humanity, that surged its foul slimes through the lairs and haunts of New York's crime-stained lower class. And yet, occasionally, you find a pure one there, like a costly gem surrounded with rubbish, gleaming out brighter for its humble setting. Such indeed, was Georgia Kentrall; but her uncle knew it not; and when the haggard old crone turned on him her dying eyes and said "forgive!" he ground his teeth to keep back the curse that arose to his lips. He said to her bitterly, "It matters little for my forgiveness; ask God to pardon you. You have sinned against a young and innocent life. I shall seek for my neice, poor little darling; she has been alone all these weary years."

He grasped the letter and trinkets in his hand, and left the presence of the dying woman, with an agony in his heart he

could not express. He sought his hotel; there he found Horace anxiously studying the list of names again. Horace noticed Frank's disturbed appearance, and asked him the cause of it. He told him he had made the discovery that his sister had left a child, and that child had been cast out in the slums of New York's vilest haunts for sixteen long years.

And now Horace, "I will have to delay my trip west with you, as I shall begin my search immediately for Georgia, and rescue her from her lowly condition in life."

Horace was grieved to be deprived of his friend's society, but could not give up the search of the face that looked so like his Austria's.

While they sat conversing, Dr. Throop picked up the list of names and glanced carelessly down the column. He here discovered the name of George Kent, aged eleven years; slight form, with black eyes and hair; his parents were dead, and he had been a boot-black in New York before starting for a home in the west. Something in the description seemed to haunt him—slight form, with black eyes and hair. He startled Horace by exclaiming:

"By George, I've got it now!"

"Got what?" asked Horace.

"Why, the trail; right here in the list of names, I find one corresponding with the name and description given me of Georgia's child. I shall go west with you, Horace."

"How fortunate!" Horace exclaimed, "and the child is a boy. I am so glad; boys can rough it through the world and amid the lower classes better than girls."

Frank replied bitterly, "I would to God it was a boy; but Georgia's child was a girl, thrown among the refuse of New York's lonely ones in male attire. God grant that her purity may yet be preserved. Yet how can I ask such a thing? Be

that as it may, my duty is to seek her out, and by future kindness, endeavor to erase all sin from her poor, tempted life. To-night I will go to the head of the police force of New York city and put out detectives to find George Kent, and then I will be ready to start west with you in the morning."

Early next morning the two friends set out for Fort Scott, in Kansas, where we will leave them on their journey and return to Austria.

CHAPTER III.

AUSTRIA'S TRIALS.

Her idol lies crushed and broken,
The fragments are strewn at her feet;
Not one kind word or sweet token
Came her lone, sad heart to greet.

Ah! weary, sunless days! How they sometimes creep into our lives, with their cheerless shadows, and leave us groping in the gloom of despair. The black mantle of desolation had unfurled its funeral pall and the sable plume hung dark over Austria's life. Day after day went by like a dream. When she left the presence of her husband she went out in the night and darkness, like some wild creature seeking shelter. She was mad with misery; deceived, betrayed by the man she loved, she prayed for death. Oh! the unspoken agony of a woman's heart mourning for the love that has proved itself worthless. Language fails to paint, and the human tongue to speak, the sorrows of such a heart. She seemed smitten with some terrible suffering. She wandered aimlessly along, neither knowing nor caring whither her steps led her; only one motive in view, and that was to escape her misery. When morning dawned she was found draggled and helpless on a door step, far out from the city. It was a cottage home occupied by a widow. She, too, had suffered,

as woman must sometimes suffer in this world, and her heart was tender for the sufferings of others. The kind hearted woman, seeing a sister in distress, asked no questions but kindly took her into her humble home, undid the costly dress, all torn and draggled; unlaced the fine boots and removed them from the tired feet; took from her neck an elegant gold watch and chain; bathed the hot head and kindly insisted she should lie down upon her bed and rest.

Dazed and stricken with mighty suffering Austria obeyed her, without a word as to who she was or where she came from. For days she lay at death's door, raving madly in delirium. In a few days her babe was born; she was kindly cared for by Mrs. Grey. When she recovered, she was as one without aim or hope in life; she lived, but life was void of interest; she slept, but sleep was only a rest of overdone nature; she ate, but food was tasteless to her, and she seemed as one sorrowfully stricken in mind and body.

Her babe was one month old when she accidentally overheard a conversation between Mrs. Grey and a neighbor. The neighbor said, "Mrs. Grey, I think it a little too hard for you to be slaving to keep that woman in idleness, who looks as if she was no better than she ought to be, here a spongin' on you in her idleness; you toil day and night for what you eat."

Mrs. Grey's kind voice interposed, saying, "Do not speak so; I know the lady has met with some terrible misfortune, or she never would have been in the condition she now is."

The words seemed to rouse Austria to a sense of her duty. When Mrs. Grey came in she asked her how long she had been with her. Mrs. Grey told her about two months. She said she was not aware she had been there so long a time, and she was thinking of going away on the morrow.

She said, "Mrs. Grey, I have no money to pay you for your

kindness, but I have a valuable watch and chain; if you will accept that I will gladly give it to you; you can convert it into money."

Mrs. Grey would not listen to such a thing. She said, "Dear lady, I am poor and not accustomed to the manner of living you have been, and I can easily support myself and Ethel by my work. You are still weak from your recent illness, and you must keep your watch until you need it."

Austria was touched by so much kindness, and said, "Oh! Mrs. Grey, if I had some humble home to call my own, I would be thankful, but I have not a shelter for myself and babe."

Mrs. Grey kindly offered her a home beneath her humble roof as long as she chose to use it.

Mrs. Clifford told her of her life, and together, as sister women, they talked over their trials. Mrs. Grey helped her to care for the new born babe. Next day, Mrs. Clifford sought employment in the city. The cottage was two miles distant from the city; it was a long distance to walk for a woman in feeble health, but Austria Clifford was not the woman to idle her time away. She realized that she must toil to support herself and child, and with noble purpose and high resolve, she sought honest employment. She knew how to do plain sewing; she went to the shops in the city and obtained sewing, and would carry enough home with her to keep her busy several days. She lived on, day after day, working and thinking of her desolate life. She seemed to hate the memory of Horace Clifford, to think he had deceived and betrayed her, when she trusted him so implicitly. There is something so pure and high in some women's love, they think their loved ones incapable of a wrong act, and when they see their idol crushed and broken, the fragments strewn upon the earth,

they lose confidence in humanity and trust in God. So it was with Austria Clifford. The man she loved had wantonly and basely betrayed her—so she thought, and her pure, proud nature shrank from the memory of her false love, as the patient shrinks from the surgeon's glittering knife, when it probes the wound for the sufferer's good.

Mrs. Grey's tender heart ached for the proud and suffering Austria. Her gentle heart had been wrung by a sad, sad, parting years ago with one she loved, but she trusted and loved him still; hers was a nature to forgive a wrong done to herself, when the act was committed through affection for her.

The two women had worked patiently all day. Ethel Gray had played with baby Joe and kept him quiet while the two young mothers sewed patiently on the coarse shop work that was to bring them food.

Austria had been more sad than usual to-day; the meager fare they had to eat, the constant confinement at work, the nursing of the baby Joe, were weakening her down; the beautiful woman was but a shadow of her former self; her thin fingers worked steadily, and her eyes were sunken with care and sleepless nights.

Little Ethel cried out, "Just see, Aunt Austria, how Joe can stand; he can most walk."

A wan smile lighted up the sad face, as her eyes rested upon her beautiful boy, then a bitter memory came to her heart. She murmured, "poor, fatherless boy! he will soon have to learn to stand *alone* in this world. The one to whom he owes his existence has most basely deserted him in this dark hour of his need."

Mary Grey came to Austria and said kindly, "Austria, per-

mit me to finish this piece of work while you rest; you look ill to-day."

Austria replied kindly, "Mary, I feel as if I was imposing on you; you take the burden of every thing, and seem to be so patient, I sometimes wonder if you ever had a heartache."

For an instant a crimson flush mounted the pure, pale brow of Mary Grey as she replied, "There are some things I have never told you, Austria; but to prove to you that you are not alone in suffering, I will unfold to you a page in my life's history that is not open to all the world."

CHAPTER IV.

A PAGE IN MARY'S LIFE UNFOLDED.

And oft when the summer sun shone hot
On the new mown hay in the meadow lot,
He closed his eyes on the garnished rooms,
To dream of orchards and clover blooms.

Once upon a time there dwelt a youthful widow with her one little daughter, in her humble cottage upon her farm. Scarce eighteen years had told their lengths for her when she was left alone, orphaned and widowed; her parents were dead; her young husband was brought home from a falling building, crushed to death. He was a carpenter, and in tearing down an old brick wall the props gave way and he was crushed to death beneath the ruins. Life seemed reft of every joy earth could give to her; she clasped her fatherless babe in her arms and wept bitter, scalding tears above her husband's grave. Not long did she dare to weep in useless grief; her child's existence and her own depended upon her own exertions; nobly she discharged her duty; she rented the few poor acres of land around her cottage and sought employment of her neighbors; she quilted quilts, wove rag carpets, did plain sewing, raised a few chickens, and from her cow made a few pounds of butter to sell. She lived a short distance from the city and walked to market once a week, car-

rying her butter and eggs in a basket for sale. One evening it was growing late, a terrible storm was brewing, and she hurried rapidly forward on her way home, and slipping fell and sprained her ankle. She sat by the wayside moaning with pain, grieving for little Ethel. She had left her with a neighbor woman across the road, who kindly offered to care for her. Mrs. Gray moaned out, "Oh! how can I ever get home with this fearful sprain." Suddenly she heard the ring of horses feet and the roll of carriage wheels. Soon a magnificent carriage appeared in view, drawn by a splendid pair of jet black horses.

A stately, fine looking man, with deep blue eyes and black hair, silvered at the temples, checked his horses and politely asked if she was hurt. She told him she feared her ankle was broken. He kindly offered to assist her home, which she thankfully accepted. He supported her gently to the carriage and drove to her home as directed. The neat little cottage, with its dainty white curtained windows, showed an air of gentility and refinement in its possessor. Mrs. Black, seeing her neighbor arrive in a carriage with a distinguished looking man, immediately conjectured something was wrong and hastily went to her assistance. When she had been helped to her little cane-seated rocking chair, the gentleman remarked that medical aid would be required and he would return to the city and send it. In order to do this it was necessary he should know the name. Mrs. Grey told him her name. He then introduced himself as Mr. Parke, late of Montreal, Canada, but now of New York city. Mrs. Grey thanked him kindly for his assistance and directed him to send Dr. Moore to her. He bowed, gazed with lingering admiration in his eyes upon Mrs. Grey, and departed. Soon the doctor arrived and Mrs. Grey's ankle was found to be

badly dislocated. When it had been attended to and the doctor had taken leave of her, enjoining perfect quiet upon her for a few days, she took her little year-old babe in her arms and wept, saying, "Dear little Ethel, mamma is hurt now; she can not work for you, sweet pet."

The babe looked up with patient, wondering blue eyes, as if to say, "Never mind, mamma; I'll be good."

Mrs. Black waited upon Mrs. Grey with true womanly kindness, cooking her food and tending her babe. They were poor people—the Blacks, but they had kind, human hearts in their bosoms.

Next day, the carriage, with the high stepping black horses, was drawn up at the cottage door, and the stately blue eyed man called and made inquiries of how Mrs. Grey was getting on.

She was neatly dressed, sitting in her rocking chair, with her babe on her lap; she blushed as he entered, and bade him be seated, her fine eyes sank beneath the steady admiring gaze of his deep blue eyes, as she told him she was doing quite well.

This was but the beginning of many pleasant visits from him. She could not well be rude to him, he had been so kind to her when she needed help, still she shrank from the attention he bestowed upon her. She felt the difference in the positions they occupied in the world. He was a man of wealth and high station, while she was but an humble country woman, earning her daily bread by honest toil. She was pure and noble hearted, and her innocent life left the stamp of her sweet patient disposition on her fair brow.

He was a man of the world, buffeted with its cares and disappointments. He was tired of the giddy thoughtless throng which principally compose fashionable life. Wealth poured

her countless stores at his feet; he had traveled far and wide; he had sat beneath the leafy palm tree on the Nile, and had stood wrapt in awe and admiration gazing upon the frozen icebergs of the Arctic zone. Everything that money could procure or taste invent, had been his. He had married in his youth, and the woman to whom his life had been joined, was a shallow, frivolous, weak-minded and fashionable woman. Ah! that tells the tale. How many men are wrecks to-day—stranded along the shore of time—that might have been grand and full of life and hope, but for the weak and shallow women that have made their lives a hopeless existence, their actions a gilded cheat. Such a man was Mr. Parke. Their marriage had been childless; his home lacked the attraction that makes man's home a paradise. He envied the humblest man in the city of New York that could take his own born child in his arms and love it with a father's love. He treated his wife with all the kindness and respect of a high nature, but it was a bitter disappointment to him to know his broad acres, vast estates and rich mining stocks must go without an heir. He contributed largely to all benevolent societies. There was not a charitable institution in the State of New York but bore the magnificent contributions of Mr. Parke. His wife did not care for wealth. She had such a large income, she was daily engrossed with the thought of how she might spend a portion of it for her own selfish indulgence. She considered poor people a nuisance, that ought not be allowed to exist.

All unexpectedly Mr. Parke had come upon humble Mary Grey, as she lay moaning with pain by the roadside. There was something in the suffering, patient face that touched his heart. He was attracted by the loneliness of her life; he thought of her as he drove home, and thought how a portion

of his almost boundless wealth might benefit her. Day after day found him a visitor at the humble cottage. Little Ethel loved him with childish fondness. He brought costly toys for her, and crowded bon-bon boxes into her little hands until they could hold no more, and she would look up with patient sweetness in her eyes, as if asking him to desist. Mary was recovering rapidly. Mrs. Black was very kind. She remarked to Mary one day, "I expect you will be leaving us soon; Mr. Parke seems so ardent in his admiration."

Mary's delicate face crimsoned over with hot blood as she replied, "Oh, no, Mrs. Black! Mr. Parke is only a friend of mine."

Mrs. Black was a worldly wise woman, and she saw the danger of a woman like Mary Grey drifting into trouble. She remarked, "Well, it is hardly right for Mr. Parke to pay you such close attention, if he is not in earnest. Men high up in the world do not seek women in the humble walks of life for any good, if they do not offer them marriage. Being your friend, I make bold to tell you, Mary, unless he offers to marry you, it is better you see him no more. Remember, you are a widow; you have no one to befriend you, and if once your reputation suffers, you can not obtain honest employment."

Mary thanked Mrs. Black kindly, and when Mr. Parke came next day, she showed in her sweet and anxious countenance there was something she wished to tell. Mary had suffered so acutely herself that she possessed a feeling of sympathy for all humanity, and she had a dread of inflicting pain on any one.

Mr. Parke kindly inquired how she was getting on, and seating himself beside her, said, "Mrs. Grey it seems to me you are not looking well from some cause."

The hot blood mounted her forehead at this kindness. She replied, "Oh! I am quite well, thank you; or, I am much better."

He seemed to pause a moment and study the fair and truthful face of the woman before him, and then inquired, "Why do you shrink from my presence to-day, Mrs. Grey? Is my presence offensive to you?"

"Oh, no! indeed, Mr. Parke; but I think, or rather my neighbors think, it best you should not visit me again."

A smile flitted over his face for a moment, lighting up the deep blue eyes, and he replied: "So your neighbors think it best I should not visit you again; pray tell me why?"

Mary replied, "You are well aware I am a widow and alone, and more than that, I am dependent on my work for my daily bread."

His eyes grew tender as he replied earnestly, "Mary, I realize your situation; your very loneliness appeals to my best sentiments, and I love you honestly, truly. My life has been so barren of affection, my heart so desolate, I find you fill the place in my life so long void. Darling, can you not love me? I will try to make you happy. Your life is desolate, you are alone in the world; I feel, as you say, your hands are your only safeguard against starvation; I can give you an elegant home, place, wealth and love at your command; I will be to you a true and constant friend, and protector; loving you as the one sole idol of my life; I will be with you every day; your lightest wish shall be obeyed; you shall not want for a thing money can purchase or love procure. Say only that one sweet word that will make you mine, my darling."

All this talk of love; this offer of wealth, and yet, what thing more humbling to a high-minded woman's sense of honor, *not one word of marriage.*

She looked at him, with honest blue eyes, and said, "There is only one way you can bestow all that upon me, Mr. Parke; that is by marriage. You have not asked me to become your wife. I could not, if you would do so; I am unfit to fill the position to be occupied by your wife; I beg you will leave me and let me journey on in my humble way, as I did before ever I met you."

Mr. Parke stood before this woman, humble as she was, and in deep humility replied, "Mary Grey, you are a pure, high-minded woman, and my heart goes out in tenderness and admiration to you as it never went out before to any woman on earth. I have passed the earlier years of my manhood; have grown old amid the cares and vexations of life; but your love opens up in my weary life a fountain of youth I had thought forever dead. Do not; oh! do not turn away from me. I am bound in marriage that is only a mockery; there is no true affection, no love such as I longed for in my young manhood. You have roused the dormant affections of my heart, that for years have slumbered in the deep silence of a hopeless life. Oh! Mary, Mary, pause and reflect before you drive me away from you."

Little Ethel crept to his feet, and looking into his face with wistful, pleading eyes, drew his attention to herself. He lifted her to his knee and said, "Now little one, plead my cause with mamma, Mary; that's a darling." She looked with pleading eyes at her mamma, but uttered no word.

Mary bade him leave, saying, "Mr. Parke, if you love me, prove it by going away from me; I can not become the creature you would have me; do not ask me to dishonor myself for you."

He clasped his arms around her, and pressed a burning kiss of love upon her forehead; then arose and passed from

her presence, saying, "Mary, I know you love me; I can trust God to bring all things right."

The next day she received a letter that read as follows:

"NEW YORK, June 13, 18—.

"MY DARLING MARY.—I must bid you farewell. How many mournful memories crowd into my mind, while I write that word *farewell*. I have stood at the bedside of the sick and dying; I have caught the last faint breath as it fluttered off, from lips that were growing cold forever; I have listened to the sluggish beat of the heart as it grew cold in death; have seen the bright eyes grow filmy as they took the last lingering look at things in this life; have heard the thud of clay on the coffin lid, as it told the sad tale of friends forever passed away. But sadder than death, more bitter than despair, is this hopeless separation from you, my darling. I must bear in silence the burden of this love of mine; my heart clings to you with a restless longing; an ever yearning desire. My life is but a living death, crowding from each day the sunshine that bids joy and pleasure beam in all its beauty, and withholding from each night the refreshing dew of nature's soothing touch. My darling, I shall cling to you forever; I shall long for one hour of tender association, one sweet and blissful hour, that I might realize what your love would be to me. Let me have *one* hope at least, that when I am grown old you will give me the love my poor desolate heart has craved. Write me one line and say you forgive me for loving you. Farewell; no human tongue can speak

"The love I bear to thee

"And though in silence my heart break

"I still can love but thee.

"Yours, until death,

"H. PARKE."

She replied to this letter as follows:

"GREY'S COTTAGE, Sunday, September 3, 18—.

"DEAR MR. PARKE—I regret to give you pain more than I can tell, but it is impossible for us to be happy in the life you propose.

You would soon tire of a woman that would throw aside honor and truth and trample on virtue for the sake of a few blissful hours of passionate love. My life is lonely and hard with toil, but it is preferable to a life of shameful ease. The passion you have nourished for me will soon wear away. If your life is void of happiness, go to work; aim at some high place in your country's needed work; go into the highways and by-ways of life, relieve the destitute, comfort the heart-broken and distressed; do the work appointed for man to do, and you will find that peace that cometh to the weary ones of earth. You asked my forgiveness. I grant it freely. Our Savior on his dying cross forgave his persecutors. You were only a good friend, and meant kindness. I can hardly understand how a man of your mind and social standing could fancy a woman so humble as myself. Wishing you much happiness, I bid you adieu and remain,

“Your sincere friend,

MARY GREY.’

CHAPTER V.

AUSTRIA'S AND MARY'S FRIENDSHIP.

A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry,
But were we burdened with like weight of pain,
As much or more we should ourselves complain.

—*Shakespeare.*

Austria listened in silence as Mary proceeded with her story; little Joe crept to her feet and looked up with loving blue eyes into her face, she took him up in her arms and cuddled him up in a little warm heap, close to her aching heart. Ethel sat at her mamma's feet, and leaning her little golden head against her knee, fell asleep. And thus they sat as the hours went by, Mary talking, Austria listening.

When Mary had completed her tale of suffering, Austria said, "Dear Mary, we have both been through the furnace of affliction. You have suffered, but there was no dishonor in your suffering, there was no trust betrayed by the man you worshipped. Oh, Mary, Mary! it is the knowledge of an unworthy love that brings sorrow to my heart. Mr. Parke was honorable with you, he did not seek to deceive you, he told you he was a married man, but unhappy in his wedded state. He then bade you a sad farewell—going out to forget you amid the cares of life."

"Yes; but Austria, I often wondered how a man, so noble

and high minded, could fancy a woman as common and plain as myself."

"Common and plain as you are, Mary, to me you are the most beautiful woman on earth—there is so much soul and heartfelt goodness in your face. Your mind is pure, and amid the hollow glare of fashionable life woman loses that nobility of mind, that purity of heart that makes her lovely in the eyes of God and man. Women are trained to make a display in fashionable life as circus riders are trained to make a display in the ring. They dress, attend balls and theaters, paint their faces, friz their hair, pinch their feet with tight shoes and their waists with corsets until they are deformed. They scorn the idea of being useful, and consider a knowledge of housework disgraceful. They drag through life, made miserable by their pining and regrets, and soon come to an early grave because they lack the will and common sense to take hold of life in a plain, practical way and make the right use of their hands and brains. We have a nation growing weak to-day, and becoming demoralized through the weakness of its wives and mothers. Men lose heart when they see naught but insipid idleness in women."

Austria had spoken at some length, when suddenly she seemed to remember her position; a bitter smile crept over her beautiful, thin face, and she said contemptuously, "I do well to advocate man's nobility and woman's inferiority. The one who so basely betrayed me is, perhaps, to-day in the first class of New York society; lapped in luxury, courting some fashionable lady, while I, his lawful wife, am thrust out on the cold charity of the world, dishonored and denied. I am compelled to earn my living and support his child with my worn out fingers, making coarse shirts at a shilling apiece."

The babe stirred uneasily in her arms, and his baby lips called "milt, milt."

Tender-hearted Mary Grey arose, and taking him in her arms said, "Come, Austria; come, Ethel; supper is cold. We have sat too long in rehearsing trouble, we will now eat our supper, and thank God it is no worse with us than it is."

Mary had a tempting supper of cold tongue, light bread, butter and fruit. She sat little Joe in Ethel's high chair, put a box on another chair for Ethel, and when Austria was seated at the table she went to her little kitchen stove and brought forth a little tin coffee pot. The fragrant odor of good coffee filled the room and created a faint appetite in Austria. Mary insisted she should eat, saying, "Austria, dear friend, you are injuring your health and your babe will die if you continue to live as you do—working all day, weeping all night."

Kind Mary Grey! How many dear little women, like her, lead others by their gentle, unobtrusive ways; strong minds, and sad hearts, to accept their broken lives with patience and live with content, if not with happiness! Like some humble wayside flower, she was content to bloom and shed her fragrance around her own sphere, regardless of the finer trees and flowers in nature's grand display.

Austria ate and felt refreshed; little Joe drank fresh, sweet milk from his little new tin cup, singing out, in baby tones, "Etel, drint tome!" Ethel smiled a little, wan smile at his talk. She had appeared listless and dull all afternoon; her blue eyes looked heavy, and her little cheeks were feverish. Mary Grey took the little one in her arms and the heat of her body was so intense it sent a fear to her motherly heart. She kissed the fair, white brow, and kindly inquired, "What hurts mamma's darling?"

The little white hands went straight to the polished white throat, and she said, "Ethel sick some there."

Mary and Austria were thoroughly frightened, as scarlet fever was at that time raging in the vicinity. They sent immediately for Dr. Moore, but the summons had been issued from the throne above, and the sweet life went out to fill a higher place in heaven.

Through broad and viewless heights of air
That little spirit winged its way
Up to the heavenly mansions fair,
To the bright realms of endless day. —*Author.*

Four days and nights little Ethel lay in pain, moaning her life away; on the fifth day God took her home, and gentle Mary Grey was a widow and childless. She bowed in the true spirit of resignation, and, with a trusting soul, said: "Thy will, O! Lord, not mine, be done. Thou hast taken her from a life of pain and woe to blossom forever in the sweet fields of thy heavenly love."

Ethel's death seemed to arouse Austria from her lethargy; she saw Mary Grey patient and noble under dire afflictions; she took a higher interest in life; day by day she grew stronger in will and purpose to rise above the trials of her life. She accepted her fate with a stern resolution not to murmur, hoping it would, in time, grow to the patient resignation such as Mary Grey possessed. She wrote every evening, after her day's work was done, and was then laying the foundation for future wealth and fame. Mary would take baby Joe in her arms, and sit hour after hour with him, singing to him a sweet lullaby, or talking of sweet little Ethel, gone home with the angels to dwell.

For years they struggled on together toiling for their daily

bread, leading a lonely and secluded life. With all their economy and hard living they met many misfortunes. Mary had a lingering spell of illness. Austria had to give up her work to wait on her; their expenses had to be paid; the few acres and the home had to sold. They then removed to the city of New York, where we find them in a humble tenement house striving, with the thousands that swarm the street there, to gain their daily bread.

Years passed; Joe grew to be fifteen, and we saw him start west leaving his mother and Mary Grey with the hope that he would be able in a few years to prepare them a home in the west. Austria continued to write, and sometimes a sweet little poem was published; but she received no compensation for it, and her existence depended on her daily work with her needle.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE KENT.

Away, away, o'er the western plain,
This was the free and joyous strain,
There are clearer skies than ours afar,
We will shape our course by a brighter star;
There are plains whose verdure no foot hath pressed,
And whose wealth is all for the first brave guest.

—*Hemans.*

Amid the crowd of boys going west, was one slight delicate looking boy of eleven years, George Kent. He had been a boot-black in New York. He said his parents were dead, and he wanted to go west, so he could find a home. His fine dark eyes and close-cut and black curls, gave him an air of delicate refinement superior to that of the other boys. The small firm mouth, and low broad forehead, showed he was a boy of fine intellectual capacities. He was very retired in his manners, and sat looking around him with a desolate look in his large dark eyes.

One boy taunted him, saying, "Hello, Kent; gettin' home-sick a-ready."

Kent answered with cool indifference. "Home-sick! I never had a home."

This drew attention to him. *What*, never had a home!

All of these boys had, in time, known some place as home, but George Kent had no conception of what home meant.

From earliest recollection, he had run with a set of ragged children in the streets, and picked up his living. There was a wrinkled faced old hag, with piercing black eyes, that the children sometimes pointed out and said, "*that* is George Kent's *granny*," meaning she was his grandmother. George always stoutly denied this.

Sometimes George slept one place at night, sometimes another. Poor little ragamuffins are not particular about associates. He was generally well liked, and his associates were liberal with him, giving him a crust, a cold potato or something to sustain life.

At nine years of age he commenced the common occupation of boot-blackening. For six years he toiled on, earning pennies and doing the best he could for self-support. He had decided to go west with the boys sent out by Mr. White-law Reid. He sat alone, and looked very friendless. One large boy called him a "gal boy," when the red blood mounted to his face and he turned his head aside to hide the ready tears that came to his eyes; for indeed George Kent was feeling very lonely. He had not a friend in all the wide world, and he felt his lonely condition more now, as he was going to a strange country, with only strangers for company.

The rough boy continued his insulting words: "Say, ho there, pickaninny, cry now; you're a bully to go west."

This was as much as Joe Clifford could stand. With blue eyes flashing and firm-set red lips he stepped up to the bully, and with the contempt of a proud, high nature for a mean, cowardly one, said: "See here, Bill Johnson, we have had enough of that; if you want to bully any boy in this crowd, be man enough to choose one of your own size." The bully lowered his head and muttered to himself about street gamins "puttin' on airs."

Joe Clifford took a seat beside George Kent, and the grateful look in the mournful black eyes amply paid him for the kindness he had shown the friendless boy. That was the beginning of a lasting friendship between the boys.

The train sped on past long slopes of sunny fields; past beautiful trees, waving in the breezes; past towns, cities, rivers and lakes; past mountains and hills—all new to the admiring eyes of the city boys. Life seemed opening up higher and grander to their crowded vision; they looked eagerly forward to the home in the west, wondering if they would meet with kindness or rebuff. As a class, they were hard-working, honest boys, looking for a place in life wherein they could improve their condition.

The city was crowded and overrun with a class who lived from hand to mouth; content to run on in the same old ruts marked out by hundreds before them. Each day was a struggle for existence.

The few potatoes, the black bread, the unwholesome meat they had for diet was, calculated to lower them in physical strength, and unfit them for steady, honest work. If the employers would have the working class in a flourishing condition, give them plenty of work to do and pay them good wages so as to enable them to purchase wholesome food. Hunger and ill health has a tendency to degrade and corrupt the human race. What boy or girl in life, when they are hungry and cold, will have the moral principle to reason it is not right to take food when they are starving for it; even if that food has to be stolen.

Do not understand me to favor theft. I do not; but I hold it fair to feed our lower classes better. See the hunted, half-starved look of some of the boys and girls in the cities, and let your hearts melt with compassion. Who knows but, at home,

that boy or girl may have a sick mother, or some one, to share his or her scanty earnings; and while our laws are strict enough with crime in low places,—they punish a boy or girl with imprisonment for stealing a penny loaf of bread,—they permit a president of the people's saving bank to rob the people to the tune of three millions of dollars, and allow them to escape punishment. It is crime in the *high* places of our land that is demoralizing us as a nation. When wealth and power has poured her lavish tide at some men's feet they lose sight of God,—trust in their great wealth to uphold them. They indulge in wicked and criminal courses; turn aside from the path of honest integrity, and revel in the wild pleasures of a corrupt and wicked life.

But I diverge from my story. The boys enjoyed their trip as boys will. Joe Clifford and George Kent stayed together on their way west. George seemed to feel a safety and pleasure in Joe's society; he shrank from association with the other boys, and looked to Joe for protection. Joe addressed him, saying, "Kent, what do you mean to do out west? You look as if you was too small to farm."

Kent replied, he did not know, but thought he could do light farm work—feed and tend stock and do chores about the house.

Joe remarked that he hoped they would get a home together and have a room together, so they could talk of old times in New York city when they were at leisure.

For the first time, George Kent seemed to shrink from Joe Clifford. His small, dark face grew crimson, and the blood receding, left him deathly pale; his eyes filled with a strange quivering light, as he stammeringly replied he hoped so.

Whereupon Bill Johnson, who had accidentally overheard the conversation and noted George's look of pain, remarked

coarsely, "Oh, that's too rich; the little aristocrat actually feels too high up in the world to room with his gallant friend and protector, Clifford."

One threatening glance from Joe's blue eye was enough to make the coward drop his head and stop his insulting words.

Four days from the time they left Jersey City the boys landed at Parsons, Kansas, sixty miles from Fort Scott. There was no trouble to find homes for them.

But as my story has to do with but two of them we will bid the others adieu and follow the fortunes of George Kent and Joe Clifford.

Joe found a home with a good man, a farmer and trader and stock dealer.

The stylish New York boy had nerve and strength in him beyond his looks. He had come west with the determination of building up a home for his mother, his Aunt Mary and himself, and of being able some day to feel himself the equal of sweet Birdie Elliot, and ask her to share his home and heart. Someway his love for Birdie brought with it an undefined pain. What right had he, the nameless son of poverty stricken parents, to aspire to the love of a New York millionaire's daughter. He crushed out the thought of dishonor in his birth and said, "My mother is a pure and noble woman. She was married and basely deceived by the author of my existence; *curse* him, I *can not* call him father. But I will not allow such thoughts to blight and ruin my life. The world is before me. In a country like America a man, no matter how humble his birth or station, can rise to the highest position in the land. It is *brains* not *blood*, *work* not *birth*, that gives to America's sons the rights of property and position. The world is as wide for me as it was for a Stewart, an Astor

or a Vanderbilt, and some day I will make a lovely home for mother, Aunt Mary and Birdie."

When he lay his head on the pillow that night in his humble room, the kind voices of Mr. Bland and his wife were heard in their room discussing the qualities of the new boy. Mrs. Bland said, "James, I declare I feel as if I should treat young Clifford as a visitor; how can I ask him to do chores? He acts, for all the world, like the son of some high aristocrat."

"That's a fact, Mary; he does carry an awful lot of style, but there is a large fund of common sense underlying all that. You know I need a good, steady boy to tend the store and keep the accounts straight, and he seems to be well informed. When I go to Leadville I shall take him with me as a companion."

Mary said, "Oh, James, I did hope you would never go away again. I feel so anxious about you. I am perfectly safe here, and Willie and Kate are good children, and I do not feel afraid, but I think we have a plenty to live on; why seek after more?"

But James had the fever of ambition in his blood; he had determined years ago to be a rich man; he had gained property rapidly, he owned a farm of several hundred acres, had a variety store of all the goods necessary for a country place, and was making money fast; but he had an ambition to be wealthy. He meant to start to Leadville, Colorado, in a few days to try his hand at mining. He felt like Joe would be a steady, honest boy, in whom he could trust. Next morning he took Joe into his confidence and told him what he required of him.

Leadville! Joe's young heart swelled with joy at the pros-

pect of going. The name of Leadville possessed a charm for him; he felt it was in some way to be the goal of his wishes.

Mr. Bland sent him to the fields with his hands in the forenoon, where he could take a lesson in plowing. It was only fun for Joe. He guided the sleek and shining horses along the straight rows of corn as easily and sat as stately and erect on the riding plow as if he had been driving Bonner's finest horses along Broadway in New York. He felt proud and happy. Far away, as far as human eye could reach, the beautiful undulating plains of Kansas farms spread out to view, dotted with farm houses and occasional clumps of trees, herds of stock were guarded by the cow boys and kept from the fields of growing grain. Far away to the east a black column of smoke came drifting along from the locomotive as it came driving over the prairies. He paused for a moment, rapt in pleasure, gazing upon the huge engine, emblems of man's power and ingenuity.

He worked steadily until noon. He thought of the other boys, and wondered if they had a pleasant home like his, and some way his heart smote him when he thought of George Kent. The boys had to be separated and taken to different homes. There was a sad and wistful look in George's eyes that went straight to Joe's tender heart, and he wished that George might share his home. But it was like chance work; each boy had to risk getting a good home. The finest looking boys were chosen first—I mean the strongest, most able-bodied ones. There were few in Kansas that could take boys just for ornaments; they wanted boys that were able to work, and oftimes the fare of the western farmer was rough and the work hard. A boy had to possess strength as well as will. They must work early and late and be content to make the best of hard times.

Joe Clifford came west determined to make the best of things; so likewise did George Kent; but, alas! poor George's lot had fallen amid the rough and heartless ones, and he suffered many misfortunes, while Joe's lot seemed to have fallen in pleasant places.

The boys were most all chosen, still George Kent remained homeless. The farmers, with an eye to the main chance, that is, to the probable amount of work they could get out of a boy, did not consider George a very promising subject for a farm hand. They looked at his delicate little hands and feet; at the small, well-formed mouth; the low, broad forehead, with the dark curls clustering round the temple; at the large, mournful eyes, with their pathetic expression, and remarked one to another, "There is a chap won't be worth his salt on a farm in Kansas."

Poor George was well nigh heart-broken; he was fearful he would not be able to procure a home, and not strong enough to keep it, once he had obtained it. The second day the boys had all found homes but George Kent; he was almost out of heart. His friend and protector, Joe Clifford, had gone among the first boys. At length a rough, heavy set man, with coarse features and ill-looking eyes, consented to take George on trial, remarking as he did so that "Jerushy was so all-fired hard to please he was afeerd she'd cut up thunder eaze he didn't git a stronger un, as she was a master hand at bossin' boys."

George went with Mr. Breeze, that being the man's name. The drive in the two-horse wagon across the prairie to the farmer's home was a delightful ride to George. At nightfall they reached a small farm house with two rooms front and a kitchen back; the house was rough and brown; there was not a tree or shrub on the premises; there was a rough plank

stable for the horses; a large lot enclosed by a plank fence, where the cows were kept over night.

Jerushy, her three girls and two boys with tow-colored hair, light blue eyes and freckled faces, were engaged in milking the cows. The oldest boy was seventeen, the other fifteen years of age, and the girls ranging from thirteen down to nine.

That night was a wretched one in poor George's existence. When Jerushy, and her five olive branches, returned from milking, she began on her husband immediately by asking, "What on 'airth' did you bring that little, weakly, weazen-faced piece of humanity home with you for. I declare to gracious he looks more like a dandy, fit for a New York parlor, than he does for help on a Kansas farm."

Mr. Breeze replied, "Jerusha, I knowed he wouldn't suit you; if he did, he would be the first thing I ever 'seed' as did suit you, for you are oncomon hard to please."

Whereupon Jerusha launched out in such a tirade of abuse of mankind in general, and Bill Breeze in particular, that poor George sat shuddering, and thinking he would rather black boots in New York city, all the days of his life, than to seek his fortune in the west under such difficulties.

The hot tears sprang to his eyes, and he longed for Joe Clifford's kind words and reassuring smile; but he knew he was a poor boy, homeless and friendless, and for all his weak looks he had a strong heart in his little breast, and he swallowed back the sobs, and made up his mind to do his best.

Jerushy's voice sounded like a war alarm when she roared out for "'em to bring on their cheers and set up to supper." Said supper consisted of fried potatoes, fat bacon, meat, corn-bread, and buttermilk, old and stale. George swallowed some of the fried potatoes, and took one sup of the buttermilk,

which was so sour he could not drink it. The younger son, Dave Breeze, urged him kindly to take something more, but George did not feel as if he could eat another mouthful. When supper had been eaten, and the dishes cleared away, Jerushy ordered them off to bed, saying, "Here, Dave, you and Jim kin take this boy to sleep with you 'uns."

George's little dark face flushed scarlet, and the luminous black eyes grew moist as he listened to her words and thought he must sleep with those two great dirty-looking boys. He never raised a word of objection, however, until they had gone into the room, which was scantily furnished. It had one cheap bedstead, with straw-bed and one of Jerushy's patch-work quilts for cover; a few wooden chairs and a box or two. Dave, who was kindly inclined toward the new boy, asked him which side he would take, or would he prefer the middle of the bed.

George replied, he had rather sleep on the floor, as he had never slept with any one, and was fearful he could not sleep.

Dave replied; "Well, I'll swon! That gits away with me; never slept with any one; you must a-had plenty of room down in York, where you came from."

George told him he had always slept alone, and in truth he had; he had crept away in some secluded place, in some warehouse, and often in some blacksmith shop, or place far from the crowd of roughs and bad boys, that infest the low places in New York city.

Here was a difficulty to encounter of which he had not thought—that of rooming with these rough boys. The bare floor looked hard and uninviting to George; but much more restful than the bed, with its occupants; he did not undress, but lay down on the bare floor.

Beneath Dave's rough exterior he had a tender heart; so he said: "Well, George, if you won't sleep with us, I'll jist fold our kiver up and make you a bed on the floor." He folded the patch-work quilt and made George a pallet, and then generously gave him his pillow, saying, "Oh! it don't matter, I lie better without a pillow."

George slept soundly all night and awoke feeling some better in the morning.

Farmer Breeze put the new boy to hoeing corn with Dave. Poor little George; he worked with all his might, but could not keep up with Dave. Dave kindly hoed a few hills for him every little while, and the long and vigorous stroke of the hoe showed him a competent hand to hoe corn; while George, laboring with all his might, made slow progress. At night his little hands were blistered and his head and shoulders ached so badly he could scarcely move. To add to his discomfort, Jerushy had discovered that he had slept on the floor; and at supper she said, "See here, George Kent, I don't want any more of your big city notions, a actin' like you was too good to sleep with your betters. You poor little beggarly upstart! I kin tell you, I'll not have my seven-star quilt used for a floor-mop any longer. *I'll not!* So you kin jist sleep with Dave and Jim, and you kin take off your dusty close, too. I don't want my gals a-breaking their backs over a wash-tub for sich beggarly upstarts as you are. Do you hear?"

Poor George! Here was his terrible trouble again. He could hoe corn all day and blister his hands; he could eat the fat pork and potatoes, and drink the stale buttermilk, but to sleep with Jim and Dave was too much. He made no reply, but mentally resolved he never *would* sleep with them.

When supper was over he repaired to the room with them,

and determined to make his escape and run away. He did not know where he should go, or what he should do; but worn, tired and stiff in body as he was, he was still resolute to leave. He pulled off his shoes; he had fifty cents in money, he had brought from New York with him; his clothes were coarse, but new and strong. He thought it would be best to lie down and deceive Dave and Jim by making them believe he was asleep until they were asleep. Dave gave him choice of sides, and George took the front side near the window; he laid aside his coat, and got in bed with his pantaloons on. Dave would shield him, he knew that. Pretty soon Dave and Jim were snoring away, Jerushy was sleeping the sleep of the just, and George knew the time had come when he could make his escape without detection. He slipped quietly from the bed, put on his coat, and taking his hat and shoes, crept out of the window. He made his escape without detection. After he had got clear of the house he was undecided what course to pursue. He stood silent for a few minutes, looking up at the beautiful western sky, studded over with stars; at length he concluded to follow the railroad track and continue his journey further west. His feet were blistered and sore with steady walking the day before; his head ached, and his eyes filled with blinding tears, as he took his lonely way out over the western plains, homeless and friendless. He wondered if in all the wide earth there was a creature more miserable than himself. He brushed the tears from his eyes, and prayed a little, choked, sobbing prayer, saying, "Lord, pity and care for me." He then walked on as fast as his feet would carry him until daylight, when he came in sight of a farm house, and decided to ask for something to eat, and then continue his journey until noon,—when he

would rest and get some sleep in a secluded spot by the wayside.

Far as eye could reach across the western plains, there were fertile fields and cosy looking farm houses; but George had an unaccountable dread of farmers' wives, fearing they, like Jerushy, would require him to room with their boys. He almost feared to stop at the house he was nearing and ask for a bite to eat, for fear he would be detected as a runaway and returned to Jerushy's care. But hunger makes us reckless, and he was quite hungry. The lady of the house was just the reverse from Jerushy; she was pleasant, amiable and evidently a woman of culture and education; her two daughters, fresh, rosy-faced girls of twelve and fourteen years of age, assisted their mother in doing the housework.

The farmer and his hands had breakfasted and gone to the fields to work; the girls were busied in clearing away the breakfast dishes. George approached the lady and politely asked her for a piece of bread; she told him to come in and eat his breakfast. He washed his face and hands and sat down to the neat, well arranged breakfast table. There were slices of good, home-cured ham, sweet, golden butter, fresh, home-made light bread and good coffee, with a dessert of peaches, cream and sugar. What a different breakfast table from Jerushy's, with her fried potatoes and stale buttermilk! George looked longingly at the kind, motherly woman, and listened to the gentle tone in which she spoke to her girls, and a wish came over him that he might live in a home like that and have such a mother. Once he was on the point of making a confession to the kind lady, and ask her to let him live with and help her daughters work. He glanced down at his male attire and felt the lady would not like to

trust her daughters with a girl that had come from New York city in male attire to find a home out west.

My readers have doubtless surmised that George Kent was none other than Georgia Kentrall's child, which was indeed the case. The nurse had robbed her of her money, her home and her sex, making her believe, in her earliest childhood's years, she must wear boy's apparel in order to procure a living more readily, and her male attire was in a great measure a protection to her, as boys are often safe in rough crowds where girls are in great danger.

George Kent had roughed it in the streets of New York city; listened to the talk of the low and the vile, but beyond that there was no impurity in her life. She had lived on, friendless for years, making a penny here and there, saving a little money, and longing with the unutterable longing of a girl's heart for a home, for kindness and protection. When Mr. Reid made the proposition to take the boys west, who desired to go, she had, in a moment of enthusiasm, determined to go, hoping to be able to better her fortunes, and in time to assume her own attire. She had become accustomed to the boy's apparel from her infancy, but the native modesty of her maiden's heart began to assert itself, and at fifteen Georgie longed to be with her own sex, and not be exposed to the hardships of a boy's life. The exposure she had been compelled to endure for the past few days had been so severe that she felt like she must give up in despair. She ate her breakfast in silence—a girl alone in a strange land; she felt so hopeless and helpless; she felt a delicacy about disclosing her sex to the lady, fearful she might not believe her.

When she had finished her breakfast she offered the kind woman her fifty cents to pay for it. This was kindly refused

by the lady saying, "Keep your money, boy." She gave him a paper with biscuit and ham and doughnuts wrapped up in it, as she said, for his dinner.

George once more resumed his journey westward, moving toward the setting sun. At noon he stopped by the wayside to eat his dinner and rest.

The landscape lay like a picture, wrapped in silent beauty. Far to the northwest the purple forest showed in the distance; to the south stretched a beautiful plain of rich farming land; herds of cattle were grazing here and the drowsy tinkling of the bells was a lullaby to his tired nerves. He ate his dinner and still had enough left for supper. Sitting here, 'neath a small tree, he soon sank into a refreshing sleep: when he awoke it was dark and the stars were shining; he felt greatly refreshed, but decided to remain until morning. Early next morning he ate his breakfast and pursued his way out west.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORM IN KANSAS.

List through the dusk silence warningly there steals
The first low notes of airy violins;
With one shrill chord the symphony begins;
While oft the thunder's diapason peal
Rolls through the flame-lit sky—God's chariot wheel.
And, hark! What trumpets blow from yon black cloud,
While the strong trees in sudden terror bowed,
Seem from the tempest fleeing, then reveal
The horror of their anguish by deep moans.

—*Charles T. Dagey.*

About nine o'clock the air began to feel heavy and close; dense clouds rolled up from the northwest, and went hurrying across the sky, obscuring the sun and turning noonday brightness into midnight's darkest gloom. Soon terrific peals of thunder rent the air, and vivid gleams of lightning blazed from cloud to cloud, until the whole earth seemed charged with electricity.

George still kept on; he was far distant from any place of refuge. He had read of thunder storms on the plains, and heard they were not of long duration. Suddenly the roar of a mighty tornado filled the air, and the long to be remembered storm, on the 31st of May, 1879, burst in all its terrible fury. Wind, hail and rain bore down in blinding sheets;

houses, barns, stock, chickens, furniture, beds, household goods of very variety came flying through the air, borne on by the fierce winds of the tornado. Cars were blown from the track, and human beings were scattered in atoms—stunned, bleeding, dying. The storm extended through nearly the whole northern tier of counties, scattering death-dealing destruction in its course; but it was most violent between the Blue Rapids and Centralia stations, on the Central Branch railroad, about thirty miles distant from each other.

My readers will not fail to remember the terrible cyclone in Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska on the 31st of May, 1879. Hundreds of lives were lost, and many thousands dollars worth of property was destroyed.

When George heard the roar of the tempest, and saw the rapidly approaching clouds, he looked around for a place of safety along the railroad track. He spied a clump of small trees that had taken root and were growing; he soon found a place where the bushes were strongly rooted in the earth; he lay down close to the earth, and grasping a stout oak shrub, he prepared to care for himself. There, alone amid the roar of the elements and the crash of falling timber, he listened to the mad bellowing of the thunder and thought of the desolation that must follow such a tremendous storm.

The train had gone by but a few moments when the wind struck it with violent fury, lifting it from the track and strewing the earth with its fragments for miles around.

George shuddered as he saw the people being blown in every direction. He held on to the small bushes, and the wind tossed him up and down, threshing the earth with his body; the rain drenching him in torrents, and deadly missiles flying all around. He had little time to be afraid or to pray. He held on with all his might to the bush, and thought if

God sent death to him, he would be done suffering. He did not crave to live, but he felt, lonely as he was on earth, it would be pleasanter to die in some calm spot; bid farewell to life on some fair day, than to die out here all alone, and leave his body to be destroyed by wild beasts, or to rot away on the plains. He thought of New York, of his friend Joe Clifford, and wished he might see Joe once more.

Suddenly a heavy form was dashed along side of him, and as well as George could see, the man appeared to be dead; his face was smeared with blood from a fearful gash cut in his forehead by some of the flying debris. The man lay prone upon the earth, and the muddy water was pouring over his face.

George let loose of the bush, and raising himself to his feet, bent over and lifted up the head of the man, supporting his head in his arms to prevent his drowning. He still breathed but seemed to be stunned by the fall. George supported his head until the fury of the storm had somewhat abated. He took his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the blood from the pale and beautiful forehead, with its bright brown curls clustering around the broad temples. He saw the wound was not dangerous—only a scalp wound. The eyes were closed, but the face was matchless in its grand beauty; there were lines of care on his face that spoke of sorrow rather than age. He was apparently about thirty years of age—tall, heavy, broad-shouldered and finely formed. He was too heavy for George to lift. It took all his frail strength to support the head and shoulders sufficiently to keep him from drowning, until the water had in a measure subsided. George chafed the lifeless hands and tried to bring life into the apparently dead body; all of no avail, the eyes remained shut and the beautiful lips were closed. The rain ceased fall-

ing; almost as suddenly as the tempest had come it passed away, and the sun shone out bright and clear on that awful scene of ruin and devastation.

George gazed for a moment on the water-flooded earth; on the trees and ruins of buildings, and thanked God for his kindness in protecting him from harm. He thought the grand looking man that lay with closed eyes and upturned face was dead; he bent his head to the cold, dead face, kissed the polished brow and rained hot, burning tears upon the cold, white cheeks, sobbing, "Oh, why must death come to such as he; he looked so good, so noble." He clasped the stately head close in his arms and wept as he would have wept over a father or brother. Suddenly a shiver went over the strong frame; he opened wide his matchless blue eyes and looked with a strange, frightened look into the mournful tear-stained black eyes of George Kent.

George suddenly turned crimson to the roots of his hair and stammered, "Oh, sir; I thought you were dead."

"And, my boy, if I am not, I feel as if I was very near it," replied the stranger, in a voice thrilling in strength and sweetness.

George still sat and supported the massive head and shoulders, but when the stranger began to recover he seemed to feel embarrassed in his position.

The stranger said, "My dear boy, if you can, help me just a little to a sitting posture, so I can find out if any of my limbs are broken."

George lifted with all his might and finally succeeded in helping the stranger to a sitting position, bound his handkerchief around the wound in his head, lifted his feet, to see if his legs were broken, straightened out his arms, and said, "I believe you are sound yet, sir."

The stranger smiled a sad smile, and remarked, "Yes, my boy, I believe I am, but pray tell me how you escaped so miraculously, while I am so near being killed."

George recounted how he had been walking along the railroad when the storm broke in all its fury. He related how he had clung to the bush while the wind tossed him up and down; how the stranger had fallen beside him, and how he had supported him, as best he could, to prevent his drowning.

The stranger reached out his hand, and clasping George's little brown hand, drew him to his side and said: "My boy, you have saved my life; henceforth I am your friend. I had thought earth held no one I could ever call friend again, I have been so basely betrayed. I did not think I should find a friend in the desolate wilds of Kansas."

George felt grateful for so much kindness from a stranger, and his young heart beat with strange emotions as he sat beside the stranger, his little brown hand resting in the strong clasp of the beautifully shaped white hand of the stranger.

The man said: "Well, my boy, we are alone and unacquainted yet, but I will introduce myself. I am Clement Howe, civil engineer, doing service for the government. I came west some years ago, and have a beautiful home in the Rocky mountains, where I retire for rest and seclusion. I have been to Washington City on government business, and am now on my return to my western home. Now tell me who you are, whom I have to thank for preserving my life."

George modestly replied, "I am George Kent, one of the boys sent west by Mr. Whitelaw Reid, to find a home."

Mr. Howe interrupted him, saying, "And now, that you are separated from your home and friends by the storm, let

me hope I may henceforth claim you as my boy. I feel that I need you, some unaccountable feeling of affection has come over me for you. You saved my life, and I in my turn, wish to do something for you."

George replied, while the grateful tears sprang to his eyes, "Oh, sir! you are too kind to me; you make too much over so little service. But I will tell you my story; I could not remain at the place to which I was taken, so I ran away and determined to seek another home."

Clement inquired, "Why did you run away? Was the work too hard?"

"No, sir," replied George, "but Mrs. Breeze, the woman, wished me to sleep with her boys, and I dislike to room with any one, so I left."

A sort of quizzical expression flitted over Clement's face as he replied, "Oh! yes, George, I see; you have been well raised and you are rather aristocratic in your notions about associates. Do not let the thought of having to room with any one at my home deter you from going. I have plenty of rooms and you shall have choice of them, and as much privacy as you desire, as Aunt Hope, Uncle Dan'l and their son John are the most respectful of servants. I shall select you as my body guard, you displayed so much good sense in saving my life, and was so cool during the storm.

Could George believe what he heard? Was he really going to be a friend and companion to that noble, good man, and live with him, apart from the world and sacred from intrusion? Something welled up in his heart, and he longed to throw himself at his friend's feet and confess all; tell him he was not what he seemed, but a girl of fifteen, dressed in boy's clothes and raised amid the vile and refuse of New York street boys. He felt such a course would separate him

forever from his newly-found friend, and set him adrift again, a waif on the sea of time, an object of pity to the world's cold charity.

He sat for some moments in silence until Clement, fearing he would not consent, said, drawing him close to his side and pressing his little form to his warm heart, "Do not be afraid to trust me, George. Do you think you can live with me?"

And George, with every nerve in his slender body thrilling with a strange joy, and his black eyes gleaming like stars, almost sobbed so near that warm heart, "Oh yes, Mr. Howe, I could live with you forever."

And there, on the water-soaked earth, with ruin strewn on every side, the sun fast sinking in the western horizon and the chill wind that follows a tornado piercing their bodies and freezing them through their wet clothes, the man and boy entered into vows of life-time friendship. Clement Howe felt in that slender, delicate boy of fifteen years, with mournful black eyes and low, broad brow, he had found a friend that loved him for himself; and already in imagination he pictured to himself how he would train him in his mountain home, where he would grow strong and well, and the rich blood would lend a glow to that little dark, pinched face, amid the grand scenery on the mountain side, where he had reared his elegant home.

And George felt in this man he had found a friend, noble, true; good and wise beyond his years. He felt the heart of Clement Howe was pure and noble as that of some pure, high-minded woman. He felt a security and peace come over him he had never felt before as he sat there, clasped close to that throbbing heart. He felt sleep unconsciously stealing over him; the last few days of exposure and excitement had been too much for him, and the thorough wetting

he had undergone was rapidly chilling his blood and putting him in a fair way to have a bad spell of fever. Clement pressed the little brown head to his bosom and said, kindly, "George, I fear to let you sleep in your present condition; we had better try to move on until we get the chill from the wetting worn off. You are not used to life on the plains, and this keen air is penetrating to the marrow of my bones, and I think it is the same with you." George readily acquiesced in what Clement said, and springing to his feet, drove away the chill that was creeping over him. They proceeded along the railroad as well as they could. The track was torn up and obstructed with fallen timbers and debris from the buildings which had been destroyed by the storm. They walked about three miles, when they heard some one moaning by the roadside. As they approached the place from which the sound came, they heard a voice in kindly, assuring tones, telling some one to "git up now, and for de bressed Lawd's sake to try to walk."

Clement addressed them when he came up to where they were, and said, "My friends, have you been injured by the storm?"

"Injured! Well now I spose we has, when de tree tops blowed 'round us thick as hops and de whole train ob cars just rises in de air like a bird on de wing."

"Silas, *can't* you tell anyfing straight, even so disasterous a time as dis is? You know we isent bad hurt; wese mostly skeered, Master, if you please."

"Yes, dat's you Marinda, makin' like it is me as is skeered and you so drefull brave as not to whoop 'Lawd a massy' once."

There was a young negro man and woman, apparently about twenty years of age. They were married, and had

come to Kansas, the land of freedom, the promised Canaan, to the darkies. They had been thrown from the train during the storm and were not hurt so bad as scared.

Silas was of the most cowardly disposition; the old superstition in the negro was aroused. He thought the devil was after him and death was inevitable.

Clement assured them of their safety, telling them the storm had spent its fury and they had nothing to fear.

Silas began to lament, saying, "On, yes, master, but I'de like to know what we'se gwine to do way out here wid eberyting blowed away and us alone in a wilderness?"

Marinda said, "Silas, you jist hush up complainin'; when de crows fed Lijah in de wilderness a hundred years ago, no use for you to be growlin', feared as you'll be starved in dis land of plenty."

Silas crept up from the mud and brushed and straightened himself out, picking the leaves and sticks from his wool. He told Clement that he and Marinda had started north with the negro emigrants from Mississippi; that he wanted to enter land and have a home in Kansas. Kansas was to the negro emigrants what Canaan was to the Israelites. He had no settled destination. He told Clement he would like to work for some man until he could get a start to go to farming with.

Clement told him he had a home in the Rocky mountains; that he was on his way to his home, and he would give him and his wife employment until he could get a start. This suited Silas and Marinda; they felt a security in Mr. Howe's presence they had not known before. It was now quite late at night, and they decided to remain in that place until morning.

Clement knew he was quite a distance from the next railroad station, and as the road had been destroyed by the storm

they could not hope to be overtaken by a western bound train, but must walk to the next station. Clement told Silas to help him gather some loose planks and limbs that were strewn around, so they could erect a kind of shelter from the sharp wind. They soon had a kind of wall built so they could sit on the south side and be protected from the wind. They sat here until morning. After midnight George fell asleep, and Clement tenderly drew the dusky little head to his side and sheltered the wet and chilled form with his arm. George slept a sleep of exhaustion, and dreamed of beautiful rooms with costly furniture and elegant surroundings. He awoke to find himself stiff and chilled with the exposure he had undergone. He felt the warmth and protection of Clement's sheltering arm, and knew he had a friend on whom he could rely.

They had not tasted food for one day and night, and they stirred themselves at the earliest dawn and took up their line of march westward, hoping to obtain food and rest soon.

Far away in the east the sun rose in majestic splendor and smiled down upon that scene of desolation on the plains, as they toiled on, Clement in the lead, striding rapidly on, not knowing how it strained every nerve in George's body to keep up. George trotted along at his heels, almost out of breath. Silas and Marinda brought up the rear.

Suddenly Clement paused, and an exclamation of pity burst from his lips. There, directly in front of him on the railroad track, lay a child of apparently two years old. The little dimpled form had been thrown with terrible violence on the earth, and her little life had gone out there alone in the storm and darkness. One little hand was thrown above her golden head; the other clasped her little dress that was drenched by the rain; her beautiful blue eyes were open in the morning

sunshine, but the awful seal of death was set upon her brow. Somebody's petted darling was lying here dead and alone. Reverently they gathered around the little body, and George knelt and lifted the shining head in his arms, crying out, "Oh! you poor, sweet baby; what a lonely death for you."

Clement said, "Here, George, let me see if there is any hope of life." But no life could be discovered; the little form was rigid and cold in death; the spirit had winged its way to a home of peace and rest beyond this vale of sorrow.

Clement lifted the little form in his arms and decided to carry it further on until he found a suitable place for burial. The weight of the child somewhat slackened his speed, and George was enabled to keep up with him. They walked on until noon, when they met a train eastward bound. He flagged and got them to stop. He told Silas and Marinda if they wished to return on the train they could now have the opportunity.

They decided to remain with him. He put the beautiful, dead baby in the care of the conductor and told him of the terrible destruction they must encounter, and they continued their journey.

Clement saw the crimson cheeks and scarlet lips of George were flushed with fever, and his heart ached for the noble little fellow who trudged on so manfully, while Silas and Marinda were constantly bewailing their hard lot and wishing for something to eat and somewhere to rest.

He took the little brown hand in his; it was burning with fever; he said, "George, I am afraid this will make you sick."

George would not complain, though his bones ached and the fever scorched him; he felt happier than he ever remembered to have felt before in his life. He, too was fearful he

would fall sick, but he resolved to keep up as long as he could go. He was afraid Mr. Howe would repent of his offer and leave him to the mercy of strangers if he should fall sick; he did not know the generous heart of Clement Howe. He was kind to any creature in misfortune and he felt that he owed his life to George Kent, therefore he would be doubly kind to him. He stopped and looked away over the plains hoping to spy some cabin near which they could stop and get something to eat and rest awhile. About two miles to the north he saw a small house, toward this they now directed their steps. George was well nigh fainting with exhaustion and the heat of the sun 'ere they had traveled half the distance. Clement kindly offered to carry him in his arms the remainder of the way. George blushed painfully and refused to allow him to, saying he could walk. He held up until within a quarter of a mile of the cabin he sank to the ground overcome with fever and exposure.

Clement tenderly lifted the little thin form in his arms and carried him to the cabin, where he procured cold water, bathed his head and gave him water to drink, which restored him. The woman at the cabin with true western hospitality told them to "come rite in," and freely offered her bed for the use of the young stranger.

Clement lay George upon the bed, removed his coat and told him to lie still, that he would keep cold water to his head and he would soon be better, as he was overdone for the want of sleep.

George obeyed, and was soon in a deep sleep. Clement asked the woman if she would prepare them some food, as they had been fasting for almost two days. This she did with ready kindness. Her husband had been farming in Kansas for several years; they had become accustomed to the pri-

vations of frontier life. She made good coffee, fried ham and baked sweet, fresh cream biscuit. Clement ate, and then Silas and Marinda were invited to partake of the food. Clement had plenty of money, and he determined to pay handsomely for the trouble they were giving the good woman. George still slept. Clement had asked permission of the woman to take her husband's gun and shoot some prairie chickens which he saw a short distance from the house. She consented readily and he soon returned with a nice brace of birds which he directed Marinda to dress, and broil a portion of them for George when he awoke. Shortly after sunset he awoke, much refreshed from his sleep and the cold application to his head. The cravings of appetite began to be felt. Clement brought the broiled bird and cup of fragrant coffee, and some of the nice biscuit, and insisted he should eat. George ate and felt almost well, saying, after he had done, "I am ready to go on the road now, Mr. Howe, if you wish to pursue your journey."

Clement told him to rest and they would resume their journey on the morrow.

He sank to rest like a tired child. After the farmer returned they had supper. Clement told him of the destruction caused by the tornado, and how near he came to losing his life. They retired for the night, feeling thankful to God for his care and protection.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLIFFORD AND DR. THROOP GOING WEST.

And the rocking pines of the forest waved—
This was their welcome home.

The next morning, bright and early, saw our two friends on the train western bound. It is useless to describe the trip; they passed through a beautiful country, diversified by cities, towns, villages, farm houses and lonely stretches of forest land. Rapidly as the train sped on its western way, it did not fly fast enough for the anxious men who had set out on a wild goose chase with the hope of finding the two they sought; the one, an imaginary son; the other, the little daughter of his beloved sister. Of the two men, Dr. Throop suffered the most acute pain; he imagined everything bad to have happened to Georgia's little girl.

Horace remarked, "Frank, I did not know you were so impatient, I have always looked upon you as possessing the most even and amiable disposition on earth, always making the best of things, and looking on the bright side, no matter how dark the cloud."

"That is, in a measure, true, Horace. I have tried to be content with the lot appointed me in life. I have had no serious trouble, except Georgie's marriage and absence, and I had begun to accept that as something to be endured with

patience and hope, when this dreadful discovery of that little girl baby, cast out in the world alone, amid the vilest surroundings, breaks upon me with two-fold sorrow, because Georgie died believing I would receive her child and care for it, and the little one has been adrift all these years. How many lonely, heart-sick hours that child has had to encounter, homeless and friendless, striving to earn the bread she ate! Just think, Horace; her delicate little hands toiling for support as soon as she could be taught to black boots!"

"I admit all that, Frank; but your sufferings are nothing to be compared to mine. Think of the torturing lash of conscience I have endured all these years. My beloved wife, driven out in the cold and cruel world, homeless and in want. Our child born in poverty, and she, for aught I know, buried in a pauper's grave. Oh, my God! the thought is harrowing to me. How, oh, how can I endure existence longer! I felt that face was my last hope. I have searched vainly for sixteen long years, and I am well-nigh heart-broken."

He presented a truly pitiable appearance; his hollow cheeks and large black eyes gave him an unearthly appearance; he had the keenest of tortures to endure—that of self-reproach. It is strange, but nevertheless true, we can put up with trouble and bear it with more fortitude when it is put upon us by others, than we can when we have been the means of bringing it on ourselves.

It was self-reproach that was wearing Horace Clifford to a shadow. He was of a proud, morose disposition; he had inherited from his father a taste for drink, and while under its baleful influence he had ruined his own life's happiness and that of his much-loved wife; from the time he had

driven Austria away in his drunken frenzy, he had never touched drink, but had turned away from friends, from social life, and lived with the haunting memory of that curse ringing in his ears forevermore. He did not seek to drown it by dissipation; he was a truly noble man and a deeply repentant one; he knew it was his own passion and self-indulgence that had dashed the cup of happiness from his lips. He longed with all the deep, unutterable longing of a strong man's love to meet once more his darling wife, and sue for forgiveness at her feet. He saw the enormity of his sin; he seemed to realize what that high, proud nature of Austria's suffered when she believed herself to be cast out and betrayed by one she had trusted with all the faith and trust of woman's deathless love.

He resolved to make atonement for his sin, if a life-time of devotion to her memory could do so. But, alas! how much of suffering must we sometimes endure for an unguarded word that escapes our hasty lips and brings to our lives days and nights of sad regret! So it was with Horace Clifford. He possessed untold wealth; his opinions were sought by the leading business men, both in America and Europe; his ships bore the wealth of many thousand dollars; he owned railroads enough to span the continent, and that man's wife was toiling her life away for her daily bread, and his son had been sent west by a charitable institution to seek a home in the western wilds. It was well for Horace Clifford he did not know what suffering Austria and his son had to endure, or he would, in truth, have been insane—driven wild by his unjust conduct.

While the train sped on its way bearing him nearer his son, but far away from his beloved wife, he sat with gloomy eyes fixed on the beautiful scenery, with but one thought

uppermost in his heart and brain; that was, that each moment brought him nearer a great joy or a great disappointment.

Dr. Throop's fine blue eyes took in the grand panorama nature spread out before him, and his genial, cheerful nature asserted itself at times and drove away the sad thought of Georgie's misfortune. He pictured her a pure, bright-faced little girl, and would soon again reproach himself, saying, "I am foolish to anticipate such things. I will try to be satisfied with her."

He was so true hearted and had so high a standard of womanly excellence, that he could hardly imagine, Georgie's child as anything but a noble, high-minded girl, and, in truth, she was. She had the same fine traits of character possessed by her Uncle Frank. And amid the scum and refuse of New York's street arabs, she retained her purity of character untarnished, her nobility of soul unblemished. Her boy's dress was a protection, as boys have a higher regard for a boy that supports himself, than they have for a girl. Little girls are subject to many insults and much rudeness that boys escape. No one suspected her sex, though her delicate features and small hands sometimes called forth exclamations of sympathy from kind-hearted men, while she was engaged in blacking their boots. They generally gave her an extra nickle for her labor, because she was so zealous in her work, and her nimble little fingers flew with a rapidity of motion excelled by few. She carefully hoarded her nickles and ten-cent pieces, and by so doing, was enabled to keep herself in clothing and food. She attended the evening school and soon learned to read and write; she readily acquired a knowledge of mathematics, and at twelve years of age, she was quite a good scholar, besides supporting herself all the time. At that age, she began to

realize it was not right for her to pass herself as a boy, and yet there was no one to befriend or protect her in that crowded city. She had longings and aspirations peculiar to a girl of that age; she was quite a womanly girl. She shrank from her association with the street boys, and when her day's work was done, crept away by herself for seclusion and meditation. She had a mind capable of great attainments; she possessed the high principle of her mother and Uncle Frank, with the fine musical abilities of her father. Her low broad forehead displayed, to a close observer, a head of unusual development for a boy of eleven. With natural refinement and maiden modesty for her safeguard, protected by her male attire, and possessing amiable qualities of mind, she had glided through life with greater ease than one would suppose she could, surrounded by so many low associations. She liked the little street urchins she was thrown with, in a certain way, but many possessed traits of character repulsive to her high sense of honor. She had seen boys put up a poor mouth and tell a pitiful tale of suffering and want to draw money from some passer-by, and then heard them chuckle over their good fortunes in getting money without earning it. Such conduct as this, she always looked upon as contemptible and afterward shunned such associates. For a girl of her age, she possessed much knowledge of the suffering and privation of life; she saw many girls driven by want and hunger to beg. It is a lamentable fact, that boys more readily receive employment than girls. Girls, as a class, are more delicate, and people dislike to have little feeble hands employed, where strong rough hands take hold better.

Georgie felt she had roughed it from infancy in New York city, and now she felt she could rough it out west and grow up with the country; therefore she had cast in her lot with

the boys going west. Her uncle did not know what a sensible, whole-souled little girl Georgie was; if he had, his trip west would have been a delightful journey—pleasant with bright anticipations of meeting his niece and restoring her to her rightful position in society.

But all things earthly have an end, so the two friends drew to their journey's end. They went to Parsons, Kansas, where the boys had been sent, and found that they had already procured homes and had been gone several days. They immediately sought out the names of the persons who had taken Joe Clifford and George Kent; they found who had taken them, and procuring guides and a two horse express, they sat out over the plains in search of the boys. They decided to go where Joe had been taken first, as the boys had been taken almost precisely the same route. They drove for two days through the beautiful Kansas lands, enjoying, to a certain extent, the beauty and fertility of the country through which they were traveling. On the third day they arrived at Mr. Brown's farm, only to receive the information that Joe Clifford and his employer had started to Leadville, Colorado. This was a sad disappointment to Horace Clifford. He had looked forward to meeting Joe with great impatience, hoping soon to learn something of Austria. Frank had to use many encouraging words to restore him to anything like his natural self, telling him it would not be hard to find him, as they had the name and address of the man he was with, and people are not spirited away in this nineteenth century. He finally recovered his spirits, and they pursued their way in the direction of Breeze's house, hoping soon to meet with George Kent. Dr. Throop felt considerably disheartened; he thought it quite likely the Leadville contagion had been caught at

Mr. Breeze's also, and they had hurried George away to the mines to realize a fortune in a few days.

In due course of time, they arrived at Mr. Breeze's farm, and, upon making inquiries about George Kent, were soon informed by Jerushy that "he had skipped out jist becuse she had made him sleep long o' Dave and Jim, and she didn't think he was much loss any way, as he was so 'fernal allfired proud with hifalutin New York notions, that he fairly turned up his nose at her fried 'taters and buttermilk, which was good 'nuff for anybody, much less a stick o' charity sich as he was."

Dr. Throop maintained the dignity of his manners far enough to not curse her to her face, but he remarked to himself, "That is one evidence to me George has the right sort of pluck; she would not sleep with Jim and Dave, and did not relish Mrs. Breeze's buttermilk and potatoes." But his heart was rent anew with trouble when he thought of that friendless little girl alone on the plains and knew how many difficulties she was likely so encounter.

They ordered the guide to drive on, and while traveling they matured their plans. They were to search at every house in the locality for miles around and inquire for George; then, if they failed to find him, they were to separate, Horace to proceed to Leadville, Colorado, in search of Joe, while Dr. Throop searched through Kansas for his niece.

Accordingly they drove on, and as fortune directed them, they came to the place where George had eaten his breakfast, and told the kind lady he meant to keep on west on the railroad. The friends decided to continue their course westward, making inquiries at each house as they proceeded.

On the 23d of May, that terrible storm that brought so much destruction to life and property in Kansas, broke over

them, killing their horses, carrying their express away in the air as if it had been a feather, wounding their driver and leaving them with barely enough life to creep. Horace had an arm broken, which Dr. Throop readily attended to as soon as the storm abated. Horace was white with pain, but he gave no utterance of suffering. They sat down on a small pile of drift-wood and listened to the roar of the receding storm. Away to the southwest it still swept madly on its way, tearing down buildings and crushing out human life with its merciless power. They had remained silent for some time, watching intently the terrible grandeur of the storm, when suddenly a low struggling moan smote upon their ears. It evidently came from some one in distress. They looked in every direction. Soon the quick eye of Dr. Throop caught the glimpse of a woman's torn drapery on a small pile of fallen timbers. He went directly to the spot and found a young girl tightly wedged in between two logs. His heart sank when he saw the painful position of the young lady. The two fallen branches seemed to have fallen together about her waist, and she was apparently crushed by their weight. The beautiful face was white with agony and the delicate hands lifted in pitiful pleading for help. He told her in calm, soothing tones to keep up her courage, that he would soon be able to relieve her. He called the driver to his assistance, and by their united strength they lifted one of the heavy branches of the tree aside so as to release the body of the young lady.

Tenderly he raised the suffering body and bore it to a better place, and used remedies to restore her. He chafed the white hands and sprinkled the muddy water on the white face and on the beautiful black hair that clustered in curls around her forehead. He soon had the satisfaction of seeing her show signs of recovery. She had fainted from suffering

and exhaustion. As soon as she was sufficiently restored, Dr. Throop insisted she should stand upon her feet. He was afraid her spine had been injured by the weight of the limbs. On her first effort to stand she sank to the earth with a spasm of pain. The doctor's face grew white with apprehension. He was fearful this beautiful creature, this royal looking woman, was injured for life. His professional skill had taught him if she had sustained injuries, the sooner she received attention the better.

Horace said impatiently, "Frank, why do you torture her making her stand; she is evidently too weak to stand on her feet."

Frank replied calmly, "I do it for her own good."

He allowed her to rest for a moment and then kindly urged her again to make an effort to stand. He put his hands around her waist to support and brace her; put her hands on his shoulders to support her weight. Kindly and tenderly as a mother would lift a sick child he lifted her to her feet. She stood well on one foot but the other hung limp and useless. A flash of joy crept into the blue eyes of Dr. Throop. He had discovered her spine was not injured; her limbs were sound with the exception of that one ankle. Her injuries were much lighter than he feared. He felt a deep gladness thrilling his heart for her. He knew the ankle could be cured, but he knew if her back had been injured or crushed she could not stand. He took off the large overcoat he had put on at the approach of the storm and wrapping the lovely form in it bade her rest on the ground. He removed his other coat and hastily made bandages to dress the wounded ankle. He found it badly dislocated but not broken. He removed the fine number three, button shoe, and in a short time the beautiful foot and ankle were all

right, and bandaged with only the necessary application of cold water to heal and restore it to its right use.

After this was done the friends sat down to consider their situation. They were indeed in a dreadful dilemma; alone, far from human habitation, on a desolate, storm-swept plain, without food or fire, and drenched to the skin by the deluge of rain that had fallen. Horace looked gloomy as ever. He had been disappointed; he had not found Joe Clifford as he expected, and now every hope was swept away forever. The driver was a rough but kind-hearted fellow, a sort of roustabout you find in western towns, content to pass his time anywhere, so he had enough to eat. He said it "was one of the dad-burndest storms he ever saw, an' he had seed a right smart in his time." He was not seriously hurt, but sustained several slight injuries. Dr. Throop was the only sound one in the party. He felt sorry for the lady. He knew she needed attention, kind, womanly nursing and sympathy, and he saw no hope of obtaining it for her. He knew they must remain on the prairie all night, without so much as a bite to eat or a particle of fire to warm their drenched and chilled bodies. He did the best he could under the circumstances. He wrapped his overcoat more closely about the young lady, and bade her be of good cheer; they were doing well to be alive after such a tremendous storm. Horace offered his overcoat as a protection for the lady; this the doctor declined to use, telling him he needed it himself, as there was danger of him taking cold and causing inflammation in his arm. But he remarked, "Horace, you can sit near the young lady, so she will not feel so lonely, while Dick and I try to improvise some kind of conveyance to carry her to a better place than this.

Horace sat down near the beautiful creature; her white

face was drawn with suffering, and the black eyes luminous with a steady light that showed she was strong to endure her pain. Horace gazed upon this lovely being without a thrill of admiration. To him there was but *one* woman beneath the sun, living or dead, and that was his queenly Austria. He sat silent and morose, while Dr. Throop and Dick sought a plank or board on which they could let the lady rest while they carried her to a higher knoll of ground.

Dr. Throop was fired with a deep feeling of affection for this beautiful, helpless girl. He had spent many years of his life in society; he had seen the famed beauties of Europe, had been courted and flattered by the ladies in his native city, but never before had he seen a woman that could thrill every nerve of his being as did this grand young creature, so full of life and beauty. The touch of her delicate hands on his shoulders thrilled him with a feeling akin to adoration. The beautifully molded limbs were fit for a sculptor's model; the delicate foot and arched instep was as dainty as the foot of some princess of royal blood. To him she was grandly beautiful, and he longed to woo and win her for his own.

CHAPTER IX.

DR. THROOP'S LOVE.

Her brow was white and low; her cheeks pure dye,
Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
Short upper lip—sweet lips that make us sigh
Ever to have seen such, for she was one
Fit for the model of a statuary.—*Byron.*

She was his ideal of lovely womanhood, and his heart thrilled with a joy inexpressible to feel she was, for a time, dependent on him. Man's love and chivalry for woman is greater when he feels her entire dependence on him.

They soon procured a plank that had evidently been part of a wagon bed; it was long and wide enough to rest the lady upon. The doctor was fearful she would contract a cold from her wetting, and visions of lung fever, pneumonia and other dire diseases flitted through his brain. He knew not what to do. He could not remove her clothing, and he felt to allow her to lie still in them all night would endanger her life.

As they were returning with the plank, Dick stumbled over a bundle that proved to be a couple of blankets and an oil-cloth they had put in their express when they started on their journey in search of the boys. Here were the very articles needed, but how on earth was he to put them in use?

The young lady was too seriously hurt to unrobe herself

and wrap herself in the blankets, and he felt her delicate maiden modesty would be shocked to allow him to undress her. But there was no other alternative. He must do it. Her health, her life, perhaps, depended on it. When he approached her he saw by the starlight the black eyes were wide open and the face deathly white with pain. Horace sat by her all unconscious of her suffering, and, for aught he said or did, he might as well have been a statue of wood or stone. Dr. Throop knelt beside her in the yielding mud, and, taking her hand in his, felt she was chilled through. He was fearful inflammation would set in in the dislocated ankle. He saw she was conscious, and lifting her head and shoulders in his arms bent his face low to her's and talked kindly and with common sense, telling her he was fearful her wet clothing, chilled by the keen, north wind, would perhaps cause her a violent congestion of the lungs; that he had found two blankets that had been kept dry by the waterproof wrap, and if she would consent he would assist her to unrobe herself of her outer garments and then wrap her in the dry blankets and lay her upon the plank out of the mud until morning, when he hoped to obtain relief from some quarter, as he knew a relief committee would be sent out as soon as the people in the city got the word. The white face grew crimson, and a hot flush mounted the pure white brow. She knew all he said was true, but she almost felt she would rather die with cold than be exposed before this man. Yet there was something so manly and kind in his way that won her confidence, and she felt that of all men on earth she could trust him. She drooped her head in confusion and told him if he thought it was best she would consent to be undressed, saying that she felt able to help herself. He raised her to a sitting position, undid her elaborate traveling suit of fine

cashmere, and taking it from her body left the elegant underwear and fine underskirt on. He then wrapped her in the blankets, and placing two props underneath the plank, made her a hard bed, but a much more comfortable one than she had occupied but a few moments previous. He laughingly remarked to her that he was not placing her on a cooling board, but on a warming board. He then spread the oilcloth around her, took off his vest, folded it and made her a pillow, saying, "now sleep until morning." He felt much better about her. He knew the blankets were warm and the oilcloth would keep out the damp, and he argued to himself, she will be much improved by morning.

Horace suffered much physically, but his mental anxiety far exceeded his bodily pain. He felt that Austria was suffering and he was helpless to aid her. The hope he had experienced for a few weeks had died away and left him more utterly prostrate than ever before. He saw the noble love of Dr. Throop springing into life for the lovely being he had rescued from death, and he mourned more bitterly for his own lost love.

Dr. Throop was wide awake the livelong night. To him that night of desolation, with drifting clouds scudding across the sky and the bright light of distant stars gleaming on the water-soaked earth, with the dismal roar of the mighty wind, as it came bleak and shrill from the ice-bound regions, was a night ever to be remembered by him, as the brightest spot in his existence. He had never been in love before. His great heart glowed and throbbed with affection for all humanity, he felt as if he could embrace Dick, and love Horace forever. As for the beautiful unknown being who had thrown him into such a state of perfect happiness, he felt he could not be

humble enough in his adoration of her. It is the great grand natures that are humble in their loves, vesting the object of their affections with every grand attribute which they desire them to possess; they set them on a pedestal, and as an eastern devotee bows at the shrine of his idolatry, such a nature bows at the feet of its loved one, and fondly imagines the object of its affections to be all its loving fancy paints them. But Dr. Throop's love was indeed worthy of all the love he bestowed upon her. She was

A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command.

And while the angry night wind howls around her scant bed on that dismal storm-rent prairie, I will give to the reader a brief history of our lovely heroine. She was the only daughter of wealthy parents, and had been left an orphan in early years. She had a brother several years her senior, who had come into possession of a large sum of money when he was of age. He was a young man of fine mind, but easily led by others. He fell into bad company in the city of Baltimore where he resided. There was a disgraceful gambling scene, a murder that was thrown upon Rufus Stuart, and he barely escaped being hung. He was imprisoned for life, but made his escape by the aid of some friends, and rumor said he had gone west. Adelaide Stuart, his young sister, grew up with this terrible disgrace ever before her. She loved her brother Rufus with all the affection a lonely child could give to an only relative. She believed Rufus was innocent of the crime imputed to him. She knew he was weak, but she could not believe him wholly bad. When she was sixteen years of age she had enlisted friends in his behalf and helped him to escape. He had gone west and joined Custer's army. She

received letters from him, from time to time. When she was eighteen she determined to visit him. He had so far escaped detection. Adelaide had always felt the contempt of some of her associates on account of her brother's disgrace, but she was a noble, high-minded girl, and did not allow the scoffs and sneers of the weak-minded few to deter her from her duty and affection to her fallen brother. She argued in this manner, "if he is disgraced and cast down that is more the reason I should visit him and care for him." During his imprisonment she had visited him every week, carrying with her books, flowers and delicate fruits to tempt his appetite, and always cheered him by her pleasant manner and perfect confidence in him. When his escape was accomplished many of his friends were glad he was free, as he had been convicted on purely circumstantial evidence. She had visited him, found him doing well, and well liked and respected. He had entered the army under an assumed name, and was known as Lieutenant John Hobbs. He had been promoted from the ranks for deeds of daring and bravery. He was stationed with a few men to guard a point where he displayed great valor and courage at the time General Custer's army was massacred, and had barely escaped death himself; he was happy to see his sister and bade her adieu with a heavy heart when she started home. She said, "Rufus, I intend to buy me a home in the west, and you must resign and come and live with me."

He promised her he would come; and they parted, she to return east for one more year in school, he to his regiment and the lovely scenes in the west. On her return, the tornado had swept the train from the track, killing some, wounding many. The wind had caught her up, and from the strength of her clothing had carried her several miles from the place where the train was wrecked. Thus we find her, bruised

and alone, with her ankle dislocated, in this western country, dependent upon strange men for care and protection. Sleep never visited her eyelids that night, such strange emotions thrilled her heart as she lay thinking of the kindness of Dr. Throop. She thought if ever she could love any one on earth, she could love Dr. Throop. Her life had been spent in school; she knew very little of the world, save what she saw in the select circle in which she moved in Baltimore. She was an excellent scholar, speaking French and German fluently. She had no near relatives, and the kind lady with whom she boarded was a good, easy soul, giving Adelaide the privilege of doing as she pleased. She evidently pleased to do that which was right, and in place of being fast, as many city girls in this nineteenth century are, she was in every respect a modest and retiring young lady. She felt that she was placed in a very unpleasant position, but resolved to make the best of her situation, and trust to Dr. Throop's wisdom to direct her right, and his honor to protect her while she was thrown upon his care.

This was a very wise conclusion, as she could not have found in all the world a man of higher honor or purer sentiment. He was then racking his brains to find how it would be possible to get her some breakfast and convey her to a place where he could procure the necessary attention for her. He hoped she was sleeping, and tip-toeing close to her side he saw the bright black eyes looking up at the stars, with a strange and solemn look.

He spoke kindly, saying, "Dear young lady, are you comfortable at present?"

She replied, "Quite as comfortable as my surroundings will permit, but the pain in my ankle is so severe I can not sleep."

He went to a pool near by and scooping his hands full of

water, carried it to her and bathed her fevered and swollen ankle, wetting the bandage thoroughly.

She soon felt relieved, and said she felt as if she could sleep; saying, "I am ashamed of myself, but I felt so nervous before you came."

He had left her alone through mistaken kindness, thinking she would prefer solitude to company. He had not taken into consideration the severe nervous shock she had undergone, beside the acute suffering she endured. He sat down beside her, and taking her hand in his soothed her with a strange mesmeric power. She soon closed her burning eyes and he saw her gently sink to sleep, with her beautiful hand clasped in his; her fingers tightly clutching his, as her sleep was disturbed by the startling scenes through which she had passed.

Hour after hour crept by, and the east began to show signs of the coming day. Soon the whole earth was flooded with a thousand glowing sunbeams. The fields were strewn with fragments of the storm; trees were blown across the railroad track, and far as eyes could reach was one scene of desolation; birds and prairie chickens were scattered dead and dying on the plain. Dr. Throop soon espied a covey of poor, scared, drenched prairie fowls. He determined to capture a few of these at any rate. He procured a heavy brush, and rushing upon the unsuspecting flock of birds, he killed nine of them before they could escape. These he gathered up and returned to where the others were. Dick was chasing a large rabbit, which he soon succeeded in capturing. Fortunately Horace had kept a few waterproof matches. They found a piece of plank, made kindling, and soon had a fire blazing brightly, while the blue smoke went curling up through the bracing spring air. The first thing that Dr. Throop did, was

to take Adelaide's dress and wring the water from it, and hang it near the fire to dry. He and Dick then dressed the birds and rabbit and prepared them for cooking. They made sharp sticks and broiled them over the coals. A little salt would have added greatly to their taste, but they had no salt. When they had broiled the birds and dried Adelaide's dress and stockings, they decided to awaken her and see if she could not eat some breakfast.

Dr. Throop approached the place where she lay, and gazed with admiration upon the innocent face upturned to the morning sun. He gently called her. She awoke with a start, and a frightened exclamation. His voice soon assured her of her safety. When she was fully awake, he asked her to try and sit up. She did as he requested her. He then brought her dress and told her to try and put it on. He retired to a distance while she robed herself in her black cashmere, which looked much the worse for its wetting. The Doctor had shaken all the mud from it, but it still presented a very dingy appearance. After she had donned her dress, he took his handkerchief and wet it in a pool of water, and took it to her to wash her hands and face, as it was the only means she had of performing her ablutions. She presented a sorry looking appearance. Her hair hung in long black curls, interspersed with stray leaves and daubs of mud. She tried to be cheerful, and when she was ready to join them at the breakfast, Dr. Throop and Dick lifted up the plank on which she sat and carried her near the fire, where she, with the others, partook of the broiled birds with quite a relish, notwithstanding their lack of salt. The terrible night of suffering through which they passed had left them a sorry looking group. Horace had been worn to a shadow before the storm, and his gloomy face and mournful black eyes were sad to behold;

Dr. Throop's fine face was aglow, with love beaming eyes for the beautiful Adelaide; Dick was hungry, and had but little time to care for his personal appearance. While they gathered around their breakfast, they appeared so ludicrous that each one was compelled to laugh; pretty soon their spirits were restored and they conversed of the storm and their terrible experience. Adelaide recounted how the tornado had lifted the cars from the track, torn them to pieces and sent the occupants whirling through the air. She had no time to observe what became of her traveling companions. The wind caught her up and carried her flying through the air. The first she knew, she was wedged between those limbs, from which she was unable to extricate herself or move until Dr. Throop came to her rescue. She lifted her fine eyes to his glowing face and said, "Now, kind gentleman, accept my sincere thanks for your kindness in rescuing me from certain death."

Dr. Throop assured her it was a pleasure to him to do her a service in any way. He was considered the leader of the party. Horace inquired of him what course he thought best to pursue. Dr. Throop told him he thought it best that Dick should return to the nearest place where they could obtain help, while he would collect material and erect a kind of hut to protect them from the sun and night dews until help could be procured. He hoped they might obtain help soon, as he knew a relief committee would be sent out to assist the distressed, but he did not as yet know the extent of the storm, and it might have traversed many miles, leaving it a waste place and a desolation. Nevertheless, it was not his theory to borrow trouble; he made it a rule to make the best of everything as he found it, therefore as soon as breakfast was dispatched, Dick started on the back track to obtain aid for the

sufferers, while Dr. Throop busied himself in gathering together limbs and brush to make a temporary tent. He chose a slight elevation on the plain as the site of his western home as he laughingly termed it. He worked manfully, dragging the heavy brush which were very irregular in their dimensions. He finally succeeded in making a tolerably comfortable shed, closed up on the north and west side so as to break off the keen wind, which was piercing cold on that May day. He gathered the finest of the brush and leaves and made a couch in one corner for Adelaide. While he was collecting brush for the hut, he had disturbed a flock of prairie chickens and several rabbits, which he hastily killed. These would provide food for at least two days. He dressed the birds and rabbits, and hung them up in the shade where the purity of the air was sufficient to keep them from tainting. It was now far past the middle of the day, and still no help had appeared. He was anxious to remove Adelaide to her new home; he spread a blanket over the couch and put everything in readiness, but his mind was racked with the thought of how he should convey her there; she was unable to stand alone, much less to step. Horace could not help him carry the plank, as his arms was broken. When he thought of Horace his heart smote him; he had almost forgotten his suffering in caring for Adelaide. He resolved, as soon as he had cared for Adelaide, to make another hut and a couch for Horace, so he could rest; meanwhile, Horace could share Adelaide's tent. He asked Adelaide if she was willing to allow him to carry her to her new home. She said she believed she could walk, by his assistance. Tenderly he supported her to her feet, but the acute pain caused her to sink, white and trembling, to the earth. He gently lifted her in his arms and bore her to her couch of leaves, draped in nature's own handiwork—beauti-

ful forest green. She was no light weight—a full grown young lady of eighteen, tall and well developed; she was all the Doctor was able to carry. She praised her room and bed, and thanked him in her sweet womanly way.

He now sat about preparing their mid-day meal, which was easily done. He had, from time to time, replenished the fire and had a fine lot of coals on which to broil the birds. This done, he carried Adelaide's dinner to her, and left her in the privacy of her own tent. He helped Horace to his dinner, kindly carving the broiled birds with his pocket knife, and saying, "Dear old Horace, I shall not neglect you as much as I have for the past twenty-four hours."

A faint smile came to Horace's lips, as he said, "I see which way the wind blows. Frank, you take care that your vessel does not capsize; do not carry too much ballast. What I mean is this, old fellow; do not set your hopes too high. Such game as that is rarely allowed to reach maturity without being captured. She is doubtless in love with some milksop."

Frank replied, "Be that as it may; my treatment of her can not differ from what it has been; I should care for any lady, be she young or old, rich or poor, as kindly as I could, under such distressing circumstances as these."

Horace knew the honest integrity of Dr. Throop's heart, and did not doubt his word. After they had partaken of their dinner Dr. Throop employed himself in erecting a tent similar to the one he had prepared for Adelaide, and by the last faint gleams of the setting sun he had completed the hut. He now prepared supper of the rabbits, saying, laughingly, that they must have a change.

When twilight fell upon the earth, and one by one the stars came out in their silent beauty, Dr. Throop built a fire on the southern side of the huts, which presented quite a comfortable

appearance. When it was time to retire, he visited Adelaide's hut, kindly inquiring if there was anything he could do for her. She asked for water, as she had grown thirsty and feverish. During the day Dr. Throop had cut a rude wooden cup from some soft wood; it was roughly fashioned, but it was their only chance for procuring water. He went to a pool of clear water near by, and soon returned with a refreshing drink for her. After she had drank, he brought water and bathed her head, which was hot with fever, and her ankle, which was badly swollen. He felt he had neglected her more during the day than he ought to have done, and resolved to be more careful of her hereafter. He returned to the hut where Horace was sleeping soundly upon his couch of leaves. He sat down by the fire to think over the events of the day. While he sat here, a low growl came to his ear. It was that of a prairie wolf, which had approached near the hut. The sound had reached Adelaide's ears, and she was shaking with terror. She soon found voice enough to call out, saying, "Oh, Dr. Throop, will you please come here!"

Visions of being destroyed by wild beasts, in her helpless condition, flitted through her feverish brain, and she felt her only safety depended on Dr. Throop's presence. He came immediately in answer to her call. She said, apologetically, while her voice trembled, "I was afraid of that terrible noise."

He soothed her, telling her it was only the growl of a prairie wolf. Soon the wretched animals made night hideous with their howls. Dr. Throop's strong heart quivered for a moment as he thought of the dreadful fate of any wounded travelers who might be overtaken by a pack of hungry wolves. The terrible storm had driven them from their native haunts and they now wandered in large flocks, devouring all that came in their way. He knew that he could protect Horace and

Adelaide by keeping large fires near the tent to drive them away. He assured Adelaide that she had nothing to fear, telling her to lie still and be calm. He replenished the fires and as they threw out their bright glare, he caught the gleam of hungry wolfish eyes peering at him through the gloom. He now felt that danger threatened them in reality, and he went to Horace's tent and awoke him, telling him he had better come and share Adelaide's room, as he was fearful he could not keep the wolves at bay from both tents much longer. Horace did as directed. Dr. Throop brought the fresh rabbits and birds which he had procured, as he knew their only chance for food depended on them. After he had stored the birds in Adelaide's hut, and Horace had taken a seat in one corner, he worked manfully all night, building a circle of fire around the tent to protect them. Toward morning the snapping and growling of the wolves grew less savage, and with the gleams of the rising sun they slunk away to their hiding places, to be ready to resume their attack with renewed vigor the following night. Morning found Dr. Throop almost exhausted with his hard service of the past two days and nights. His hands were blistered and swollen; his hair and eyebrows singed by his steady night's work at the fires; his broad shoulders ached, and his feet were blistered. For two whole days and nights he had not closed his eyes to sleep, beside his bodily strength had been overtaken, and he was almost sick, yet he knew that he must not give up, as their main dependence was on himself. He proceeded to a pool of water near by, bathed his head and face and felt somewhat refreshed. He then replenished the fire and proceeded to prepare the breakfast in the usual manner. He awakened Horace and Adelaide, then brought fresh water and assisted them in making their toilets for breakfast.

Horace said it looked as if Dr. Throop had a hospital in the wilderness far from human habitation.

Dr. Throop laughingly answered that they were doing very well, considering the many difficulties they had had to encounter. They chatted pleasantly as they partook of their breakfast, and we will leave them alone awhile and follow the fortunes of Joe Clifford to Leadville, Colorado.

CHAPTER X.

JOE'S TRIP TO COLORADO.

With steadfast mind and eagle eye,
He spanned the surging crew.

Joe and his employer set out immediately for Leadville. Mr. Brown was an active business man of the present day; to use an oft quoted expression, everything he touched turned to gold. All manner of speculations prospered in his hands, and Joe seemed equally as fortunate as his employer. They arrived in Denver City, Colorado, before the tornado, and while many were killed, wounded and storm beaten, Joe and his employer were speeding on to the great Eldorado of the west. To Joe, Denver City presented a lovely appearance. It is useless to describe it to my readers; every one knows that Denver is the hub of the western commerce. They collect there to travel north, south and west. All the lines of travel leading to the health and pleasure resorts of Colorado, naturally tend towards Denver City. Added to this large list of travel, are the thousands of people drawn west by the new mining excitement of Leadville. During one week there were four thousand, three hundred and eleven strangers arrived and were registered at the principal hotel. Nor did this represent all the travel into or through Denver. A large portion of the mining travelers were too poor to lodge at the

best hotels, and they sought cheaper lodgings, and spent a day or two in sight-seeing before they proceeded on to Leadville. A restless mind seemed to pervade the whole community. Many rich and well-dressed persons were continually passing to and fro, with pleasant interest in the scenes around, while in strong contrast to these were the eager, striving, hard working ones, who were there to benefit themselves by their trip west. They bore the unmistakable stamp of gold hunters on their countenances. Joe and Mr. Brown passed two days in Denver, sight-seeing, and then proceeded on their way to Leadville. They went by the South Park and Pacific Railroad. The scenery by this route is grand beyond description. Tall mountains tower toward heaven with their lofty peaks crowned with eternal snow. On one side of this track is the Platte river; away up in the mountains, a tiny rivulet, clear and pellucid, it trickled from a cloven rock and gathered force and power on its downward course, until here, a wild mountain stream, it dashes down through the canon over an almost unbroken succession of rapids and cataracts. Occasionally you come upon a clear pool of water, suggestive of trout fishing. The rocks rose hundreds of feet on either side, worn by the river into all sorts of wild, unearthly shapes.

The ride over the Denver, South Park and Pacific is very uncomfortable. Travelers who are used to palace sleeping cars find an all night ride in a narrow gauge car very tiresome; it leaves them in a poor condition to stand fifteen hours of stage-coaching over a rough mountain road. Yet Joe and Mr. Brown had both been used to hard times, and when they reached the terminus of the road they sustained no real injuries, only they were stiff and sore and pretty well stove up with their night's ride. They reached Summit at five o'clock in the morning, and with the motley crowd there, they fried

their bacon, ate their hard biscuit and made ready to continue their way to the mines. The distance to Leadville was yet thirty miles. The road was thronged with people coming and going to and from the mines. The scene presented a moving mass of human beings, horses, mules and dogs. Some men had their whole families, along with their worldly possessions. There were tired-looking, haggard-faced women; dirty-faced tangled-haired children, with opened mouthed wonder plainly displayed upon their countenances; rough-dressed, bearded and unkempt men thickly mingled in with this heaving, pushing, crowding mass of humanity. Far as eye could see, the crowd swelled and surged onward to its destination. How many hearts ached and eyes grew tired of the grand western scenery and longed again for their little home in the country or small room in the overcrowded city where they might rest and feel satisfied that for one night they would remain free from disturbance. How natural it is, amid scenes of grandeur, surrounded with all the vast displays of nature's sublimest works, for our heart's to return with a sick longing to our first humble home, and we feel ready to cry out in unsatisfied longing for some old familiar scene.

But time drags on, and we grow accustomed to strange faces and new scenes. The dear old faces and the pleasant old home become memories to us, and the by-gone years fade away, leaving faint traces of our childhood's days clinging to us like the broken fragments of a pleasant dream that fades away with the mists of the morning. Joe looked at the tired, slatternly women and his heart went back in rapid thought to his home in New York city. He thought of his tired mother, of the long years of disappointment and heart sickness she had undergone; of the weary weeks of toiling and hopeless drudgery that she had endured for him, and his

young heart swelled with bitterness as he thought of his father, and an involuntary curse arose to his lips. But he ground his teeth and crushed it back. He knew his mother was proud and high minded, and the slur that had been put upon her by his father was undeserving. He resolved to seek wealth for her sake. With such pure sentiments of heart-felt love in his heart as these for his mother, there was little danger of Joe being led astray by the many temptations incident to camp life.

After Mr. Brown and Joe had spent a couple of days in Leadville, they went out prospecting with the necessary mining equipments. They determined to go about two hundred miles further and seek a new mining locality. They set out with one gun, pistols and ammunition to do them, and intended to rough it in true western style. They met with many adventures of a trivial nature, crossed mountain streams, climbed over huge boulders of rock firmly imbedded in the earth, peered into deep and dark canons, found a few specimens of gold, but nothing of importance. They killed game in the day time, kindled a fire and broiled their meat, and at night slept beneath the shelter of some large rock or mountain shrubbery.

They had now been out two weeks, and had not met with anything like the success they anticipated. They decided to travel one day more, and if they did not meet with better luck in mining, to return to Leadville and set up a store. That night they slept near the mouth of a deep cave. The air was pure and fresh from the mountains. It was now midsummer. Joe slept a sound, healthy sleep, and awoke with the first gleam of the morning light. He decided to kill some fresh game for breakfast; he took his gun, and had gone about fifty yards when he espied on the mountain side

a large antelope; he drew his gun and fired, wounding the deer; it staggered down the mountain side, lost its footing, and in falling struck against some rocks that were in its way, and loosened them on its downward course. In the mountains it is frequently the case that land-slides occur. Sometimes, where rocks and trees have stood for years, a very slight disturbance in the right direction will cause a weak place to give way, and a tremendous mass of rocks, trees and loose earth will be precipitated into the ravine below. It so happened that the deer, in its fall, struck the right rock. That rock seemed a key to unlock the vast pile of rocks that had rested for centuries, perhaps, waiting for the one disturbing cause in nature to loose its apparently solid foundation. The time had now come, and the whole mountain seemed to be moving. A dangerous mountain slide occurred. It was a terrific scene to Joe. The noise of falling rocks and trees sounded like the roar of thunder. The whole mountain side seemed to be one moving mass of crushing, crumbling ruin of trees, rocks and earth. And what was that gleaming in the rising sun? Long, golden streams of sparkling ore glittered amid the rubbish and debris of that mountain slide. Joe stood awe-stricken, and gazed with solemn admiration upon the scene that was brought into such rapid action by a rifle ball. Suddenly the thought flashed over his mind that this beautiful, glittering mass could be nothing else than gold. He clasped his hands, and with uplifted eyes and grateful heart, said in boyish tones, "Thank God! Now mother will not have to lead a slave's life longer. She shall have a home and wealth and fine dresses." The first thoughts that came to him were fraught with joy for his mother's sake. The old

dread of poverty was gone. He saw, in prospective, a long life of prosperity for his mother and Aunt Mary. He knew his mother was quite a gifted writer, but he felt she had had no opportunity of cultivating her talent for writing. The actual bread and meat of daily life required her whole time. He thought of all these things in less time than I have written it.

The noise of the falling trees and rocks had awakened Mr. Brown, who immediately came to where Joe was standing, and then Joe explained how it happened. They soon returned to camp to talk over their wonderful discovery. They prepared their breakfast of dried buffalo meat, and when they had eaten they determined to go to work to get all the gold they could. The mountain deer had been covered by the falling debris from the mountain, and Joe never knew how many feet deep it lay buried. They discovered the mine to be one of nature's richest deposits of golden ore; they found large nuggets of almost pure gold, and within two days they had gathered a large quantity. Then the fear of thieves and mountain robbers came to them, and they had to seek a safe place to conceal their treasure. They concluded to remove it to the cave and fill up the mouth so it would not be easily discovered. Joe worked with untiring energy; visions of a lovely home and elegant surroundings for his mother and Aunt Mary flittered through his mind. He thought of sweet Birdie Elliot as she said, "Joe, you are like the others; you seek gold and care for naught else." He readily forgave Birdie, because she had never known the want of gold as he had. Many a time he had gone cold and hungry, while his mother and Aunt Mary were sick, depriving himself of the necessities of life to procure the comforts of those dear ones. He would eat the crusts of bread and cold potatoes and drink

a cup of water without complaint. Not but what Joe had a good appetite; he craved the nice roast beef and dainty fare that filled the rich man's table, and thought if hard work and economy could some time procure him a good home and plenty to eat he would have it. They soon succeeded in stowing away their treasure from sight, but there and then went to work anew to dig for more. They killed a mountain deer and had fresh venison roasted for each day's meal.

Here for several weeks they worked faithfully; they built high hopes of future greatness. Joe's highest ambition was to procure a home for his mother, and after that he meant to build a home for overworked and homeless women and girls. He had seen much suffering in the city among the working class of women. When they became ill or unable to work for a time they still had to pay rent for the crowded tenement rooms, and had not a breath of fresh air or a taste of wholesome food to nourish their worn out bodies.

Boy as he was, he had exalted ideas of doing something to benefit his race. He would often talk to himself, saying, "Yes, I will do some good in my life; I will buy the old place where I was born and where the little cottage now stands, and I will build an elegant home for tired and overworked women and girls. Boys can help themselves but girls can not. There were only boys sent west, while the poor girls were left cooped up in that bed of iniquity and compelled to toil at starvation prices. Is it any wonder they lose heart, purity and nobility of soul and become the poor squalid creatures they do in a few years. They are often tempted by rich men's offers, and they see no outlet to their miserable lives, nothing but work and starvation, and, after a time, a rest in the potter's field. I would not have them live in idleness, but I would have them well fed and well nourished in body and

mind; and when they work they will work with a nerve and energy that is well both for the employer and the employed."

Joe had been a close observer in the city; he had seen hundreds of women, like his mother and Aunt Mary, striving to keep the wolf from the door. He had seen them stricken down with sickness, and they were compelled to face poverty and endure much hardship and privation, that a little help from the wealthy would have alleviated. It was, indeed, a noble plan Joe had in his mind, and one well worthy of a high and noble nature. Mr. Brown was ambitious to accumulate much wealth and become a second Astor or Vanderbilt. So each, with his mind filled with visions of future good or greatness, toiled, dug and delved from early morn till late at night to amass a fortune. They held the claim by the right of discovery, and nature had assisted them in unearthing large rocks and laying bare its vast wealth to their eager hands. The fortunate shot at the mountain deer had been the cause of saving many hard days' work. There were large veins of golden ore laid bare in one hours' time, but there was great danger in procuring it, as the earth still kept caving in at intervals, leaving great sink-holes that appeared to be bottomless. They were also in daily fear of being discovered and robbed. They left an opening at the mouth of the cave large enough for Joe to enter each night and store away their day's gatherings. Joe noticed a luxuriant green vine, similar to the woodbine, growing over the rocks and trees in the vicinity. He dug up several of these vines and planted them so they grew over the opening in the rock. He watered them every day from the fresh mountain stream that flowed near by, and soon the whole mouth of the cave presented the appearance of a solid rock overgrown with ivy. And now we will leave

them to enjoy their surroundings and improve their fortunes, while we return to George Kent at the farmer's home on the prairie.

CHAPTER XI.

MR. HOWE'S HOME ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.

Beyond the nearest mountains bosky brows
Burst in open prospect—heath and hill,
And hollow, lined and wooded to the lips,
And steep down walls of battlemented rock,
And glory of clear waters interspersed.—*Tennyson.*

George awoke greatly refreshed by his night's rest, and when they had partaken of breakfast they resumed their journey. Mr. Howe was anxious to make all haste to the nearest station, so he could go on to his home in the mountains. He was doing Government service, and it was necessary he should be at head quarters in a certain time, as he was appointed to meet other Government officers. Silas and Marinda congratulated themselves by telling each other of the marvelous escapes they had made. Silas declared "de hebbens was jis one blaze ob litenin' an de yeth jis shook wid de roar ob de tunder, an I jis stood immoved in de gran display ob de Lawd's works."

"Yes," responded Marinda, "an' very good reason for why you stood immoved—case you was jist skeered so bad you couldn't move."

Silas rebuked her, saying, "You haint no rite to 'spute my word when I'se your lawful husban'; an' its woman's plase to 'bey der husbands."

Marinda replied, with spirit, "Yes, when he knows enuff for her to 'bey. As for *you*, I kin prove by Marse Clement dat you was jis a howlin' for deer life, an nuthin' de matter, when he cum up dar."

"You nebber mind de provin; do you spose any nice, 'spectable white man wants to settle a 'spute twixt a cullud gentleman an his wife; not much I reckon."

"Culled gemmen an his wife, *indeed*," irately responded Marinda, "much gemman dey is about you callin' ob your wife a liar an den slinkin out ob it by sayin de *white* man don't want to listen to our 'sputes; nebber you mind, Silas, de days a cummin when de cullud ladys 'll hab dere rites jis de same as de cullud man's do."

Clement and George walked on, enjoying the beautiful scenery through which they were passing. To Clement Howe there was an unspoken pleasure in the society of George Kent; there was something so kind and obedient in the boy's manner. He looked at the slender little form and patient face, and thought, surely George had had a hard time in New York city. Clement Howe was about thirty-five years of age. He was of a high and wealthy family; he was a graduate from Harvard College; was a distinguished scholar, and heir to a large property. He had all that heart could desire or wealth procure. He traveled in Europe and returned to New York city, where he fell in love with a beautiful young lady. She favored his suit, her friends were highly pleased with her prospects, the wedding day was set, and Clement was happy in anticipation of wedded bliss. When the wedding day dawned the woeful discovery was made that his false love had eloped with her music master, who had courted her for years. This so thoroughly disgusted Clement Howe that he retired from society and

became almost a recluse. Finally he went west, and had not been heard from for years. He had one sister, older than himself; she was married, the wife of Mr. Elliot, and mother of Birdie, Joe's much-loved little friend. His sister was entirely absorbed in fashionable life, and her brother concluded all women were a vain and heartless set. After he had gone west he was appointed to a government office. He frequently made trips to Washington City on business, and then immediately returned to his home in the Rocky mountains, which he had named "Eagle's Eyrie," on account of the almost inaccessible route to his home on the mountain side. Here he had spent years in adorning and improving his home, which resembled some beautiful palace. West of it the tall peaks of the Rocky mountains gleamed in the sunlight; on the east flowed a clear, pellucid stream of water, abounding in trout and bordered on each side with beautiful forest trees, magnificent in their towering height. Boulders of rock projected out over the stream, covered with mountain ivy, a vine peculiar to that country.

This river was fed by the never-failing mountain streams, and dashed over the rocks with reckless freedom, scattering the silver spray on its downward course. To the south was one long rich valley of undulating land, fertile as the Valley of the Shenandoah in Virginia. This valley, with thousands of acres of government land, had been purchased by Clement Howe when he first came west. Here, on the mountain side, he had reared, at an enormous cost, a residence almost palatial in its grandeur. This home, and the immense amount of land belonging to it, had gained for him the name of the Rocky Mountain King. The main building was one hundred feet in length in its front, of solid white marble. It was double storied, with a long balcony extending the whole

front of it. There was one main entrance, at the massive oaken hall door. Beautiful plate glass windows extended to the floor, and opened out on the balcony. He had been years in completing this building, and it had cost a fabulous sum of money. The yard was enclosed by a solid stone fence overgrown with ivy, and was elegant with costly shrubs and flowers that would flourish in that climate. The inside of the house contained eighteen large rooms, all well furnished and with taste to rival some of the elegant mansions on Fifth avenue in New York city. The dining room was gleaming with marble-top sideboards that were covered with costly silver and Sevres china. Clement had brought things with him from the east, and fitted up this home. They had been brought by railroad as far as its terminus; thence conveyed over the rough mountain road by wagons to "Eagle's Eyrie." He had two male servants and one female—Aunt Hope, Uncle Abel and their son John. They were left in charge of the premises when he was absent. While he was at home they prepared his meals, ministered to his comfort and looked upon "Marse Clement" as the combination of all good and great beings. His library was well stored with the best books. Aunt Hope declared there had been four wagon loads "ob books, all fotch dar jis for Marse Clement to read."

Toward this home Clement was now anxiously wending his way. He knew it would take one day's travel to the nearest station, then two days' travel by railroad, and three on horseback would bring them to his mountain home. He was anxious to reach home on George's account. He saw that his strength was only fictitious, and he had felt a strong affection spring up in his heart for this delicate, black-eyed boy. He had been so long and so far removed from human affection that he caught himself building air castles of how he would

teach George to shoot and hunt mountain deer and buffalo and ride his thoroughbred horses.

Clement Howe had denied himself nothing in the way of living; he had a stable well filled with the finest blood horses in the west—not so fine perhaps as Linden Tree or Leopard, that were presented to General Grant by the Sultan of Turkey, but fine horses for all that; strong, beautiful, sure-footed and well adapted to the rough mountain roads, wide-spreading plains and fertile valleys of the west. Wildfire, a splendid black, with quivering nostrils, fiery eye and flowing mane and tail, was his master's favorite. Fleetfoot, Van Wert and Bayard were all fine horses, and so well groomed by old Uncle Abel and John that they were aching for a race over the plains.

Clement left orders for Abel to meet him at the railroad terminus with a horse for him to ride home.

Uncle Abel obeyed orders, and was now at the terminus waiting for his master. The storm had delayed his coming, but old Abe knew when Clement left the word he meant for him to stay until he arrived. So he stabled Wildfire and Van Wert and lounged around the town, gathering all the news. He heard of the terrible tornado that had destroyed so much property and so many lives, and he said to himself, "Jis like enuff Masse Clement been on dem planes, and he will be killed, and leabe us all *alone* out dar on dem mountains. An de Lawd above knows whats to become ob de ole 'oman an John an me. He aint got no family, an whatever *is* to come ob all dem fine tings and dat big house what cost so tremendous, is more an I know. 'Clare to goodness," soliloquized Abe, "sometimes I fink he'se had *awful* troubles, he looks so sorrow like at times, when he looks way down de ribber, wid sich a longin' in his eyes. I know he needs a woman to 'sole

him when he's a grevin' so. Case for why, Hope allus 'soles me wid comfortin' words when I'se feeling bad, saying, 'Abel, you ought to be tankin' the Lawd, case you aint like yo name-sake, Abel, what was shot wid buck shot and killed by his own brudder, case his sacrament (meaning sacrifice) was more 'ceptable dan his brudder's.' Den I say dat am a fact, Hope, an likewise I feels better arter her a talkin' to me. An dats jis what Masse Clement *needs*—a woman to 'sole him."

Abel still waited patiently for his master.

Clement told George at noon they would stop and rest. The lady at the house had filled them two large baskets of provisions, which were very acceptable. Clement carried one and Silas the other. They stopped at a pool of water, partook of their dinner, rested themselves and then resumed their journey until they were compelled to camp out. They built two fires; Clement and George sat by one fire, Silas and Marinda at the other. Silas offered to keep guard the first part of the night, but Clement bade him sleep and he would call him in the after part of the night. George offered to keep guard a part of the night, to which Clement kindly replied, "My dear boy, you are quite too unwell to do anything of the sort. You risked your life to save mine, and I now feel that I want to save your life. You are very feeble after your hard chill, and you must take your rest. I procured a blanket from the lady to make a bed for you, and you must lie down with your feet to the fire and rest; remove your shoes so your feet can rest."

George removed the coarse, boy shoes that had blistered his feet; lay down as Clement directed, and was soon fast asleep, overcome by fatigue and weakness. Silas and Marinda soon gave evidence of their happy condition by the loud snoring they emitted. Clement sat alone, keeping guard over

the strange group he had taken charge of. His heart clung to the strange boy with a tenderness he had never before experienced. He said to himself, "It will not be long until the fresh mountain air of Eagle's Eyrie will bring the health to his delicate cheeks. He did not tell me his age, but I should judge he was about eleven years old. What tiny little hands and feet he has! and how he ever managed to hold my head and shoulders above water is more than I can understand." It had indeed been quite an effort for George to hold him up, but his little shoulders had grown strong by the constant use of the blacking brush in New York city, and instead of a boy of eleven he was a girl of almost sixteen years of age, and her naturally tender heart had caused her to use every effort to ward off suffering from any one. But Clement knew nothing of this; if he had really at the time suspicioned Georgie was a girl, he would have returned her to the borders of civilization and secured her a home in some good family and paid for her schooling, as he could not forget the service she had done him in saving his life. He was ignorant of George's sex, and so he went on building air castles, and thinking what a friend he would have in his home on the mountain side. George stirred uneasily in his sleep, and muttered, "Oh, I *can't* sleep with Dave and Jim." Jerushy's ill treatment and abuse had hurt him and still clung to his fevered brain. He tossed restlessly on the blanket, and talked on, "Oh, I will not get sick, I *must* not; Mr. Howe will leave me and I will die."

Clement's heart was touched by the pathetic tone of the boy. He approached him and found him feverish and delirious. He brought water and bathed the burning head and gently roused him from his feverish dreams. George started up, clasped Clement's hands with his little brown, feverish

hands and cried out: "Oh, don't leave me, Mr. Howe; I am *not* sick; I *can* walk; indeed I can!"

Clement soothed him and told him he would not leave him, and inwardly blamed himself for allowing the boy to walk so far in his weak condition. George soon sank to rest, and toward morning his fever cooled again. Clement secured a piece of plank, and after they had eaten their breakfast, he directed Marinda to carry the basket with the remainder of the food, and told Silas he wanted him to assist him in carrying George to the station, a distance of five miles. He then requested George to sit upon the plank while he carried one end of it and Silas the other. In this novel manner they proceeded on their way. George was too weak to stand alone, and Clement knew if he could get him to the station he could then procure medicine for him.

They arrived at the station just in time to go on their way. Clement sat on the seat beside George and supported his head on his shoulder. He soon fell asleep; the motion of the cars lulled him to rest and Clement cared for him as tenderly as a mother would care for her child. He observed the coarse, rough clothes of the boy and determined to procure him some fine wearing apparel at the railroad terminus, as it was quite an enterprising town, and he could obtain almost anything he wished in the clothing line for a large price. When they arrived at the station they found Uncle Abel waiting impatiently for his master's arrival.

Abel was much surprised to see the persons who accompanied his master. He had brought a little sickly weasel of a boy and two colored persons. Uncle Abe ejaculates to himself, "Why on de yerth couldn't Marse Clement git some company as was somebody to fetch 'long w'd he, in place ob dat little poo' puny boy, dat niggah man, an' dat black gal. She

is a ripper; I tell you dat now, Abel. (He always addressed himself as Abel while carrying on conversation by himself.) Dey is some Mississippi niggers, I'll bet, case dey don't know what 'finement ob manners is, like we Varginy black folks do. Dat man Silas is a poo', hen-pecked critter, feered ob his own shader; I can tell dat by de shiftin' ob his eyes."

Uncle Abe had been a Virginia slave before the war, and he still adhered to the custom of addressing Clement as master. He had drifted west with the tide of emigration and Clement had picked him up at some of the western towns and taken him and his wife and son to his mountain home. He had treated them kindly, paying them for their service by the year. He told Uncle Abe to call him Mr. Howe, but Abel fell into his old time habit of addressing white men, and called him master. Uncle Abel was soliloquizing to himself, "Well, well; Marse Clement haint got eyes for nuffin nor nobody but dat little weasel ob a sick boy; an' how on de yerth we is to convey he to the Eagle's Eyrie is more dan I kin tell."

Clement decided to procure two horses for Silas and Marinda, let Abe ride Van Wert while he rode Wildfire and carried George before him, as he was unable to sit alone on horseback.

Clement transacted his business in town, and was soon mounted with his crowd of attendants and on his way to "Eagle's Eyrie." Wildfire was proud of his master, and his easy, graceful motion was soothing to George's aching body. They traveled along the rough mountain road at an easy pace. They had to camp out one night more before they reached home. Abe had brought the necessary camping articles and a well-filled hamper of food along. No accident occurred on the way, and the next day at noon they arrived

at "Eagle's Eyrie." Hope and John were eagerly waiting to welcome them. They were surprised to see the new servants and the sickly boy their master brought home, but nevertheless much pleased to see their beloved master. He ordered a pleasant room on the second floor made ready for George. He assisted him to the room and ordered a bath for him. He sent to his room a fine suit of deep blue broadcloth, with spotless white linen shirts and fine patent leather shoes. He told George these clothes were for him, and when he was rested to ring for John, and give orders for any thing he wanted, saying; "My dear boy, you are home now; rest satisfied, you have only to let your wants be known to have them supplied." With these words Clement left the room and left George to his rest.

CHAPTER XII.

GEORGE'S FEAR OF DISCOVERY.

She dreamed of being alone on the seashore

Chained to a rock, she knew not how ; to stir

She could not, from the spot, and the loud roar

And each wave rose roughly, threatening her ;

And o'er her upper lip they seemed to pour

Until she sobbed for breath ; and soon they were

Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high,

Each broke to drown her, but she could not die.

—*Byron.*

George sank to sleep almost immediately after Clement left her room. Strange dreams haunted her pillow, and wierd shadows seemed drifting around her. She awoke in a room richly furnished ; a beautiful Axminster carpet covered the floor ; the furniture was rich and heavy. The room had a southern view, and the windows were open to admit the fresh air. She felt as if she was in fairyland ; yet she knew she must rouse herself and be on her guard. If she should fall sick she was afraid her sex would be discovered, and Mr. Howe would turn her out of doors as an imposter. Poor child, she was sorely tried ; and through no fault of her own, but through the wickedness of others, she had been placed in a false position all her life, and she now felt her only safety

depended on her concealing her sex and appearing as a boy. She knew she was in a strange house in the mountains, far distant from any habitation, and her only companions were to be servants and the man whose life she had saved. She could not bear the idea of divulging her secret to him, and, thanks to his kindness, she would not have to room with any one. He had left John at her command as her servant, but she was so well used to waiting on herself she did not need a valet. She smiled at the idea. She, a little New York boot-black, established at a fine residence in the west, with a man-servant to wait upon her! She wished with all her heart that she was a boy. She gazed away to the sparkling river as it flowed on its eastern course, and turning her eyes she saw in the valley to the south large herds of buffalo feeding on the rich grasses there. She lay a long time thinking of her position, and longing for some friend in whom she could confide.

At length she determined to be contented and make the best of her life. She believed she could conceal her sex from Mr. Howe. She had so much reverence in her heart for the stately, blue-eyed man that treated her with so much kindness and consideration, she longed to hide her face in her hands and tell him she was not what she seemed; that circumstances had so formed and fashioned her life that she was compelled to occupy a false position, but she knew that would never do. She thought she could live here in this wilderness and grow better and stronger; she dreaded the thought of having to learn to shoot and ride horseback. She did not dread the use of firearms so much as she did the thought of riding those fiery looking horses. Georgie was, by nature, a delicate, high-toned maiden, whose modesty was a safeguard

to her, and she shrank from any display much less than the place she would have to take as companion to Mr. Howe. She determined, however, to make the effort to conceal her sex, and here in this mountain fastness to live with him as a male companion forever. She arose, took a bath, arrayed herself in the blue broadcloth Mr. Howe had sent, and looked very sweet and girlish for a boy. The delicate little rosebud of a mouth had a grieved expression, and the eyes a patient sadness, which you seldom see in a boy of eleven or twelve years of age. She brushed back the black curls from the beautiful brow and sat down to think before she should descend to the lower room. Soon a knock sounded at the door. She arose, opened the door, and John, bowing his woolly head, said, "Please sir, Mr. Kent, Marse Clement sent I to see if dar was anyfing I could do for you; he said as how dinner was ready, and would you come down an eat 'long o' he."

George arising, told him to lead the way. He led the way down the stairs to the elegantly furnished room. Clement Howe fairly started as the beautiful boy entered the room. There was a beauty, style and grace displayed by the boy never before noticed. The coarse, ill-fitting suit of tweed had given him a puny, delicate appearance, while the fine blue broadcloth suit greatly enhanced his delicate beauty.

Clement advanced to meet him with outstretched hands saying, "My dear boy, I am happy to see you able to come down, and now let me welcome you to your new home, 'Eagle's Eyrie.'"

A crimson flush mounted to George's white brow as Clement drew him to his side and folded him in his arms, saying, "But for you, dear George, I should not have returned to 'Eagle's Eyrie.' I have no brother or son, you shall henceforth be as my younger brother, sharing with me all the pleasures

of my mountain home, and here, far removed from the whirr and bustle of city life, you will grow up a strong and healthy lad."

Clement's great heart was hungry for something to love; something to cling to in his loneliness, and he placed high hopes on this boy, who had saved his life. George released herself from the arms of Clement, and blushing said: "Dear Mr. Howe, you are the first real friend I ever knew; my life has been so lonely, so desolate, amid the vast city's crowded throng, I had no friend to call my own. I will strive to deserve the honor you have bestowed upon me by making me your friend, and I sincerely hope you may never regret it."

"Do not fear I shall regret it; Clement Howe does nothing to regret." And this was really true; he was of so high a mind, and of a character so pure, that he was not tempted to do things to regret. He was so evenly balanced, with such a grand heart in his manly bosom, a person felt in looking at him, he was a man to be trusted among a thousand. He bade George be seated at the table, where every dainty that wealth could procure was spread to tempt the appetite and please the mind. Fine Sevres of china dishes, with cut glass and silver, adorned the table in the center of the room. In the center of the table stood an elegant vase filled with fresh rosebuds and glossy fern leaves that had been gathered from the yard; fresh broiled venison steaks were sending forth a grateful odor to tempt the appetite; nice trout from the mountain stream was fried, brown and tempting, and served with vegetables and fruit. There was fresh butter manufactured at the home dairy, and delicious cream biscuit made by Aunt Hope. George partook of a venison steak, some of the biscuit, drank a cup of fragrant tea, and felt much better.

After dinner they repaired to the piazza in front of the house, where Clement indulged in smoking a fragrant cigar, and George sat drinking in, to his soul's content, the beauties of his mountain home. He felt his heart expand and swell in grateful affection for the friend who sat near him for treating him so kindly, and he determined to be worthy of that affection. Uncle Abe and Silas were engaged in tending to the stock, while Aunt Hope and Marinda were engaged in the household duties.

Hope remarked, "I 'clare to gracious, Marse Clement's jis wrapped up in dat boy."

"Well," replied Marinda, with her usual tartness, "I guess if you had bin out dar on de plains in dat storm, wid de bref clean blowed out ob you, an' some one had held you up outen de mud an' de water to keep you from drownin,' I reckon as how you would kinder be grateful to 'em yoursef."

"To be sure I would," returned Hope; "but *I* didn't know as he reskued Marse Clement from de storm an' de tempest. Ob course, dat's why he's so kind to him, den. But land's sake, how I *do* wish Marse Clement would get he a wife to lib out here in dis Egle's Ere! It do seem so lonesome like widout a woman at de head ob de house."

"Well," sniffed Marinda, "as you is a sighin' for a Missus for company, I 'spose a 'spectable woman ob yo own color am no company to you."

"Oh yes, you is company for me," replied kind hearted Aunt Hope, "but I jis felt like Marse Clement ought to have a wife for his company, and for a lady at de hed ob de 'stab-lishment, an' den chilluns alus looks nice playin' roun, an comin' ater de ole folks to 'herit de house, an' lan' an' name."

"Yes," replied Marinda, "but whar dey isn't sich I don't sees as does any good grevin' about it. An for *my* part I jis

trusts in de Lawd, an' nebber troubles myself; if odder folks don't want families its no look out ob mine."

"Dat's so," philosophically responded Aunt Hope, "an' perhaps I is borrowin' trouble."

When their work was completed they went to their room, where Marinda talked to her heart's content of the terrible trials she had undergone since she had left Mississippi as a refugee for Kansas.

As the evening advanced, and the mountain air grew chilly, Clement and George repaired to the parlor, where a bright fire was built of coal and pine wood, sending out the delightful odor of burning pine. Here they sat for sometime longer, Clement busy with some papers, George gazing dreamily into the fire, and contrasting his present luxurious life with his miserable, half-starved existence in New York. When Clement had overlooked his papers, he turned to George and saw the beautiful, childish face deep in thought. The fine eyes were bent in serious thought upon the blazing fire; the little mouth was compressed with a steady, firm look, that bespoke his power of suffering and self-control; the delicate little brown hands were clasped as if in patient waiting. Clement gazed for a few moments upon the sweet-faced boy, and then said, "A penny for your thoughts, George; but why do I ask? Of course you are thinking of New York, and longing for your old associates there. Who would you rather see in the city?"

George raised his dreamy, dark eyes, and looking into the dazzling blue orbs of Clement, replied, "I have no friends or associates there."

"What!" inquired Clement, "in that vast city of half a million inhabitants, and no friends there?"

George answered sadly, with a quivering note of sorrow in

his tone, "No, Mr. Howe, I never knew what it was to have a friend until I started west, and met a kind boy on the train who protected me from the abuse of a rude boy. We parted at Parsons, Kansas, and I have not heard from him since. Then I met you, Mr. Howe, and I feel you are my best and only friend on earth. You so kindly offered me a home here. I hope I will never have to leave."

"Rest easy in your mind, George; you shall never leave with my consent. I live here alone, apart from the world. Years ago my fondest hopes were all blasted. I loved a lady, sweet and fair to look upon, but cruel and heartless beyond all description. She deserted me for another man on the eve of our marriage. I learned to despise her, and with my contempt for her came a hatred for all women. Yet I feel I must have some one to love, and no one suits me so well, my dear boy, as yourself. If you were a girl I could not bear you in my sight, but you are a boy; you do not belong to the treacherous sex; you shall share my home, my heart, my wealth, my studies, and my pleasures. It will be my highest delight to see you mounted on Fleetfoot, skimming over the valleys, or with a rifle picking out some bird at a distance to lay at my feet as a trophy and proof of your ability to shoot well. I myself will conduct your studies. I will teach you music. In the parlor is one of Steinway's grand pianos that is equal to a band when well played."

It was well for George the firelight had flickered low in the room, and he turned his burning face aside as he listened to Mr. Howe's conversation and plans. What could he do! a girl, the very identical creature Mr. Howe despised! Should he come boldly out and declare the truth by telling Mr. Howe of his wretched life. He felt he was deceiving his best friend, taking advantage of the kindness offered him, because he was

supposed to be a boy, when he was that despicable creature in Mr. Howe's eyes—A GIRL. He thought of his hard life in New York city, of his miserable sufferings at Jerushy's, of Mr. Howe's condemnation of all women, and George resolved to conceal his sex at all hazards, and make believe he was a veritable boy forever.

Clement continued to talk to him of his plans, all unconscious of the pain he was inflicting on the delicate little girl, who was homeless and friendless, save for himself. Clement Howe was a noble-hearted man, but he believed himself to have been basely used by a woman, and his mind was embittered against the sex. If he had known George was a girl; if he had seen that poor little innocent girl struggling to support herself; if he could have known the weary days and sleepless nights that young creature had passed, because she was a girl in a false position, he would have died sooner than wound her feelings by unkind remarks against her sex. But he firmly believed she was a boy, and one to whom he owed a heavy debt of gratitude. He thought he would give the boy to understand he had no rival to fear; that all he was required to do the remainder of his days, was to live with him and be happy.

With sinking heart and faltering words George stammered out his thanks to his benefactor.

Clement attributed his emotion to weakness, and said kindly, "Dear George, I have been too selfish, and kept you up too long. I had forgotten you were so unwell. Come now and kiss me good-night and retire to your room, so you will gain strength."

George went obediently to Clement's side, but did not offer to salute him with a kiss. Clement put his arm about him, drew him to his side, and kissing his cheek, said, "Do

not be afraid to kiss me, George; I declare, you are as timid as a girl. Good night, and pleasant dreams in your Eagle's Nest! Sleep soundly, with no thought of the morrow, for the 'Old Eagle' always cares for its young, and rest assured I shall care for you."

George left the parlor and retired to his own room, and there, in the privacy of his own chamber, he burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping. His heart was full to breaking; he had held back the passionate sobs as long as he could; he knew Clement believed him to be a boy, and his heart was heavy because he had deceived him. When he had ceased weeping, he sat in an easy chair by the window and gazing away into the deep and starry silence of the night, wondered if any one on earth was half so miserable as himself. The dread of those fiery horses made his heart stand still with terror. He knew Clement would expect him to manage them with the ease and freedom of a boy. He resolved to do the best he could with the horses, when the time came; he felt the studies would only be a pastime, and music was his soul's delight. His fingers ached to touch that piano and draw grand strains of music from its ivory keys.

George had no gentle mother to teach him the Lord's prayer, but he had a high, pure soul, and a deep adoration in his heart for the maker of the universe, and when his grief had subsided, he knelt at the window and seriously and earnestly besought the father of mercies to care for him in the trying conflict through which he must pass. He arose comforted and strengthened, trusting in him who is a present help in every time of need. He then retired to rest and the sleep of the innocent soon wafted him away to the land of dreams.

Clement sat a long time in meditation after George had

left him; he reviewed his past life and laid new plans for the future; he was happier than he had been for years; he felt a strange joy in the companionship of George; he mused on the delicate features and timid ways of the boy, but he felt there was a high principle and a strong will underlying that delicate exterior; he talked to himself, a habit he had acquired from being alone so much, saying, "Yes, he shall share all of my pleasures, and it will be my delight to see his young mind develop and grow high and pure into a perfect manhood. I would like to have had such a son, but it was not to be; women as a class are heartless, cruel; I could not bring myself to seek another when Helen, whom I thought was the soul of honor, betrayed me. But I will not grieve; I must sleep." And he retired.

And while night casts her sable shadows over the beautiful "Eagle's Eyrie," and all its inmates are peacefully sleeping, we will return to Dr. Throop and his friends in the hut, surrounded by howling wolves and dreary night shades.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NIGHT OF SUSPENSE.

Hither we came,
And sitting down upon the golden moss,
Held converse sweet and low—low converse sweet,
In which our voices bore least part.—*Tennyson.*

When night again descended over the plain, Dr. Throop felt as if he would not be able to hold battle with the prairie demons another night. But love nerved up his strong right arm and made him strong to suffer and to do; he knew it would not do to let Adelaide suffer, even in thought, as she was in a very precarious condition. His experienced eye could detect a weakness of the spine that might terminate fatally if she was allowed to become excited or overcome. He felt the fever in his blood, with a pain and dizziness in his head, but would not allow himself to give up. He dragged his tired limbs to a pool of fresh water near by, procured fresh water for Adelaide, and then proceeded to broil some of the birds for supper.

Horace was anxious about his friend, and earnestly requested him to lie down and rest after supper, saying, "Frank, in my selfishness I have allowed you to do all the hard work, and last night you never closed your eyes in sleep. Now I demand that you take some rest."

Adelaide also joined Horace in his request, saying, "Dr.

Throop, I feel that we are safe, encircled, as we are, by a ring of fire. Those wild beasts will hardly venture through fire, let them be ever so hungry."

Thus importuned, Frank lay down on the couch of leaves in the room adjoining Adelaide's. He soon sank into a heavy dreamless sleep, from which he was aroused about midnight by the fierce howling of hungry wolves. He sprang to his feet, grasped a firebrand from the blazing fire and soon had the satisfaction of hearing the howls grow more distant. Horace Clifford, with his arm in a sling, had worked manfully all night keeping the fire replenished. Adelaide had slept but little. She had become anxious about Dr. Throop. She had never before met with a man who commanded her admiration and respect as the Doctor did; she knew nothing of love, unless the strange happiness in her heart could be called love; she felt very weak and nervous, but she had a will to overcome nervousness; she hoped they would soon be rescued from their painful position, but she did not know how long they might be left alone.

Dr. Throop felt somewhat refreshed from his sleep, and when he had succeeded in driving the wolves away he insisted that Horace should retire and seek some rest while he remained on guard until daylight. Horace did as the Doctor requested him, and was soon sleeping.

Adelaide remained silent for sometime, but at last, tired and lonely, she asked Dr. Throop if he would not assist her to her feet and let her sit by the fire with him. This he readily consented to do, carefully wrapping her in the blanket to protect her from the night air. They did not talk much at first, but sat silent and thoughtful.

Dr. Throop felt the presence of Adelaide as some sweet, inexpressible power, that was to lead him to a haven of rest.

Presently he remarked, "Dear lady, you have not told me if you lost friends in the storm," and she replied, "No; I was on my return from a visit in the west, when the storm overtook us. And you," she said, "have not told me if you, Mr. Clifford and Dick were alone."

He told her of his setting out to trace his sister's child; how they had traced him to the farm house, and had then lost sight of him, and said he was fearful the boy had perished in the storm.

Adelaide's gentle heart ached in sympathy for the brother and uncle, who had looked so long and anxiously for his sister, and then when he found her child, to feel that it was in a perilous situation, in danger of being devoured by wild beasts. Her heart sank when she thought of that lonely child exposed to the storm and the terrible wolves. She felt how helpless she was and how she might have died alone had it not been for the timely aid of Dr. Throop and his kind care of her since. She felt they must soon part, and a feeling of desolation crept over her. Her whole life had been devoted to her weak brother, who, in an hour of temptation, allowed himself to yield to sin and commit an act that was to trail its shadow over her whole life. She felt Dr. Throop was a high and noble man, and could not look with the eyes of affection and forgiveness, as she did, upon her erring brother. She felt there was a secret she must forever keep locked in her own bosom. She did not tell him who she had been visiting in the west. He did not press the question further; his noble heart and trusting nature was ready always to believe the best of every one. When he saw any one suffering he did not stop to inquire who they were or from whence they came, but like the good Samaritan of olden times, he bound up the bleeding wounds and poured on the healing oil, never waiting to make

inquiries. He felt Miss Stuart had been cast in his way by some strange providence, and he looked upon her as a precious charge. He longed to take her in his arms and pour a tale of pure and honest love into her ear. But respect for her feelings and his own high notions of honor forbade his taking undue advantage of her lonely condition. He looked upon her sweet, pale face and felt no language of his could speak the love he felt; he realized, that

When love would the power of passion reveal
And would all her sweet treasures declare,
Oh, how little we say of all that we feel
For our words seem as empty as air.

Such was the state of Dr. Throop's mind and heart that he felt his inability to express his feelings. He was not aware that love has a language of its own, that speaks in many varied ways—the glance of the eye, the clasp of the hand or half unconscious sigh, all tell the old, old story. Old, yet forever new while there are young hearts to beat and grow tender with impassioned earnestness, then grow sad with despair, or fond with love returned. There is something glorious in the first tender love of woman's heart, like the delicate unfolding of a sweet spring rose—one by one the leaves open up, displaying a fragrance and beauty unsurpassed in nature's finest works. So, one by one, the little acts of love display themselves—the red flush of pleasure on the face, the tender light glowing in the eyes, the sweet quivering notes of gladness trilling in the voice, and speaking a language that naught but love can utter. Reader, have you seen some fair girl giving her heart, all unconsciously, into the keeping of a stranger? Such was now the case with Adelaide. She had learned to love Dr. Throop in the few short days of their acquaintance with the

love of a lifetime, and she felt she must guard herself strictly or she would betray her secret. She grew silent, and sat looking in the fire with a heavy sadness gathering in her glorious black eyes.

Dr. Throop saw the shadow of pain on the fair face, and inquired tenderly, "What is it, dear Miss Adelaide? Does your ankle give you pain?"

She replied, with a rising flush, "No, I was only thinking."

His tender tone of inquiry had thrilled her heart and sent the red blood flying to her face.

He said kindly, "I know you must be weary of this hard life; it is so trying to you, a lady, alone here on a storm-riven plain, wounded, and with only two strange men for companions. I feel deeply grieved for you, but at present that is the only comfort I can offer you—the sympathy of a loving heart."

He had broken his word to himself, and told her he loved her. He felt now that he would not back down from his sentiments. He did love her, and why need he care if they sat alone on a storm beaten plain, far removed from human habitation, with naught but the twinkling stars from heaven to shed their cheering light above them? Was it not just as well to declare his love there as it would have been beneath the gaslights in a New York drawing-room? He felt that his avowed love would give her more of a feeling of security with him, and he determined to win her if he could. Therefore he thought, to use an old-time saying, "when once the ice was broken" and he made the first plunge, he would not find it so hard to proceed.

When he told her she had the sympathy of a loving heart, she replied, "Oh, Dr. Throop, I never can thank you sufficiently for your kindness to a destitute and friendless girl;

where would I have been but for your timely aid in rescuing me from that dreadful situation?"

"Dear Miss Stuart, I do not want thanks; the mere knowledge of your life lends a pleasure to my hitherto aimless existence. I seem to have lived longer and enjoyed life better in the last few days of peril and disaster than ever before. I feel the pleasure of life on this dreary plain. I have learned to love you, dear Adelaide; forgive my presumption in telling you, but my life, such as it is, I willingly lay at your feet, and implore you not to cast me away hopeless. Be my wife, Adelaide, and let it be my fondest care to love and protect you always. Answer me, darling; let me not plead in vain."

His steel blue eyes glowed with tenderness, and his manly frame quivered with emotion. He clasped the glowing, trembling form of Adelaide close to his heart, and her woman's heart thrilled by the weird hour of night, by the lonely surroundings, and the memory of her desolate life, yielded up its fountain of pure, fresh love to this manly wooer. And the silent stars in heaven witnessed a betrothal pure and solemn as that in the Garden of Eden centuries ago. She loved, and with woman's first, fond love, gave him the priceless treasures of her pure heart.

"Beloved," he whispered, in low tones, thrilling with tenderness, "to-night is the happiest hour of my existence. There is only one thing to make me happier still, and that is, when you take my hand, heart and name as your own." And with a man's usual impatience he went on, "Let us be united, dear, as soon as circumstances will permit."

This, in a measure, restored Adelaide to herself, and she thought of her brother's disgrace, and felt that she ought not tarnish the name he offered her by accepting his love and burdening him with her dishonored name.

She stammered, "Oh, give me time! This is all so sudden; so unexpected. Three days ago we did not know each other, and to-night we are betrothed, and you wish me to consent to an immediate marriage." A look of pain crossed her features, and she said, "Oh, you do not know all, or you would not urge me to become your wife."

His face grew pale, and a sudden fear shook his strong frame. "What is it," he asked trembling? "Is there some one else you love; some one who has a prior claim on you."

"No, no," she replied; "no one else that I love, but something you ought to know," she added hesitatingly, scarcely knowing whether to tell him her troubles or not.

He saw she was in trouble about something, but felt so happy by her assurance that she did not love any one, that all other troubles seemed of a trivial nature to him. He said in soothing tones, "Never mind, darling, if it is anything painful, I do not wish to disturb you. When you feel better you may tell me all your troubles."

Thus reassured, she did not say more. His manner was so kind and so protecting, and poor Adelaide had been so set apart from near ties, had felt the contempt of many on account of her brother's unfortunate conduct, that such generous love as his was as balm to her wounded heart. She was modest and retiring, and the hot blush of maiden modesty burned her face, as he held her close in his arms and pressed tender kisses on her cheek and brow.

He whispered: "Forgive me, darling; you are so dear, so precious to me. You have opened up such grand possibilities in my life and made me so happy, I can hardly control my feelings."

In truth, it was the pure, honest love of a noble heart, welling over with its tide of heartfelt affection. That night

was to him an Eden on earth, and the first faint gleam of morning light as the dawning of a new era in his existence. He insisted that Adelaide should retire and rest while he prepared the morning meal, as Clifford was still sleeping, but Adelaide told him she felt like sitting up until breakfast, adding, "It seems to me I have been a burden to you ever since we met."

He smiled, pressed her hand and replied: "A very precious burden; may you never be less a burden to me, my darling, for I assure you the past few days have been the happiest in my life."

That morning was to Dr. Throop the happiest morning of his hitherto pleasant life. He went about preparing the breakfast merry as a boy. He raked up fresh coals, broiled the birds, then called Horace to his breakfast. They were not very hungry; this was the third morning since the storm, and they had grown tired of their bill of fare. They had not heard a word from Dick, but they expected him back to-day. Horace looked more depressed and out of heart than usual this morning. He felt that his life was entirely hopeless; his arm had been painful during the night; his breakfast did not tempt him—broiled birds without salt, as a regular diet, was not the best of eating. To the lovers, it mattered little what they ate, they were so absorbed with each other. Horace wandered aimlessly about till noon.

Dick made his appearance at noon with a large express wagon and a span of good horses, and the storm wrecked party were soon on their return to the nearest town. Horace and Dick occupied the front seat; Dr. Throop and Adelaide the back one. As they journeyed along at slow stages, Dr. Throop felt it would be impossible to separate himself from

Adelaide, and he did not feel like abandoning his sister's lost child. His brain was busy thinking, planning, and he resolved to urge Adelaide to a speedy marriage. He tore a leaf from his note book and wrote a note to her asking her consent to an immediate union. The presence of the others forbade any private conversation, and this was his only way of asking so important a question. Adelaide blushed as she read, and sadly shook her head, saying, "It is too soon."

But with all a lover's impatience, he urged her to become his wife as soon as they arrived at the nearest town. She finally consented. That evening late they arrived at a small railroad town, where Dr. Throop procured a marriage license, and called on a justice of the peace to unite them. Adelaide was very pale; her recent suffering and the trials she had undergone, left their traces on her sweet face. Dr. Throop was flushed and glowing with a happy and triumphant heart. He loved this woman with all the strength of a nature like his, and she was now his own. She had given him the highest proof of woman's love to man, and stood by his side his lawful, wedded wife.

Horace Clifford looked gloomily on, thinking ever of his beloved and ill used Austria.

Dick was happy as a witness of this strange wedding. He remarked, "Well, well! it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and I think, with all the harm the wind did, it surely did some good in bringing the doctor and his sweet lady together."

Passers-by stopped to gaze at the lovely bride. One lady at the boarding house remarked, "She is being married in black; she will live to repent it."

This smote on the ear of Adelaide, and sent a chill to her heart, but the doctor whispered, "Never mind the dress, dar-

ling; you can soon change its sombre hue for one more suitable for a bride." She returned the fond pressure of the hand, and felt she was willing to be wed in any dress that would make her the wife of her only love.

The ceremony was soon over that joined two lives together for weal or woe. After the wedding they sat down in the rude little parlor to wait for supper. Dr. Throop had ordered the best the house was able to give. The supper was really good; there were nice fresh biscuits, good coffee, roast beef and potatoes, preserved fruits, and many dainties which our wedding party had been deprived of for a few days past.

Adelaide was too happy and too much excited to eat much; but Dr. Throop, Horace and Dick ate heartily. They again repaired to the parlor. Dr. Throop had ordered a room for himself and bride on the second floor. The hotel parlor was somewhat crowded. The whole theme of conversation was the late storm that had swept over the plains and destroyed so much life and property.

The doctor knew Adelaide was too ill to listen to much about the sufferings of others, so he tenderly inquired if she would *not* rather retire to her own room, which she readily did, with grateful feelings for so much kindness on his part. He called an attendant to lead the way to the room, and he also accompanied his bride to the threshold of their chamber. It was a small room, with whitewashed walls, two windows with white curtains, and a rag carpet on the floor; a neat bed, dressed in white, a wash-stand and towels, and a couple of chairs completed the outfit. But this was a great improvement to what Adelaide's sleeping apartment had been for the past few nights.

Dr. Throop apologized, saying, "My Darling, I am sorry I

can not afford you better rooms, but this is really the best we can do at the present."

She thanked him, saying pleasantly, "Do not be disturbed on my account, doctor. (She had learned to call him doctor in their few day's acquaintance.)

He fondly assured her he would provide better room, and kissing her blushing cheeks and ruby lips, with a fond husband's right, he left her alone to the rest she so much needed. When he had gone, a waiting girl made her appearance and asked if there was anything she could do for her.

Adelaide thought of her dilapidated wardrobe, her soiled linen, and asked her if she could purchase ready-made underwear in the place, adding that she was willing to pay any price. The girl was a bright, intelligent girl, who readily understood Adelaide's situation, and replied there was not any ready-made clothing for ladies at the store, but she could loan the lady a nice suit if she would accept them. Adelaide disliked to borrow, but seeing this was her only chance, she accepted the offer. She ordered fresh water, took a bath, laid aside the soiled linen and arrayed herself in the fresh, clean clothes of the obliging girl, and felt much better. She sent her linen to the wash and asked the girl to have her black cashmere well aired and dusted, as she could not replenish her wardrobe until they went to a larger place. When she was dressed in the clean, white muslin night robe, she seated herself in a low rocking chair near the window and gave herself up to happy thoughts. She was indeed a happy bride. True, it had not yet been a week since she had met Dr. Throop, but she felt in the few days she had known him that he was the only man on earth she could love. She sat thinking sweet thoughts of her young husband, of his kind and tender love. She resolved he should never regret his hasty

choice of a wife, saying to herself, "It will be my highest earthly happiness to minister to my husband and make his life pleasant."

While she sat musing in the twilight the girl returned, bringing a lighted kerosene lamp, which she placed upon the stand and lay beside it a roll of fresh newspapers, and kindly inquired if there was anything more she could do.

Adelaide thanked her, and told her she would not need anything more.

The girl retired, leaving her alone. She picked up the newspaper and glancing down the columns read, with throbbing heart and dilating eyes, these words:

ACCIDENTALLY SHOT.—LIEUTENANT JOHN HOBBS, LATE OF CUSTER'S ARMY.—Lieutenant Hobbs came west four years ago, joined Custer's army and was one of the few who escaped from the terrible massacre. He joined the army as a private, but his manly courage and gallant conduct soon gained his promotion to a lieutenant's office. He had the respect and good will of many friends in life, and his untimely death is deeply lamented by all who knew him. We do not know any of his relatives or where they reside. We insert these lines so his friends may learn his sad fate.—*Denver Times*.

Poor Adelaide! her only brother shot dead, with no near friend to care for him in his last hour, and the awful news to meet her eyes on her bridal evening. The exposure she had undergone for the past few days; the excitement of the last few hours, and now this terrible news, was all too much for her weakened state. She sank back fainting, with the paper grasped in her hand. The doctor entered the room almost immediately. He had grown tired of the company in the parlor and longed to be with his bride. He sought their room, and as he entered the door he saw her sink, fainting to the floor. He ran to her, lifted her up, and cried out, "Adelaide, my darling, what is it!"

Her white lips gave no utterance; her black eyes grew dim, and the beautiful face was wan and deathly in its appearance. He kissed her cold face, and clasped her to his breast, a great grief coming to his heart. He feared she would die from the effects of the exposure in the storm. He knew she had been seriously injured, and had borne her suffering with a great amount of patience. He did not think she had seen anything in the paper to cause her to faint.

When she was restored, he carried her to the bed and sat beside her, holding her hands. He tenderly inquired, "What is it, darling? Is the pain in your back worse?"

Here was a chance for an excuse for her, and she replied, that the pain was not so bad now. He soothed her, and bade her rest, and sat beside her, anxious and concerned, while she longed for him to leave, so she could weep for her unfortunate brother. She did not want to mar the pleasure of her wedding day by telling him he had married the sister of a murderer, and the name she gave for his was covered with disgrace. But she longed so earnestly for the privacy of her own room where she could mourn undisturbed for her brother.

Dr. Throop saw she was agitated, and seemed to be grieved. He whispered softly, "You are not sorry we are married, Adelaide?" His kindness was too much for her overburdened heart. She burst into a violent fit of weeping, and fairly shook the bed with her heavy sobbing.

Dr. Throop was distressed beyond all comparison; his knowledge of woman was very limited. He knew they were hysterical at times, but he could not understand why Adelaide should feel so terrible bad on their wedding day. She ceased weeping, but heavy sobs came from her lips at intervals, and when she sank to sleep, her husband sat at her bedside with watchful care. He felt her pulse, but could not de-

fect any symptoms of fever. Her suffering seemed to be more of a mental nature. Then he began to pity her; he thought perhaps he had urged her to a marriage that was distasteful to her. He resolved not to impose his love upon her if she seemed to avoid him, but it was bitterness to a nature like his to think, perhaps, he had acted prematurely in urging his love upon her, and binding her to him in marriage within a week from the time he first met her. He said to himself, "Poor child, she was all alone, with no female friends to care for her, on her wedding night; I will not intrude my love on her. I will be her friend, her physician and wait until she wants me for her husband." He said, passionately, in an undertone, "I will win you, my beautiful darling, and you will come to my arms of your own free will."

While he sat thinking, his eye unconsciously fell upon the paper she had been reading when she fainted. He picked it up and read the very lines she had read, "*Accidentally shot, Lieutenant John Hobbs,*" etc. Some way these lines possessed an attraction for him. He folded up the paper and placed it in the breast pocket of his coat. He sat thinking, "this Hobbs may have been her lover, and the news of his death may have caused her fainting spell." Then he soliloquized like unto this: "I will be careful of her, and when she is well I will remark something about this Hobbs' death and watch her closely. Her tell-tale face will own the truth to me." Then his great heart grew to pitying her, saying, "Poor girl! What a shock his death must have been to her. I will be very kind and not mention it, and if she wishes to tell me anything I will listen to her, but I will not allow a jealous thought in my heart of that pure angel. Her face is so sweet, so pure, no wrong ever found room to rest in her pure soul." Toward morning Adelaide slept soundly, sometimes a long.

shuddering sigh crept up from her breast and died away on her lips.

Dr. Throop never closed his eyes during the long night, and when the first rays of the morning sun gleamed in the east Adelaide opened her eyes and beheld him sitting at her bedside, patient and faithful. When the remembrance of her last night's sorrow came over her, and the thought of her selfish grief passed through her mind, her heart smote her for allowing him to sit there all night. He bent over her tenderly, asked her if there was anything he could do for her, and if she were better.

She replied she was much better, "and you," she asked kindly, "Did you sit up all night?"

He told her he did.

She said to him reproachfully, "Doctor, I am afraid you will be sick. Why did you not go to bed and rest?"

He replied, "Dear one, I could not rest away from you, and beside, all the other rooms at the hotel were occupied."

She said, "Well, this is our room, and I am sure you ought to have taken some rest."

Then aware that it was his place to offer to share their bridal bed, she blushed a red hot blush, and stammered, "And—and, you ought not overtask yourself so; you have not had a night's rest since we met."

The doctors' heart thrilled with tenderness for this lovely woman and a new joy filled his being when he knew her grief of the night before was not caused by aversion to him. He kissed her, and said kindly, "Dear Adelaide, you were so nervous, I feared to sleep, thinking you might have another severe attack of suffering."

The first bell now rang for breakfast. The doctor bathed his face, brushed the light brown curls from his broad brow,

and descended to the parlor. Adelaide arose, brushed out her long black curls, wound them into a beautiful coil at the back of her shapely head, donned her black cashmere, and to her husband's surprise, soon joined him and Clifford in the parlor. There were dark shadows 'neath the eyes that told of heavy suffering, but she had determined to bear her grief in silence. She greeted Horace kindly. Dr. Throop led her to a seat, and any one looking at the newly married pair would not have thought the bride had spent the past night in deep sorrow, and the young husband had sat at her bedside all night without a moment's sleep, wrapped in gloomy meditation. But such was the case; they were man and wife by lawful marriage, yet they were separated by some unexpressed feeling.

Breakfast was announced, and the three sat down at the table together. They had a nice breakfast of good beefsteak, fresh eggs, light biscuit and preserved fruits. After they had eaten, they returned to the parlor to lay plans for the future. Horace Clifford resolved to go on to Leadville in search of the face which so strongly resembled Austria. Dr. Throop thought it quite likely that George Kent had drifted toward Leadville with the tide of emigration going thither. Adelaide was willing to accompany her husband wherever he went, and signified her consent to his plans, saying she was "content to go wherever he went."

They made arrangements to take the noon train to Denver, Colorado. The doctor had plenty of money, and he resolved to have Adelaide replenish her wardrobe at Denver, and to spend a few days of their newly wedded lives in the great metropolis of the west. He decided to insert advertisements in all the leading western papers, making inquiries

for the George Kent who came west with the party of boys sent out by Mr. Whitelaw Reid.

Horace thought he would advertise for Joe Clifford, but was determined to seek him personally. He thought perhaps he might find him in all that vast throng, and while we leave our party en route for Denver, we will take a bird's-eye view of Austria and Mary in the crowded tenement rooms in New York city.

CHAPTER XIV.

DARK HOURS FOR AUSTRIA AND MARY.

The clouds may rest on the present,
And sorrow on days that are gone,
But no night is so utterly cheerless
That we may not look for the dawn;
And there is no human being
With so wholly dark a lot,
But the heart by turning the pictures
May find some sunny spot.—*Phoebe Cary.*

It was indeed a dreary time to Austria. Mary had fallen ill and had grown thinner and paler as the days went by. Austria toiled early and late to support them, and many times she went hungry, to provide luxuries for Mary. The doctor said she must have wine and oranges. The weather was warm now; they did not need fire, but everything costs money in the city of New York, and its humble, toiling thousands are often poorly paid. Austria was at work on a book she hoped to have published sometime. But, oh, what a weary time she must wait before she could hope to have it bring her anything! Her limbs ached; her head grew dizzy, and her hands trembled with weakness. Sometimes she almost felt tempted to go to the wealthy banker and stockholder, Mr. Parke, and ask him to loan her a few dollars to provide for Mary's wants while she lay sick. She knew Mary's pride

would revolt at such a step, and she would rather die than accept a favor from one whose offers of kindness she had rejected. Austria reasoned like this: "Was it really harm for Mary to accept help from Mr. Parke. He was lapped in luxury; everything that heart could desire or wealth procure was lavished at his feet, while the woman he loved lay suffering for the actual necessities of life."

On the day of which I write, Mary had suffered violent pain during a greater part of the night previous. Austria had been kind and patient in her attendance; their little stock of household furniture had been parted with, piece by piece, until the one little room in the third floor of the tenement house was almost bare. They had one poor-looking little bed, but it was white and clean. The cheap white spread that covered the bed was not whiter than Mary's patient face. There was one little cracked stove, where they broiled steak and made tea, when they could afford such luxuries. It had been almost a week since Austria had tasted meat or tea. Mary craved ice and cooling drinks, and her earnings had all been spent to procure these. Mary had been too sick to notice that Austria was starving. To-day she was better, and Austria was going to carry home the work, and try and get some food for herself. Mary called her to her bedside, and taking her hand in her pale, thin hands, said, "Austria, dear, I have suffered until I feel there must be a change; I can not tell how it will be, but whatever comes I feel I am prepared for it." The burning tears crept down Austria's pale cheeks as she sobbed, "Oh, Mary, Mary, do not talk so. You are my only earthly friend; you are the one pure light that shines over my dark life. Without your kind heart and noble example I feel that I should be utterly cast down. Do not talk of change,

unless it be to health and strength. I can not bear to think of giving you up, even when I know for you it would be peace eternal; but, oh, my selfish heart cries out and longs for you to be with me yet a while longer in this earthly habitation."

She spoke cheerfully now: "Do not get out of heart, Mary; I can work for us both; I know the prospect is gloomy now, and the streets of New York are thronged with its suffering hundreds. Tired, worthless-looking men, haggard, sad-eyed women, eager, pinched, little, hungry-faced children, greet my eyes in every direction. There is nothing but poisoned air, suffering and distress on every side. Poor Jane Hall lost two of her little ones yesterday with scarlet fever. I could not weep for them, they are gone to a better world, a land where sorrow never comes and peace reigns for evermore."

Mary clasped Austria's hand in hers and said, "Dear Austria, my heart swells with gratefulness to Him who cares for us, when I hear you talk so patiently of that better land; it will be a rest, pure and undefiled—no more sorrow, no more partings, and no temptation then. Oh, Austria! I feel through all my sufferings here, God has been very good to me; He has kept me by His love and saved me by His grace; and I feel this morning it is all right, come what will. And she repeated these lines so expressive of her faith:

It may be weeks that I must wait,
Or years, I can not say,
But safe within the pearly gates,
I feel there's rest for me.
This earth has been my trial ground,
Tempted and tried by sin;
And yet I feel that God's dear love
Has kept me pure within.

She trusted Him who was strong to redeem and able to save to the uttermost. In the darkest hour of her suffering and misfortune, she felt the strong arm of a merciful Savior thrown around her, and realized that she had chosen the wiser part, and built her house upon the rock of true faith, Christ Jesus. And though storms of sorrow should come, and dark tempests of grief and sadness o'erwhelm her for a while, she felt that that "peace which passeth understanding" would yet be hers.

Austria arose from that bedside, comforted and strengthened. She went out in the streets of New York, and the motly crowd that greeted her eyes assumed a new appearance to her. They were God-created human beings, and He had some wise plan in creating them. She understood that many of the seemingly poor and starving ones were happy in their way. When their simple wants were supplied they did not possess an aching heart such as she did. The words came into her mind, "That the burden is fitted to the back," and every one of these creatures were born to fill their destined graves, and each would live out its frail life here and go home to rest. The promise of that rest gave resignation to her tired spirit, the thought that she was one day nearer home, one day nearer the peace eternal, calmed her troubled mind. And she resolved to bear her life with resignation, if not with happiness. The words drifted through her mind, "The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth," and then she wondered why it was a spirit must be made tired of this earth before it could long for the life beyond this. A longing came to her heart to see Horace once more. She had received a letter from Joe on his arrival in Kansas saying he had found employment with Mr. Brown, stating also that he expected to go to Leadville. She thought of her beautiful, sunny-faced boy, and

longed to clasp him to her heart. A silent prayer went up from her heart, "Lord bless and keep Joe." A mother's prayer, pure and white-winged, it entered the pearly gates of heaven and found an echo in the great throbbing heart of the master mind of the universe. She pursued her way to the shop. When she came to a crossing she was weak and faint from long fasting. Her walk had exhausted what little strength she had, and she sank fainting on the street. A splendid pair of high-stepping jet black horses and a carriage stopped at her side; a noble looking grey-haired man sprang from the carriage and lifted the fainting woman in his arms. The gentleman was Mr. Parke; his noble, generous heart had been touched with sympathy for the beautiful wan face. He left his horses in the care of a groom and bore her to a drug store near by, where she soon recovered. He urged her to drink a glass of wine, which in a measure restored her failing strength. He then kindly inquired where she lived, saying he would take her home in his carriage.

She remembered her work and started up eagerly, saying, "Oh, my work! my work! is it lost? If so, Mary can not have the wine and oranges, and we must starve."

It was pitiful to see the look of hunger and pinched want on that beautiful, soul-lit face—the deep, burning blue eyes, the parched lips and trembling hands, all told a tale of want and woe, that went straight to the heart of Mr. Parke.

He said, "Do not mind the work, dear lady; I have ample means and you shall not suffer for its loss. Permit me to see you home, for I see you need help sadly."

Tears sprang to the proud blue eyes of Austria Clifford, as she listened to the kind words of this noble man, and a tide of bitterness welled over her heart against Horace Clifford, when she remembered he had caused her to live in such des-

titution—an object of charity to a stranger. She put back the falling tears, and accepted his offer to see her home.

It did not take long for the proud stepping blacks to bring them to the miserable tenement house. He assisted her up the stairs, for her steps were weak and tottering. The door of their room had been left ajar to let in the fresh summer air, and Mary lay quietly sleeping—a smile of peace on her lovely face. One glance at her face sent a pang, sharp and swift, to the heart of Mr. Parke. Here was the woman, among women, he had loved, with her pure, sinless heart and heavenly face, beautified by patience and suffering. He started back at sight of her; he was filled with joy at finding her; for many long years he had been seeking her. He had been a widower several years; his wife had worn herself out in a round of fashionable folly, and now slept her last long sleep. He had sought far and wide for sweet Mary Grey. The cottage home where first he met her had passed into stranger hands, and he could find no trace of her. He was wealthy, but his wealth brought no pleasure to him, save the pleasure of making others happy. He was known as one of the most liberal benefactors among men. His name headed many benevolent societies; he gave freely of his vast wealth, but no rest came to his anxious heart, no peace to his weary soul. The one unsatisfied longing of his heart kept repeating evermore, “Lost! lost! Mary Grey.” And now when age had whitened his locks and sixty years had told their numbers over him, he had found her; and she seemed to be dying. He took one step into the little bare room, and sank upon a wooden stool standing near her bed. He bowed his stately head upon his hands, and hot tears trickled down the cheeks, furrowed with age.

Austria stood amazed at his conduct; suddenly like a flash

of light, the thought entered her mind, this was the man of whom Mary had spoken; the very man she herself had almost determined to seek out and tell of Mary's painful situation. And now he was, by some strange providence, here in the room with them.

Mary opened her eyes and they rested on the bowed head of Mr. Parke. Just then he raised his head; his eyes met hers, and a red hot flush mounted the fair face of Mary Grey.

He reached out his hand, taking her transparent hand in his, and said brokenly, "Oh! my darling, it breaks my heart to find you looking so deathly ill."

Mary smiled, and her sweet eyes kindled with joy as she replied, "It is, indeed, a pleasure to me to meet you again."

He bent and kissed the pure, pale face, saying, "Say that to me again, dearest; it is the sweetest music I have listened to in many long years."

She shrank back from his caress, remembering he was married.

He said tenderly, "Do not shrink from me, darling. I am free to love you; to marry you now, say that I may claim you as my own, and I will wed you e'er the sun on this day goes down."

Mary replied, "Mr. Parke, you must wait until I am well, and see what my friend Austria says."

He laughingly returned, "I know she will not object, as I earnestly desire she will make her home with us." And, turning to Austria, he said, "I appeal to you, dear lady, to plead my cause with her."

Austria said, "Do not be discouraged, Mr. Parke; I think she will accept your proposal."

He urged his suit with Mary, saying, "Dear one, I want to

remove you from this den of squalor. It is no wonder to me you are dying; the very air is foul with deathly odors."

Mary said to him, "Mr. Parke, you know I loved you years ago, but I preferred a life of poverty to a life of dishonor. I have no earthly ties—little Ethel is dead. My friend, Austria Clifford, has cared for me in poverty and ill health, and if you are willing to take her with us I will be your wife."

He clasped her in his arms, saying, "Bless you, my darling, for these words; they make me the happiest man in New York city to-day. Your friend shall share our home and fortune. Parkhurst is lonely, but we will soon make it ring with music, and be glad with happy hearts. But you are so faint and weak, you must have some nourishment and be prepared for our wedding this evening. I can not bear the thought of being separated from you, now I have found you."

He pressed a well-filled purse into the hand of Mary, saying, "Here, darling; you will need something to fit you out for our wedding, which will take place this evening at seven o'clock." He pressed a kiss upon her brow, almost crushed Austria's hand at parting, and said, "God bless both of you for making me so happy."

He descended the rickety stairs, entered his carriage, drove to a restaurant, ordered a well filled basket sent to Austria and Mary's room and then gave orders to be driven to the city park. The proud, high-stepping horses, elegant carriage and stately old gentleman attracted much attention even in Gotham. There were many stylish ladies bowed and smiled to the gray haired occupant of that carriage, for notwithstanding his silver hair and many years there were many young ladies who would willingly have married him for the sake of his wealth and elegant home. Beside owning Parkhurst, one of the most elegant among the many fine residences

in New York city. He owned vast railroad stock and countless other kinds of wealth. He was considered by maneuvering mammas and match-making aunts as one of the most eligible matches in the city. But little he cared for all that. He had found the woman he had loved for years and sought so earnestly. But how had he found her! He feared she was dying of want. And while he was driven around that beautiful carriage-way in the city park his heart ached with undefined sadness.

The trees were gently waving in the breeze; birds were singing, flowers blooming and the sun shining down in glad brightness, while he thought his loved one lay dying. He had suddenly grown sad hearted; he feared he had found her too late. But his sadness was short-lived; he talked to himself saying, "Sweet Mary Gray, you must live to solace my declining years. I shall be so tender with you; it will be my heart's delight to lavish wealth on you, deck you in costly robes and see your sweet face glow with untold pleasure." With these happy thoughts in his heart he returned to Parkhurst, called Jarvis, the middle-aged housekeeper, into his room, and gave orders for an elegant supper to be served at ten that evening, also to have two suites of rooms made ready for guests. The aged lover then made such arrangements as he deemed necessary for his wedding, and then lay down to rest awhile until lunch time.

His nephew and heir expectant, Charlie Parke, lived with his uncle. He was a tall, shambling young man, about twenty years of age, with tow colored hair and yellowish green eyes. He was too indolent to be really bad. He had been raised and educated by his uncle, and had lived in anticipation of one day inheriting his uncle's vast wealth, which his uncle had decided he should not, saying to himself, "I will endow a

charitable institution with my money, rather than know it will be wasted by such a milksop as Charlie."

Mr. Parke tolerated Charlie, because he was his brother's son, and his only near living relative; but the selfish, unprincipled character Charlie displayed was very distasteful to the high notions of honor possessed by the elder Mr. Parke. When they met at lunch that day, Mr. Parke informed his nephew that he would be married that evening at seven o'clock, and would expect his nephew to be at home at supper at ten o'clock. Charlie elevated his eyebrows and asked who the fortunate lady might be that was to be honored as his uncle's bride.

Mr. Parke remarked, that she was a lady with whom he had been acquainted for many years, and one in every way worthy to fill the position she was going to occupy. He said the old home was lonely and he had decided to bring a wife there to brighten things up a little, as he termed it. He was tender-hearted, and he did not wish Charlie to feel badly; so he said, "It need make no difference to you, Charlie; your life here will be the same."

Charlie knew it would be useless to raise objections, or remonstrate. When once his uncle had made his mind up on a thing it was as decided as the law of the Medes and Persians. Therefore, he submitted with the best grace he could, concealing his disappointment from his uncle, but nursing a secret hatred for his uncle's wife, and determined to make her life miserable if he could.

The day sped rapidly by, and the hour for the bridal drew near. Austria had made good use of her time. In a city you can procure fine articles of ready-made wearing apparel; therefore, as soon as she had prepared some food for them she went to work to prepare Mary for her wedding from the well

filled purse of her generous old lover. She bought a beautiful ashes-of-roses silk for Mary's wedding dress, white flowers, laces, ribbons and gloves to match with the dress, but she bought nothing for herself. Mary remonstrated, saying she would refuse Mr. Parke right at the altar if Austria would not go with her to her new home.

Austria argued that Mr. Parke only asked her through politeness, and she did not think it was right to accept his invitation or use any of the money he had given Mary to procure her wardrobe.

Mary, like most gentle dispositioned people, when she took a notion, was very positive on a subject. She said, Mr. Parke would feel hurt and offended if Austria refused to accompany her home, and she felt sure he meant the purse for both of them.

Finally Austria decided to purchase a cheap black alpaca dress, ready-made. She did not wish to grieve Mary in her present weak state of health, and thought she would go home with her and stay until she was fully recovered and then return again to her old life in the tenement house and live out the years of her dreary life in loneliness and waiting. When the hour approached for the wedding Mr. Parke's carriage drew up in the street fronting the tenement, and he descended from it with a minister, who was to celebrate the solemn nuptials. They ascended the rickety stairs, and there, in that little bare room in a tenement house, the marriage service was read over them. The New York millionaire and the homeless woman he loved and honored as his wife were made one in the sight of God and man forever. The tears sprang to Austria's eyes at the memory of her own ill-fated marriage. She soon dashed the tears from her eyes and recovered her composure as speedily as possible.

When the marriage ceremony was completed Mr. Parke tenderly wrapped a shawl about the shoulders of his wife, and bore her to the carriage, bidding Austria come on, and bid farewell to the tenement house forever. They were soon at Parkhurst, where Mr. Parke seated Mary in a large easy chair in the grand parlor, and bade her welcome to her future home. Jarvis had prepared an elegant supper, which was scarcely tasted. Charlie Parke, Austria and the officiating minister were the only guests at the wedding supper.

The dark clouds were drawn aside from Mary's life. Henceforth she had only to live and enjoy the peace and comfort of her surroundings. Mr. Parke and Mary would not consent to Austria's return to her humble home, but prevailed upon her to accept a suite of rooms in their elegant and roomy home, and pursue her literary labors. Mr. Parke had read several of her small poems in some of the popular magazines and felt that she only needed time and application to become a successful authoress. This she resolved to do, and then she felt she could repay in money what they had advanced to her.

And here for a time, we will leave this happy family in New York, and return to the west and see how George Kent prospers in his new home.

CHAPTER XV.

GEORGE KENT IN HIS NEW HOME.

Ah, many a storm hath tossed my poor frail bark

While sailing over far off angry seas ;

Ah, many a night above the tempest dark

My doubting heart cried out for just such shores as these.

—*Emma Marian Cass.*

Morning dawned bright and fair o'er the mountain home of Clement Howe. Trees sparkled with dew drops as the sun rose higher on his daily course. George awoke with a start; he had slept soundly, and now awoke refreshed. For years he had craved a home where he might live apart from mankind and find rest. Only those who have been deprived of the privileges of a quiet home can understand his weary longing for quietness and peace. He arose, dressed himself and prepared to descend to the drawing room. Uncle Abel and Aunt Hope had long since roused Silas, Marinda and John from their slumbers, and had them busily employed about their duties. Clement slept soundly and awoke early in the morning. He sat in the beautiful morning parlor which had been thoroughly warmed by bright, open fires in the grates, made of coal and blazing pine knots. He was thinking of his dreary and isolated life; of the woman who long ago had wrecked his happiness—as he thought of this an involuntary sigh arose to his lips. Just at this time George

Kent entered the spacious dining room and stood near the grate. Clement saw him through the open doors. George glanced around the elegantly furnished room; his eyes wandered over the costly china and silver that decked the table; lingered for a moment on the pictures that adorned the walls; then rested on the fire with a troubled look in their sombre depths. How could he, the New York boot black, live in this gentleman's house and deceive him about his sex. (We still speak of George as a boy). He felt the kindness and generosity of Clement Howe had prompted him to offer him a home; he had accepted it, at the time, but he had not considered what his kind benefactor might require of him. Here a thought of the horses crossed his mind, and he shuddered when he thought of them. Clement expected him to ride one of those vicious brutes, and he feared he could not. With a mighty effort he repressed the thought, and determined, if human will and endurance could accomplish all Clement Howe required of him, he would accomplish it or perish in the attempt. A new light shown in the dusky eyes, and a glad feeling crept into his heart while he thought he would do this for Mr. Howe. There was a fascination, a power, in Clement's wish to George. He felt when Mr. Howe desired him to do a thing he would attempt it with a determination to succeed, and only acknowledge he could not accomplish it when he had failed.

Clement, unobserved by George, had been watching him closely. He said to himself: "What a beautiful boy, and how determined and resolute he is. I only wish he was stronger. If it had not been for him, I would have been sleeping my last sleep long ago. I must try and make a good, smart man of him. Poor little fellow! He looks so delicate; he looks almost like a girl, with his tender mouth

and patient eyes. His life has been so hard; he has never known anything but hardship and privation; he shall never know want again while I live."

With thoughts like these, he arose and entered the dining room, saying pleasantly to George, "How are you feeling this morning?"

"Much better, thank you," George replied, while a crimson flush mounted his pale face.

Clement saw the pale cheek grow red and the beautiful eyes grow humid when he spoke to the boy, but he attributed it to his not being accustomed to good society or the friendly inquiries of any one. He said kindly: "I hope you will recover in a few days; I shall look after some affairs at home to-day. There is the library; you can amuse yourself looking through the books; you will doubtless find something to interest you. This evening I will give you some instruction in music."

This pleased George; here was a respite of one day that he was free from riding one of those terrible horses. His face immediately grew brighter, and when John entered with the breakfast—fresh venison steaks, steaming hot, on chafing dishes, fragrant coffee and light rolls of delicious home-made bread—George ate heartily. Clement was pleased to see him eat, and kept urging him to partake of the viands placed before him. When they had finished breakfast and returned to the parlor, Clement showed George the library and bade him make himself at home. He then went out to inspect his stables and look after his horses.

George, left alone, searched over the library; found a volume of Tennyson's poems, and sat basking in the morning sunlight, dreaming sweet dreams. Here was the one place on earth he craved—a quiet, peaceful home, with plenty of

books, and no one to molest or disturb him. He could roam at will through this spacious house, and view the beauties of the landscape in every direction; or he could sit for hours, lost to the busy outside world, wrapped in his own thoughts, and happy in solitude. This home was all his highest imagination had ever dreamed of; to him it was sweet as a poet's—as an Eden bower fair. It was the shore of peace and rest, after the long, tempestuous voyage of trial. George had never, since the first hour of his remembrance, had a day wholly his own, where he could sit alone in peace and quiet, undisturbed, and rest. This day he would make good use of. Many a day, through storm and tempest, his heart had craved a day of rest like this. Now he was anchored near the peaceful shore, and his soul could bask and revel in the light of his loved one's eyes. Here his life could grow stronger and better, his mind higher and purer. The clear, bracing air, the lofty mountains, the grand display of nature's magnificent works, all possessed a power to elevate and ennoble the human mind. Life seemed to him just opening in the delightful pleasure of living. The miserable existence in New York of skimping and toiling for his daily bread was fast fading away from his mind like a troubled dream. He longed to forget that he had ever lived there; he wanted that wretched part of his existence to pass into utter oblivion, and be remembered no more forever; his mind was busy with thoughts of the past and hopes for the future. He determined to study hard and fit himself for an honorable place in life; he could not help the channel into which his fate had driven him; he could not help it because he had been cast upon the world in a false position; his sex was a secret in his own heart, and he resolved to keep it buried deep and dark as the hidden treasures of

the earth. What mattered it to Clement Howe, be he girl or boy, so he never knew the difference?

Here a hot blush of shame mounted his face when he thought how Clement would despise him when he knew how, for years, he had practiced a systematic course of deception—passing himself for a boy, while he was in reality that object held in so much contempt by Clement Howe, *a girl!* He longed to throw himself at Clement's feet and acknowledge all, but the fear that Clement would send him away restrained him. He knew, as a girl, he could not live alone in the mountain home of Clement Howe, but as a boy he could remain undisturbed. Fate still drove him onward in a course from which he saw no loop-hole of escape.

The morning soon sped away, in reading and thinking; at half-past two they had dinner. Here again he met Clement. The dinner passed off pleasantly; after which Mr. Howe again went out on the farm to look after some work he was having done, saying as he went out, "Do not be lonely George, I will give you a lesson in music this evening."

George bowed and smiled his thanks, saying, he would be glad to take a lesson when Mr. Howe could spare the time.

Evening came, and with it the promised lesson. It was like a paradise on earth to George; it was the happiest hour he had ever experienced in his life. The soft, sweet notes of melody, thrilling and tender, sank deep into George's heart, and awoke a long slumbering passion in his soul. The passion for music she had inherited from her father and his music-loving race. That evening a new love was born in the heart of George—a love for music, and a sort of wild, deep soul-worship for his teacher. All thought of an explanation faded from the mind of George, and he resolved never to divulge the secret of his sex; but to live and act as a boy, so he

could be near the object of his soul's worship. With these resolutions, he devoted himself earnestly to his lesson.

Clement was surprised at the progress he made, and praised his musical talent, saying, "George, it is a pleasure to me to instruct you; you show such decided ability to master all the difficult parts of music."

George was happy as a bird, and did not grow tired of the rudiments of music, even of the dullest part. When the lesson had been completed, Clement played some pieces from the old masters with a touch and skill hard to excel.

George listened, and his soul was raised from thoughts of this life and dwelt on the far away land of rest. Unconsciously the tears crept down his cheeks, and a sigh of happiness welled up from his heart.

Clement turned and caught that beautiful, rapt expression in the soul-lit eyes of the boy; and he played on—deep-thinking and soul-stirring melodies.

A low sob arose to George's lips, and he dashed the tears from his eyes.

Clement turned round on the piano stool, and reaching out his shapely white hand, drew George to his side and asked him tenderly, "What is it that troubles you, George; I thought you loved music?"

George replied, with a little fluttering sigh of gladness, "Oh, I do, I do!"

"Then why those tears?" inquired Clement.

"They were tears of joy," responded George; and then he burst out impulsively, "Oh, I am so happy! so perfectly happy! I wish this life would last forever."

"And why may it not last forever, dear child? You have no other ties; you can live here with me, and we will be two of the happiest old bachelors in existence. Here we are in

our western home, free from the world and all its vexing cares, with naught to grieve or molest. We are far removed from the wiles of the fair sex. Bah! my mind fairly sickens at the thought of so much treachery being enclosed by so much that is beautiful and fair to look upon."

Clement felt a shudder pass over the slight form he had pressed to his side, and continued, "My dear boy, I hope you will never become a victim to some fair, false one and have your life made desolate by the cruel treachery of the accursed sex."

George answered stammeringly, "But, Mr. Howe, all are not false; I hope you have a mother or sister to redeem your faith in womankind."

"No George, my mother died in my infancy, and my only sister, the wife of a New York banker is wholly devoted to a life of fashionable frivolity, and is as heartless as the balance of her treacherous sex. During my early years, I was a kind of waif on the sea of life; I had money, but money can not purchase human love. I knew but little of women; I met and loved Helen R—— and was so badly betrayed by one whom I thought pure as an angel that I lost my faith in womankind. And from that day to this I have shunned the sex as something too vile to look upon. To tell the truth, I hate women. The mother of all mankind brought woe to the race, by doing that which she was strictly forbidden to do. As a sex they are willful, deceitful and treacherous, and man's bitterest enemy."

What words for poor George to listen to! This noble-hearted man had been ruined by one woman's treachery; his faith in womankind destroyed, and he living apart from friends and kindred, like some hermit, in the fastness of his rocky mountain home. While he spoke his eyes had grown

bright and fierce, and his clasp tightened around the slender boyish form until he almost crushed the delicate little body.

George raised his little sun-browned hand and placed it caressingly on the frowning face, saying kindly, "Mr. Howe, please do not think of that any more; it makes you so unhappy."

The light touch of the little fingers possessed a magnetic power over Clement Howe. His face changed from gloomy darkness to a pleasant, genial glow; his fierce clasp loosened from the gentle form, and he murmured brokenly, "God bless you, my boy! You have helped to drive the fire from my brain; the torture from my heart."

For years there had been times in Clement's life when he had been driven almost wild with the thought of his betrayal. He had loved Helen R—— with all the ardent affection of a man's first love, and when he awoke to the reality of her treachery, he thought his faith in womankind was wrecked forevermore. Here alone and in solitude for years he had nursed these bitter feelings until he had lost every particle of faith in woman's purity and truth. If he had known the little one he held so close in his embrace and loved with such an unaccountable tenderness had been a girl, in place of a boy, he would have spurned her from his presence. But man's nature craves an object of worship; the tender, soothing influence of woman's love possesses a magnetic power over man's most turbulent passions; her tenderness and sympathy soothes his saddest hours, and shines with bright and steady light amid the gloom and darkness that oftentimes surrounds man in his earthly pilgrimage. And when man becomes insensible to the refining influence of woman's love, he is lost to all the higher sentiments of humanity.

Clement Howe felt that he hated women with a just and

righteous indignation. He believed (vain man) that he could live forever apart from the sex and feel the contempt for them he thought they deserved. This man of whom I speak, towered aloft from the mass of human kind, as some lofty mountain that lifted its barren and desolate top above its neighbor mountains, and pierced the clouds with its lofty peaks, crowned in eternal snow; or stood, like some lone and lifeless tree, that rises amid its brother forest trees stretching out its barren limbs to the moaning winds of winter, and the scorching heats of summer. But as the years go by, one by one, the seeds are scattered on that mountain side, that will clothe it with eternal verdure close to its lofty summit. And one by one, the little tendrils of clinging ivy will twine around the gnarled and twisted trunk, the barren and leafless branches of that mighty monarch of the forest, until its hideous deformity is covered from sight and it presents a lovely appearance to the passer by.

Nature brings her mighty powers to bear, and the most stubborn of God's creatures must bow to its sublime commands. And true to this man's nature, he was seeking an object of adoration in this boy. He had been subject to the boy's influence but a few days, and yet there seemed to be a subtle influence at work, bending this strong man's nature to the mysterious power of an innocent girl's first love. He was soothed and calmed by the presence of the boy.

Slowly he released the fragile form from his arm, said, as he gazed upon the pallid face, "George, I have frightened you with my fierce temper; I will be more careful in the future."

George replied, "No, Mr. Howe, you have not frightened me; but I shudder when I think how cruel that lady must have been to wreck so grand a life as yours."

The first little seed had found a resting place, on the

rugged mountain's side; the first little tendril had ventured its trusting little hands to reach the barren branches of the lifeless tree.

Clement replied "That is true, dear George. She has ruined my faith in womankind. The very dress of woman fills me with a secret loathing I can not express. I know it looks low and mean for me to say such things, but they are true."

George lifted the shapely white hand in his; pressed it to his lips, and replied, "Do not think of her, Mr. Howe; she was unworthy one so noble as yourself."

"You are a sweet little deceiver, George, when you talk so highly of my goodness. How do you know, but I shall prove a perfect tyrant."

"I am not afraid of that," returned George, with a loving look in his tender black eyes, and a faint flush glowing in his pallid face.

The hour had grown late; the servants had done their work, and Silas and Marinda had recounted their numerous hair-breadth escapes for the edification of Aunt Hope, Uncle Able and John. Aunt Hope, ever mindful of her master's comfort, thought it time to close the house for the night. She asked John if the shutters had been closed, adding that he had better take the night lamps to the parlor, where Master Clement and his young companion were sitting, and see if there were any orders the master wished to give.

John approached the door and knocked respectfully. His master bade him enter, saying, "Well, John; what is it?"

John deposited the night lamp on the side table and respectfully inquired, if Master Clement had any orders to give.

"Nothing past common," replied Clement. "See that the horses are groomed and in good order; I want to give George

a lesson in horseback riding in the morning, if his health will permit."

Here was a fresh terror for poor George, which he had almost forgotten in the pleasant evening's entertainment. The memory of those terrible horses brought sorrow to his heart. A peaceful, quiet home with Clement Howe was all he craved to make him happy, but a life full of adventure and wild rides over the mountain roads was almost more than he could bear to think of in his present weak state of health. Yet the presence of Clement endowed him with a wish to do whatever he willed; and he determined to make the effort to ride if he was killed in the attempt.

Clement gave George a night-lamp and kindly bade him good night, saying, "Go seek your rest, dear George; you must take good care of yourself until you are fully recovered; you came very near having a serious spell of fever."

George ascended the stairs to his pleasant room, and was soon calmly sleeping.

Not so with Clement. The presence of that boy had broken into the daily routine of his life. For the first time in many years he had taken an interest in something beside the inanimate things of nature. He was like a young mother with her first born babe, or a young girl with her first lover. He wanted to be all he could to that child in his loneliness. The conversation with him had opened afresh his heart's deep wounds, and he was restless under the smarting pain. He strode up and down the parlor like some mad creature until long after midnight. His thoughts wandered back to the bygone years when he loved and trusted a fair young girl and believed her pure as an angel, while she was deceiving him all the while. At length, wearied out with distress of mind, he retired to rest, and toward morning sank into a fitful slumber.

CHAPTER XVI.

GEORGE'S FIRST RIDE.

Thus, thus I leap upon thy back,
To scour the distant plains;
Away, who overtakes us now
Shall claim thee for his pains.

Morning dawned fresh and fair; the sun came up like a golden ball, driving away the darkness and mists from the mountain tops. When the inmates of Eagle's Eyrie had breakfasted Clement ordered Wildfire and Fleetfoot to be brought out, as he and George were going to take a ride.

George was dressed in a neat-fitting suit of navy blue broadcloth, and a small dark blue cap fitted close over his black curls. There was a nervous, wistful look in the delicate face, but the mournful black eyes had a steady light in them that spoke a strong determination in them to ride the horse or perish in the attempt.

John led Fleetfoot up to the marble mounting-steps; Silas held Wildfire, who was viciously pawing the earth and rolling the whites of his eyes, like he meant mischief. It had been a long time since the beautiful horses had been brought out, finely caparisoned, for a dashing race down the mountain side and over the plain. Fleetfoot was a beautiful dappled gray, sleek as a mole, with trim-made limbs and long, slender

body. When John led him to the steps, Clement came himself to assist George to the small, well-fitting saddle. Gently he seated the boy in the saddle and placed the bridle reins in his hands, telling him when he wished to turn to the left to draw the left rein, when to the right to draw the right rein, and when he wished to continue straight along, to draw the reins evenly and seat himself firmly in the saddle, and on all occasions to hold on to the reins, never losing his hold, as that would give the horse an advantage over the rider.

It was well for George that Clement gave him such minute directions, and it was well for himself he heeded them, or that would have been his last ride. When George was mounted, the groom led his horse aside and stood with his hand upon the bridle until Clement had mounted Wildfire and led out saying, "Follow me."

George started down the mountain side at an easy pace. Fleetfoot was the very poetry of motion; he did not feel the weight of the boy, and the light pull on the bridle rein was no more than a feather's weight to him. The gentleness and ease with which the horse started inspired George with fresh courage. His face gradually lost its strained expression, and he began to feel easy on horseback. They had ridden quite a distance and were now in a beautiful road leading down the valley, when the sharp report of a rifle rang out near them, startling both horses and their riders. Quick as lightning's flash Fleetfoot darted away down the road. George clung on to the reins with all his puny strength, but Clement saw he was unable to check the mad brute, as it dashed headlong on its way. He shouted to George, "Sit firm in the saddle and hold him straight in the road," while he dug the rowels into his horse's sides and vainly endeavored to overtake them; but Wildfire did not possess the speed that Fleetfoot

did, and while terror lent speed to the latter, all the urging in the world could not bring the former alongside of the runaway animal. On and on sped the maddened beast; trees, rocks and passing objects seemed to fly on his way. Faster and faster flew the horses' feet, while great flecks of foam dropped from his distended nostrils and flew out on the air. Colder and firmer grew the grasp upon the bridle reins; settled and more fixed the expression in the black eyes. George felt he was on his road to death. A farewell for all on earth flitted through his mind. He thought of his life in New York, and felt he had nothing in that city for which he craved to live. He thought of Joe Clifford, and a silent prayer went up from his heart, "God bless Joe;" he thought of Clement Howe, the man whose life he had saved, and who was now sending him to his death; but he bore no ill-will to his kind friend and benefactor. He knew Clement believed him to be a boy, and wanted him to learn to ride for his own sake.

They tell us the ruling passion in life is strong in death. With the thought of Clement, came the desire to conceal his sex. He felt that death would perhaps reveal to Clement the fact that he was a girl, and Clement would hate him for his deception after he was dead. With this thought came the desire to live. All these things passed rapidly through his mind in less time than I have been telling it. A gleam of fire shot into the black eyes, and the puny hands pulled on the bridle rein which only added fresh impetus to the flying horse.

Clement had urged Wildfire to the top of his speed, hoping to overtake the runaway, but all in vain. He cursed himself, saying, "It is my mad folly in urging the boy to ride, that has brought this about; he saved my life, and I have driven him to his death. Poor boy, I saw his aversion to riding in

the shrinking eyes and quivering nostrils. But I thought to overcome that, and have him for my constant and steady companion, in my rides through the country. My only hope is, he may be able to sit on the horse until he runs himself down. There," he exclaimed, as he saw George take a desperate pull at the reins, "God bless the boy, he has the nerve of manhood in him. See how steady he sits his horse, and how firm he grasped the reins, holding him straight to the track."

That grasp on the reins had never been loosed since he had first placed his hands upon them. George had the power of endurance in mind, but his body was too weak for such a trial of strength. He sat steady and composed because he was chained to his seat in terror. When the horse first started he had gained the courage of despair, and resolved to sit in the saddle as long as he could, or until he was dashed to pieces by the terrified beast.

Clement was tortured in his mind, seeing George in such danger, until great drops of sweat beaded out on his brow and dropped off his face. The road led down the valley a distance of fifteen miles and then turned to the west and entered the timbers. At the turn in the road was a deep ravine, thirty feet wide from bank to bank.

Clement kept in sight, and his heart sickened with a terrible dread as he saw the terror-stricken beast rushing on to certain destruction. Nearer and nearer the fatal spot he sped, and Clement closed his eyes to shut out the dreadful sight of that boy riding helplessly on to certain death. The horse was a trained animal and had been taught to jump ravines by the cow-boy from whom Clement had bought him. Clement did not know this. He had ridden him several times but Fleetfoot had always appeared docile and tractable, but

the weight of his master and the strength of his hold on the reins showed him he had some one who could control him. Now he imagined himself to be mounted by the cow-boy and felt that he must indulge in a runaway scrape and a few frantic leaps. He had been held to the track on a dead run about sixteen miles, and when he gained the edge of the precipice he gathered himself for a leap and cleared the ravine at a bound.

George sat him like a practiced rider; he had grown used to the motion and bade fair to make a splendid equestrian.

What was Clement's joy and surprise, when expecting to see horse and rider vanish and lying at the bottom of the ravine, a crushed and quivering mass of dying flesh, in terrible agony, he beheld Fleetfoot moderating his wild run to a gentle canter, and George still erect in the saddle, holding his position with ease and apparently unconcerned about the great feat he had performed in that dangerous leap.

For the first time in many years the hot tears sprang to the eyes of Clement Howe, and he exclaimed fervently, "Thank God for his kindness, and mercy in sparing the dear boy's life." He saw that Fleetfoot had evidently exhausted his desire to run and was now in a very docile condition. He had no further fear in regard to George's ability to control him. He knew any one that could ride a distance of sixteen miles at a dead run, and then leap a ravine thirty feet in width, was in no immediate danger from a horse in a gentle pace, such as Fleetfoot now displayed.

George made no effort to check the horse; he was determined to give him the full enjoyment of his run now. He had been so badly frightened in the starting out, he felt it would be no more than right to tire him down for his bad conduct, and he would be more submissive in the future.

Clement advanced at a rapid rate until he overtook George, when he spoke with much kind concern in his voice, asking if George was frightened.

George replied, "I was very much frightened when the horse began to run, and after he ran awhile I feared he would dash me to pieces in some place; but he did not kill me; I am still spared for some reason."

"For which I thank God again," devoutly ejaculated Clement. He had been so frightened and heart-sick at the thought of George's death, and felt such glad relief at his deliverance that he could not express himself in any way so earnestly and devoutly as in thanking the Almighty for his care over him.

They rode on side by side for some distance, George admiring the beautiful scenery and Clement explaining the different kinds of trees and plants indigenous to that country. At length they decided to return home; Clement was fearful of taxing George's strength too severely. The ride home was delightful; the horses behaved admirably. They were soon at home again. At half-past two dinner was served in the best of style, for Clement Howe's servants understood their master's wishes in regard to regularity and good style. George ate with quite a relish, the ride in the keen mountain air had given him a fine appetite. He felt, too, that he had accomplished the desired wish of his dearly loved friend. He had been able to ride the renowned Fleetfoot, and he felt himself established in Clement's good graces.

Mr. Howe's conduct to George had undergone a marked change. At first he had spoken to him almost in a tone of command as if George was his son, saying, You must do this, or you must learn that. Since that dreadful hour when he saw that mad beast tearing on, as he thought, to destruction with him, and he knew the boy had gone at his command

against his own inclinations, he then resolved never again to lay a restriction or command on George, but always to speak to him gently and consult his wishes. He was delighted to see him eat with so much relish, and while they were eating he said, "George, do you know this morning's ride has been a terrible experience to me. If the horse had killed you I should always have felt myself guilty of murder."

George replied, "Then you would have accused yourself unjustly, Mr. Howe (George always called his new friend Mr. Howe, and never approached anything like boyish familiarity with him), because you did not compel me to go; I went from choice."

"Yes, dear boy, but confess the truth. Did you not choose to go merely to please me?"

George looked with candor into the steel-blue eyes bent upon him and replied, "Yes, Mr. Howe, I chose to please you, as I shall always choose to do."

Clement's answer was worthy of his own noble-hearted self: "Never try to please me, George, against your own inclinations. Your mind is higher, your perceptions clearer in regard to what you can do than mine are."

George blushed like a girl at this compliment, and replied, "No, no, Mr. Howe; my only wish is to please you, and all I want is your command, so I may show you how willing I am to obey."

Clement's fine eyes glowed with pleasure, as he remarked, "Rest assured of one thing, dear boy, my commands shall henceforth be such as you can obey without risk to yourself."

By this time they had finished eating. Clement did not use wine at the table; he was strictly temperate. They now repaired to the parlor and spent an hour or two in looking over books and papers, and then Clement gave George an

other lesson in music. This day was almost a repetition of each day that followed during the summer. George studied hard and was able to recite lessons each evening in history, geography, grammar or music. Clement was pleased with his progress. Each day they took a pleasant ride down the valley or up the steep mountain road leading to the nearest town.

Sometimes they visited the mining camps, where men were sinking deep shafts into the mountain side; seeking the golden ore so deeply hidden there. One day they were visiting a camp, when the familiar tones of Bill Johnson's voice (the terror of George Kent's trip west)—rang out from a crowd of rough looking fellows, saying, "Hello, Kent; you are the same giri-boy as ever. Seems to me you are purty well keered for, for a New York boot-black; you seem to be cutting quite a stiff in your store clothes, with your hands and face as white as a gal's. I say, how do you come on, and how is Joe Clifford? Is he as ready to fight for you as ever?"

George's face flushed crimson for a moment, and the blood dying away left him pale as a corpse. He was finely dressed in a beautiful suit of neat-fitting, navy blue cloth, with gleaming white linen collar and cuffs, and wore a soft felt hat perched jauntily over his shining black curls. He had developed rapidly within the past few months of his sojourn at "Eagle's Eyrie." He was now almost sixteen years of age; his form had filled out and grown plump; his eyes wore a dangerously beautiful glow; his cheeks were plump and smooth as a girl's; his delicate features and color had often roused Clement's curiosity, and he would say, "George, your hands are too small, and your face too fresh and fair, to ever make a rugged mountain hunter like I am."

Such talk would only bring a deeper flush to the fair face,

and Clement would refrain from saying more, to spare his dear boy's feelings.

To-day when Bill Johnson addressed him with so much insolence and contempt and the fair face grew crimson at the rude remarks, a strange look of displeasure flitted over Clement's face, and a heavy, threatening look brooded in the deep blue eyes that boded no good to Bill Johnson; but Johnson, intent on wounding and hurting Kent, advanced from the ill looking crowd and kept using insulting language to the small boy that sat so spiritedly on the dappled gray horse.

Without a word, or a moment's warning, Clement, who had been standing at some distance engaged in conversation with a miner, suddenly wheeled Wildfire around, rode between the bully and George, drew his riding whip, and with one stroke, sent a blinding lash around the bully's neck and face saying, "There, d—n you; take that for your insolence, and learn to let inoffensive persons alone."

The smarting lash sent Bill Johnson howling and cursing back to his crew, where he vowed vengeance on George Kent and Clement Howe. Some of the crew laughed, and said, "Bill Johnson, you had better learn to keep your chin-music to yourself, in place of bein' too familiar with the dressed up coves. I tell *you*, Bill, Clem Howe is jist as big an 'ristocrat as you will find in New York city."

Bill rubbed his smarting face and muttered: "D—n his 'stocracy; I'll be even with him yet or know the reason."

Clement and George rode on, regardless of the threats. As they descended the mountain side a fleet-footed mountain deer went dashing across their path. Clement was wishing for his gun, when a covey of wild turkeys started from a clump of bushes near by. Simultaneously, George and Clement each drew and fired into the flock; each one bringing down a large

wild turkey. George had practiced shooting with a pistol until he was a good shot, but he had not learned to use a gun yet. They carried their game home and next day had a fine turkey dinner. There was no scarcity of game in that mountain region.

Clement Howe's servants lived on the best in the land; they were a sleek, well-fed, healthy and happy set. Their only trouble seemed to be that, "Marse Clement would nebber marry, and bring a 'oman out dar in de wilderness.

Aunt Hope remarked, "Marse Clement is so taken wid dat boy he'll nebber marry; I 'clare he mos' worships him. Sometimes, when I goes in de room where dey is to, tend to somefin', Marse Clement 'll jis be a lookin' at dat boy wid his soul in his eyes."

"Well, *indeed*," Marinda returned, with a sniff, "*I* think he's got de rite to mire' him, 'cause he saved his life; if it hadn't been for young George you nebber would a seed Marse Clement agin, fur he was jis dead, in a manner, when young George held his head up an' kep' him from drownin'. An' as to marryin', I don't see no great call for dat myself, speakin' on de wimmen's side ob de question, 'case all de worl' a man wants wid a woman is to hab somebody to growl an' fuss at dat he ain't afeerd to abuse."

Hope and Marinda invariably got into a dispute when they conversed about their master. They agreed on one thing, and that was that he was "de best livin' man top side o' God's yerth."

Spring had crept into summer, with bright and joyous days for George and Clement. Summer sped into autumn, and soon the glowing colors on the forest foliage bade them look for the approach of winter's storm and cold. But that had been one ever-to-be-remembered summer by George.

He had learned new and strange lessons in his mountain home; his soul had been impressed by the sublime grandeur of the scenery he had looked upon; there were beautiful mountains which were decked with summer's richest verdure, while their lofty tops were crowned with eternal snow. The long summer days were as a dream of Eden to George. He had plenty to eat and plenty to wear, with an abundance of the most beautiful sights for the eye to dwell upon, books and music to instruct the mind, pictures and statuary to entertain the fancy, horseback rides and delightful mountain rambles to occupy the idle hours; but dearer than all, higher to be valued than all else beside, was the company of his dearly loved friend, Clement Howe.

Day after day they had spent together, until life would seem a desolation to either one to be separated from the other. Clement had grown to love the boy with all the fond affection of a nature like his. He filled the vacuum in his life, soothed the want in his hungry heart, and each day seemed full of perfect content to both.

One day Clement had a severe nervous headache. Aunt Hope tried her usual remedies without relieving him; he ordered her to go tell George to come to him, saying, "It is strange George never will come to my room unless I send a special request for him, and then he always acts as if he was on forbidden ground." George came, as he was directed; bathed the feverish brow, and soothed the nervous man into quietness with a few gentle strokes of his delicate hands, which Clement declared were too soft and white for anything but to paint pictures or play the piano.

To George there were many long nights of anxiety and regret; he knew he was deceiving Clement in regard to his sex; he was modest and retiring in his manner, shrinking

from the least familiarity with Clement; and Clement, mistaking his modesty for indifference, felt hurt at his apparent want of interest in his affairs. As the days went by, George grew more and more retiring; often spending the whole day in his own room in deep meditation over his life; he loved Clement with the first deep and tender love of a pure maiden's trusting affection; and yet he was under false colors. He knew Clement liked him for what he believed him to be—a boy that been cast out on the cold charity of the world to care for himself, and he feared the worst should Clement know, in place of a boy, he was a pitiful little girl, who had been cast amid the vilest slums of New York's street society. He felt the blush of shame mount his cheek to think he had been thrown in such a channel, but he was helpless; he knew not who he was or from whence he came. His earliest recollections were of a squalid room, full of vile, low, slatternly women and ragged, hungry-faced children striving, pushing and fighting for the crusts and scraps that were thrown to them, like they were so many little hungry pigs. Here he had scrambled and fought his way with the vile set—always hungry, dirty and cold—until he was sent out to beg; then he ate enough if he could get it, but always gave the pennies and old clothes to the others. As soon as he was able to black boots he went to work, and gradually drifted away from the dens of the low and the vile. He knew such a life would not be remembered against a boy as it would a girl. He felt his own purity of heart and honesty of purpose, but he did not believe Clement would trust him after he had deceived him in regard to his sex.

This day of Clement's severe headache was a hard trial to him; he could not bear for Clement to think ill of him; he longed to throw himself at his feet and acknowledge all; tell

his weakness, his fear of being cast off; all of his whole miserable life, and then ask Clement to forgive him. He sat by the bedside holding Clement's hand in his own. Soon the face cleared, and the pain seemed to leave him; the hand relaxed its grasp, and he was apparently sleeping. George listened for a moment to the steady breathing, then bending low his head pressed his scarlet lips to the sleeper's brow and murmured, "Oh, if he only knew all, he would not blame me."

Clement was not sleeping; the pain in his head had grown less severe; the light hurt his eyes, and he lay with them closed. The thrilling, trembling pressure of the scarlet lips upon his brow, and the low, murmured words from the overcharged heart, reached his ear. But he did not betray himself by word or look; he remained silent and still. He now felt assured that the reluctance manifested by George about coming to his room was through no dislike to himself, but through a modesty and fear of intruding himself. He thought to himself, "Bless his noble heart! He would risk his life to save mine, but he would not intrude himself on me for a moment unasked."

No thought of the truth ever crossed his mind—that George was a girl. Clement believed that he was only a timid, modest, shrinking boy, disliking to put himself forward, on account of his early life being so full of misery.

If Clement had known, or even suspected, the truth, he would have treated George as a lady, and with all due respect for her sex. Much as he disliked women, he was too much of a gentleman to treat them with anything but respect; and besides George having a claim to that respect from Clement, he had a still higher claim—that of gratitude for having saved his life.

Clement had grown to love the boy with a deep and high regard. He saw George's high sense of honor; he read aright the sentiment of purity in that young heart, and understood with the deep intuition of a kindred spirit the elevated principles of that young mind. He often saw the young face light up with noble thought, and saw the brown eyes kindle with enthusiasm at some fine passage in reading, some beautiful scene in painting, or some grand strain of music. Clement felt that George possessed a high, fine nature to appreciate all these things with so keen a perception. George would have been perfectly safe in making a confidant of Clement, but he did not know it; therefore he suffered much unnecessary pain.

The beautiful summer had drawn to a close; the nights had grown chilly, and the gay flecking of the forests trees showed signs of the approaching autumn. With the exception of George's trouble in regard to his sex there was no happier human being on earth. The servants were kind and attentive; Clement was affectionate—no wish in his life was denied. In fact all his wants were anticipated and filled before they could become a wish; but for all this there were many long nights that George scarcely closed his eyes in sleep; or slept only to awake with a start from some troubled dream, and think he was discovered and cast out from his lovely home. He could not analyze his own feelings thoroughly;—he loved Clement with all the true devotion of a noble woman's first love; he determined to conceal his affection, and show him only the kind friendship of a boy for a much-loved friend.

It was now late in September; the fires were kindled in the rooms, and Clement and George spent their evenings in the parlor, busy over books and music. Of late George had

scarcely slept at all; while sleeping he dreamed of climbing over precipices, falling from rocks, and being dashed to pieces on the earth.

One evening they had been sitting near the fire for some time in silence, when Clement addressed George, saying,

"Tell me of your earliest recollections, George."

He told him all he could remember, and Clement added, "You have no knowledge whatever of your parents?"

George drew from his neck the beautiful Roman gold locket, set with Oriental rubies, which contained the pictures of his parents, handed it to him, and said, "This is all the clue or memento, whatever it may be called, that I possess in the world."

Clement took the locket, opened it and gazed with admiration upon the beautiful face of Georgia Kentrall, and that of her comely Italian husband.

George saw the look of wonder and admiration creep into Clement's beaming blue eyes, and felt grateful to think he appreciated the beauty of his parents.

Clement gazed for some time in silence and then remarked, "George, I now see where you get your delicate loveliness. I know from these pictures your parents were persons of culture and refinement.

George blushed with pleasure at this compliment.

Clement continued, "But what puzzles me is, the child of such parents should become a street waif in the city of New York. It is evident to me these are your parents—every lineament and feature of your mother is portrayed in your face, with the dreamy sadness of your father's eyes lingering in the depths of your sweet black eyes."

It was a pleasant thought to George to think he came from honorable parents. When he thought he might have been

the offspring of the low and vile, his cheek burned with shame, and his heart ached with an undefined sadness. Now that Clement saw his resemblance to that beautiful picture, he always believed to be his mother's, he felt a strange thrill of gladness quivering in his bosom. To George, Clement was the personification of goodness and nobility, and his opinions were to be valued higher than all else on earth. That night when he retired he felt too happy to sleep, but lay thinking sweet thoughts of Clement. Hour after hour crept by; the large clock in the hall tolled out the hour of midnight, and still he slept not; some strange, uncanny spirit seemed to be abroad that night, robbing George of his rest. It seemed to him some terrible danger threatened Clement. He knew that Clement was perfectly fearless; that he always slept with his windows open on warm nights, and never kept weapons near him. He had borne a sort of charmed life in the mountains; he had never been robbed or attacked in any way; but of late rumors had been abroad of the mountain robbers having committed several depredations. He thought of these things and grew strangely excited. He almost fancied that some one was ready to murder Clement for the money and costly jewels he possessed. The presentment of evil grew so strong in George's mind that he arose, put on his pantaloons, and with bare feet crept noiselessly to Clement's door. The door stood slightly ajar; he drew it wide open, and by the mighty light of the late moon he beheld a sight that chilled his blood with horror and froze his tongue to silence. There, standing at Clement's bedside, was a tall form, looking down upon the unconscious sleeper with devilish malignity. In his right hand, poised and gleaming, ready for the fatal stroke, was a deadly looking dagger. He seemed to be contempla-

ting his victim with fiendish pleasure. He steadied his arm for a blow, and muttered between his clenched teeth, "D—n you; I'll teach you to strike Bill Johnson."

These words seemed to arouse George from the stupor into which terror had thrown him, and with the rapidity of lightning he sprang upon the body of Clement as the blow descended from the assassin's dagger. It missed its aim at Clement's heart, but went crashing through the tender flesh of George's arm and pierced the beautiful white shoulder. The sudden appearance of George on the scene frightened Johnson, who left the bloody dagger, and in his haste to descend caught his foot in the iron trellis-work at the window, fell and stunned himself so badly that he barely made his escape.

Clement awoke in a moment, saw the gleaming dagger descend, and felt the hot blood spurt into his face from George's shoulder. He knew that George had risked his life, if he had not lost it, for his sake. He clasped the boyish form in his arms and sprang to his feet just as Johnson clambered out at the window. He rushed to the bell, rang out a wild peal that brought the servants rushing pell-mell into the room. He placed the fainting form on the bed, and by kindly attention restored George to consciousness. He gave quick and peremptory orders to his servants, saying, "There have been thieves and murderers here. Abel, you and Silas set out to hunt them up, and John, you take the fleetest horse and ride immediately to Roland for a physician. You, Hope and Marinda, get me lights, warm water and bandages."

These orders were issued in less time than I have been writing them. While he gave these orders he sat with the little limp form clasped close to his bosom, and the crimson blood from George's wound was staining his white shirt-front

and trickling warm against his body. Lights were soon procured, and while the men servants hastened to obey his orders the women stood by, anxiously inquiring what more they could do. Clement's hands shook with dread when he tore away the boy's shirt, saturated with blood, and beheld the ghastly wound that noble-hearted boy had received to save his life. George was in a fainting condition from loss of blood; the villainous dagger had severed the main artery of the arm, cutting to the bone, and had pierced the tender flesh of the body. The bone of the shoulder had turned the cruel blade and saved the boy's life. While Clement bathed the fair, round arm and dimpled shoulder to remove the blood, he started back white and trembling; There, all unconsciously revealed, was Georgie's secret. Clement discovered the soft, glowing bosom and dimpled shoulders of a girl, in place of the firm-knit, solid muscle of a boy's body. He was startled, surprised, shocked for a moment, to think that all these months he had been in daily association with this girl and had not discovered her sex. Then he recalled how modest and retiring the boy had always been; how he had shrank from all familiarity with him, yet he had twice saved his life by his prompt action. He knew that George did not wish his sex revealed. He bathed the wound, examined it closely, and found it was not fatal; he then closed it and bound it up, keeping the delicate form as well covered from the gaping eyes of the servants as he could. He gave George wine to restore her (we shall henceforth speak of her in her right sex), and placed her comfortably upon his own elegant bed. A shuddering sigh welled up from the trembling bosom as the pale lips asked, in quivering tones, "Are you hurt, Mr. Howe?"

"Hurt! No, you darling child; thanks to your kindness,

I am saved; but my life will be valueless if yours has to pay the penalty."

A red flush mounted the pale face, and Georgie murmured, "I shall not die; my hurt is not deep."

"Thank God, I hear you say so, my dear child," fervently responded Clement. "But now you must rest; I can not permit you to exhaust yourself talking."

"But Johnson," asked Georgie with trembling lips, "did he escape?"

"Yes," replied Clement. "But Uncle Abel and Silas are in search of him. I dispatched John to Roland for a physician, and I remained to care for you. I did not go in search of the murderer, assassin, thief, whatever he is. But really, now, I must be obeyed," said Clement; "you must sleep, and I will sit beside you until you are better." He pressed the little hand to his lips, and then held it kindly in the firm grasp of his own, saying, "Sleep, now, my darling child, you will be better soon."

Georgie closed her eyes and soon sank into a quiet sleep, as he had lost much blood and felt very weak.

Clement sat by this girl-boy and strange emotions flitted through his mind. He knew he could not live with the girl under his care the same as he had with the boy, yet he was loth to give up the child that had twice saved his life, and he had grown to love with a high and true regard. He sat deeply buried in thought for some time. He was too honorable to take advantage of the child's affection for himself to keep her here alone in his mountain home and never let her see or become acquainted with the world. A pang smote his heart at the thought, "Yes, she is a girl, and will be traitorous as the others of her sex." He gazed upon the innocent, upturned face, the tender mouth with its half parted lips, and the black

curls clustering around the polished forehead. She was beautiful as an angel in her sleep. The little fingers grasped his with a nervous clutch, a frown gathered on the fair brow, and the unconscious sleeper murmured, "He will kill him." A rapid spring of her whole body almost lifted her from the bed.

Clement spoke soothingly to her, and she sank to sleep again. She was living over that terrible scene of the attempted murder. Clement could not have a hard thought against the child who had twice saved his life, even if she had deceived him and was of the sex he despised so heartily. He resolved to care for her kindly until she was well and then he would place her at some good school, educate her, and when she was grown and married she could come and live with him, and he would love her as he would a daughter or a younger sister. While thoughts like these drifted through his brain Georgie slept, all unconscious that her secret had been revealed. The sleeping lips moved and uttered some inaudible sounds, then the sounds grew distinct and she murmured, "No, no; he must never know I am a girl; he would hate me and cast me out from his heart and home forever."

Here the voice grew pleading and pitiful: "I have no home, no friends. Oh, merciful Father! what would be my fate? Alone, alone, yes, yes!" The voice grew loud and firm in delirium now: "I will; I *will* ride the horse if he kills me. I will not tell him I am one of the sex he despises so much. He thinks the whole female sex are false and treacherous; we are *not*. I would tell him I am a girl, but he, like others, would be incredulous. He would not know how my only safety from the low and vicious depended on passing myself for a boy. He could not realize the weary years of my miserable childhood; how, friendless, homeless and nameless, I

have struggled on. No, no, no, *no!* I'll never, *never* tell him I am a girl. I will drown or shoot myself first."

She was in a raving delirium and strongly threatened with brain fever; she tossed her feverish hands, and no amount of soothing could still her wild raving or cool the burning brain. For days and weeks she had been hovering on the border of a fever, and now that her nervous system had undergone such a shock, she bid fair to have a serious, if not a fatal, attack of brain fever.

Clement was well read in medicine; he immediately applied ice to her head and mustard drafts to the back of the neck, and gave her medicine to reduce her fever. In a few hours he had the pleasure of seeing her sink into a sleep produced by the powerful anæsthetic he had given her. The little, hot, throbbing form grew still, but the red, hot cheeks and feverish eyes all told her dangerous condition. Clement could not be induced to leave her to taste a mouthful of food. Hope and Marinda entered the chamber with silent, awe-stricken faces. They removed the unsightly blood-stains from the floor and furniture, and replaced the soiled bed linen with pure white linen. They prepared their master's breakfast, and Aunt Hope went to him, saying, "Now, master, while he is resting let me sit beside him while you 'freshes yo'sef wif a little breakfus."

He replied, "No, Hope! I could not touch a mouthful of food until the dear child is past danger. Just think, she risked her precious life for mine, and now she is dying.

Hope returned to the kitchen with woeful countenance, telling Marinda she believed "Marse Clement was clean gone daft, for case he called young George 'she,' and wouldn't taste a mouthful of food, an' I done made dem nice cream biskits

he likes so well, an' briled his venizen to a turn, an' it 'll ever bite spil fore he'll taste it."

Marinda answered with a sniff, as usual, "Well, do you expect him to set down and cram hisself, an' dat poo' chile layin' dar dyin', when he spilt his poo' heart's blood to save de mars-ter's life. 'Deed an' I don't see as how he could taste a mouthful, an' de dear boy a dyin'; I nebber did see yo' match for shore; when dat poo' chile done risked his life twice to save Marse Clement, he would be cruel as de grave to go to neglectin' o' he now."

"Well," quietly remarked Hope, "dar is no use ob you an' me havin' words about it; for my part I don't see as he would be a neglectin' o' him to eat a few bites. I'll jis take a cup o' coffee and some dem nice biskits an' a slice ob dat venizen, what's nuff to tempt anybody to eat, an' Marinda, you bring some fresh water, an' we will persuade him to wash hisself an' eat a little up dar."

Hope evidently thought Marse Clement in a deplorable condition when he failed to take his food. They went to the room laden with food and fresh water for their master.

George had grown quiet and Clement sat at his bedside, his stately head bowed upon his hand in deep thought. Marinda prepared the fresh water for her master's use, while Hope deftly arranged the little side table, placing the tempting viands upon it. She then addressed him respectfully, saying, "Please, Marse Clement, we'se done brought you some fresh water to wash and a little mouthful ob food, hopin' you won't refuse to eat, and likewise, Master, if young George should wake, wouldn't it frighten he to see dat awful blood stain on yo' shirt front."

Clement had been so troubled in mind he had not thought of his personal appearance. He arose and retired to his

dressings room, leaving those kind-hearted creatures in care of Georgie, enjoining strict silence upon them. He bathed his face in fresh, cold water, removed the soiled linen and soon returned to the room. Georgie was still quietly resting. He then seated himself at the table and partook of a slight repast, scarcely tasting the food so carefully prepared. He returned to the bedside and sat sorrowfully thinking of Georgie. He saw the poor little girl seriously wounded and burning with fever; he did not know what the result might be; he feared it might be death. He thought of the months that had gone by since he first met Georgie on the storm-beaten plain. He had always found her kind and obedient; he knew she possessed a high principle, and was the very soul of honor. He understood how a delicate little girl would shrink from telling why she had been led to conceal her sex. He saw at a glance how her life had been safer, her purity kept untarnished, by her male garb. He pitied, with all his noble heart, the lonely, friendless condition of this delicate little girl. He thought of the locket worn by her, and wondered if she had been foully dealt with. Her delicate features, her conduct, her refined manners, all spoke to his practised eye of gentle blood. Ever and anon the sleeper stirred uneasily, and muttered some indistinct word. He would speak soothingly to her, put fresh cold cloth to the burning head, and wait patiently for the physician. He knew he could not expect a physician before the middle of the day.

Abel and Silas had pursued the would-be murderer down the mountain side, but there lost all trace of him. He made good his escape in the darkness, and returned to the band of outlaws he had joined, and reported of the plate and fine things in the elegant mansion on the mountain side.

This band of outlaws had become dangerous; they were

supposed to be led by the noted bandit and desperado, Jesse James. They infested the country for many miles, and had become a terror in the region round about Clement's home.

At noon John returned, saying "Dr. Moore would come as soon as he returned from a patient to whom he had gone."

There was nothing to do but for Clement to wait and attend, the best he knew how, to George. It was a sad day to the servants; they all gathered in the large kitchen with sad hearts. They loved young George, and it was sad to think he might soon be called to battle with the grim monster Death. To the black folks death possessed a terror that religious consolation could not divest of its gloom.

Clement sat at the bedside in silence, hoping for the best, yet fearing the worst. Hour after hour crept by, and still Georgie lay chained to the bed by a powerful opiate, apparently sleeping, but to an experienced eye showing that she was only resting from the medicine. Toward evening she roused up with a wild, fevered glare in her gentle, black eyes, that showed the disease was neither checked nor broken. The servant was again dispatched for the physician; he met him near the house, and returned with him. Dr. Moore pronounced it a case of brain fever, brought on by over-excitement. When he had given the medicine required and examined the wound, an inquiring look came into his eyes when he addressed Clement. He inquired how she had received the wound.

Clement informed him of the attempt to murder himself, and of her interfering in time to save his life at the risk of her own. He told the doctor she was a child he had rescued from death on the plains after the storm; that she had no living relatives, and he had adopted her, which, in truth, he had. He determined to preserve her secret; it was known

only to himself and servants that Georgie had passed herself for a boy. He resolved to explain to his servants, and have them understand why Georgie had worn male attire; then he intended to have her resume the dress suitable to her sex. For this purpose he made out a list for ready-made clothing for a young girl of twelve, and ordered them sent immediately from the nearest town. He dispatched John with the order and a two-horse wagon to bring home the clothing. He sent the order to an establishment where ready-made clothing was for sale. He sent for the finest and best; also for a fine seal-skin sacque and black silk beaver hat, with drooping plumes.

Clement was a connoisseur in dress; he knew ladies required a great many articles of toilet unknown to him by name; yet he sent to have a complete outfit, and sent a check by John to pay for it. He seemed suddenly to have recovered from his antipathy to female dress, from the order he sent out. The establishment to which John carried the order was thrown into a furore of excitement by such an extensive order for female attire from Mr. Howe, as he was known far and wide as a confirmed bachelor and woman-hater. The lady at the head of the establishment surmised and conjectured various things of who it could be. She asked John how large the young lady was that his master had sent the order for. (Clement had not thought to send a measure, and his description was rather vague, as some girls were large, some small, at twelve.)

John's reply mystified the lady still more. He answered, "Deed, mam, an' dey ain't no young lady dar."

"Well, then, what size is the young person your master has sent the order for?"

"Deed, mam, an' dey ain't no young person dar, 'ceptin' young George, an' he's jis a mite ob a boy."

"How large a boy?" inquired the madam.

"Oh, 'bout de size ob dat little gal yonder," said John, pointing to a girl that was about Georgie's height.

The madam seemed to reflect on the answer for a moment, and then said, "Well, men as a class are hard to understand, and this hermit master of Eagle's Eyrie seems to be worse than the commonality of his class. Here he has sent an order for a complete outfit of clothing, fine enough for a princess, and not a measure or anything by which I can make them, except for a young lady about twelve. Rather a vague order, I must confess. Nevertheless, such orders are not to be slighted; such a windfall of fortune does not occur every day.

She therefore called up the girl who, John said, was about the size of the young person, took her measure, and soon had several shop girls busy preparing such a wardrobe for young Georgie Kent as she had never in her most sanguine hours dreamed of possessing. There were fine linen underwear, beautiful embroidered and frilled night-robes, elegant dresses of the richest silk and cashmere, beautiful handkerchiefs, gloves, ribbons, and tiny little button gaiter boots, with the other hundred and one articles necessary to complete a female outfit. Everything was procured by the energetic madam, and packed in the large trunks that were ordered, and when she presented her bill of six hundred dollars for payment John gave her the check his master had sent to the bank, which called for eight hundred dollars. The madam sighed when she thought she might have invested the spare two hundred with profit to herself. All these things were being prepared for Georgie Kent while she lay in a raging

fever, hovering between life and death. For several days she remained in a hopeless condition, but a merciful Providence spared her life, and she slowly returned to consciousness and health. When she first became conscious she was in her own room, lying upon her snow-white bed. It was night, a large lamp shed a mellow light over the surroundings in her room; at the table sat a solitary figure in a large easy-chair, reading. She lay for a long time looking at all these things; her memory slowly gained ground until she remembered the terrible scene that had brought her to this bed of illness; she raised her thin hands to gaze upon them, and the rich frills of lace at the wrists of her night-robe first attracted her attention. She wondered where she had gotten such a dress as that; she put the little thin hands to her face, and then she felt a keen pain dart through her wounded shoulder. She lay for a long time wrapped in deep thought; she knew the figure so silently reading at the table was Clement; the noble head and fine form could belong to no other; she knew he was watching beside her in sickness, and wondered how long she had been ill; she could not reckon time; her brain was still too weak to recall anything clearly.

Clement sat reading for some time; suddenly he raised his head and seemed to be listening intently. He then laid the book aside, got up and approached the bedside; he looked at the pale face and lustrous black eyes for a moment and a great glow of gladness spread over his features like the rising beams of the morning sunshine, lighting up his face with ineffable joy. He saw that Georgie had awoke from her long sleep, conscious and with a clear mind, but very weak. He bent his head low to the pale face and spoke in a low, gentle tone, "Are you better, darling?"

The tiny little, thin hand was raised and placed within the

shapely white hand of Clement, who pressed it to his lips and murmured, "Bless you, my child; twice this little hand has been the means of saving my life."

Georgie lay in a delicious trance of enjoyment; she was too weak to converse much, but she realized that all was right with her much loved friend. He brought a cup of tea and some light toast that Hope had prepared for Georgie, and prevailed upon her to take a little food. He said to her kindly, "Now, Georgie, go to sleep and you will be better soon."

Georgie reached up her hands with an appealing look in the black eyes, saying, "Will you please tell me how long I have been sick?"

"Three weeks," replied Clement.

"And you have sat up with me all that time. Now, I will not sleep unless you promise to go lie down and rest also."

Clement saw it was useless to oppose her, and he promised. He renewed the fire, secured the door and retired to his own room with better feelings than he had experienced since the night of the murderous attack, three weeks ago.

Georgie slept a sleep of weakness, but one that was restoring. When she awoke Marinda was in attendance in her room. She helped her to a sitting position, arranged the beautiful white robe which Georgie wore, and looked on with mute, inquiring eyes, wondering why she was robed in so costly a garment.

Marinda said, "Now, Miss Georgie, you is to take de tea an' de toast, and den you is to taste of dis briled venizen; dat's the master's orders."

(*Miss Georgie*, from Marinda). She felt that she was discovered, and Mr. Howe knew that she was a girl; she was too weak to care much; she felt she had done the best she could under the circumstances, and if Mr. Howe should deny her

his friendship, and send her away because she was a girl, she could not help it. She ate her breakfast with a relish for her food.

Marinda was very kind in her attendance; she arranged the room nicely, placing a bouquet of late flowers on the marble-top stand, saying, "Marse Clement sent you dese flowers, an' hopes you will 'cept dem wid his compliments."

A faint smile crept into the black eyes and quivered round the gentle mouth. She was pleased with the gift from her friend and amused at Marinda's manner of speech in presenting the master's flowers and compliments.

Marinda took a fine camel's-hair brush and brushed the clustering curls, parting Georgie's hair in the center, and bringing her the glass to look at herself. Georgie took a survey of the pale face, sunken cheeks, hollow eyes and said, "That will do, Marinda; I look like a fright."

She took the bouquet of rosebuds and ivy leaves in her hand, inhaled the fragrant perfume, and gazed lovingly at the flowers, saying, "Sweet, sweet flowers, emblems of purity and love to me."

After Marinda had cleared away the breakfast service, she returned to the room, and asked Georgie if there was anything she wanted; Georgie told her there was not."

Marinda stood for some moments in silence, until Georgie noticing her, asked, "What is it, Marinda? You seem to have something on your mind; do you wish to tell it to me?"

"Deed I does, Miss Georgie; but I'se afraid it mite overdo you, in yo' present weak state."

"You need not be afraid to confide in me," replied Georgie.

"Oh, as far as de confidence goes, dere ain't nuffin de matter ob me; but I jis wanted to sho' you sumfin if you was able to stand it."

"Of course I am able to stand it."

Marinda proceeded to the large wardrobe that stood in the room, threw open the doors, and taking from it costly dresses of woolen and silk, displayed them to the astonished eyes of Georgie.

Marinda's tongue was unloosed, and she talked volubly. "Oh, Miss, Georgie; dese fine close all 'blong to you, an' I'se to be yo' waitin' woman, an' dress you in dem as soon as you is able to git up, an' go out. Marse Clement called all we 'uns to his room de udder day and splained to us how de circumstance forbid of you a bein' a girl befo' dis time; an' how as de time had arove now when you could 'sume your natural sect, and he wants all we 'uns to sho' you de highest respect we would to de highest lady in de lan'; and we all promised, case we all had reasons to 'spect you as a boy, an' ob course we felt more regard for you bein' as you was a girl."

Marinda had not been idle while she was talking, but had been busily engaged in displaying various fine things to Georgie, too numerous to mention. When she had finished showing Georgie the wardrobe that had been ordered for her, she said, "And now what do you tink, Miss Georgie?"

"I think," replied Georgie, with deep reverence in her voice, "that God has been very good to me to raise up such a friend as Mr. Clement is to me."

She understood the true nobility of soul that prompted Clement to shield her from the censure of the servants; he had promptly and tenderly protected her, but the question occurred to her, did he as readily forgive her himself as he was willing to have her exculpated from any fault by the others? She reasoned like to this, "If he had not forgiven her, why had he sought so earnestly to make her happy?" He had spent days and weeks in waiting upon her; he had

bought a costly wardrobe for her benefit, and placed a waiting woman at her command; and now she had nothing to do but to rest and get well. No more thought of the morrow; no more working and toiling for a pitiful subsistence; no long, dark nights of gloom and pain; no hopeless future now; but peace and hope, and tranquility of spirit. She would trust Clement; she knew his abhorrence of her sex, but since he had discovered she was a girl and treated her so well surely she had nothing to fear. She knew he had suffered greatly by that other woman's treachery; she knew his life had been dark and solitary, and he had suffered hours of deep wrought pain. But she hoped his troubled spirit would find relief and the heart felt agony he had suffered would be removed forever.

This little waif on the sea of humanity had a deep and abiding faith in God. The heaven-born spirit of purity in her young heart reached out and grasped hold of the vast truth that was handed down to man in his wretched condition by the Savior who hung bleeding on Calvary's brow, and by his precious blood brought peace and rest to suffering humanity. God works in many mysterious ways his wonders to perform. Here, to this wilderness, he had sent this little waif of want and woe; this helpless little girl of tender years, who was to chain this strong man's affections and lead him back from a life of cruel and bitter hatred to her sex and implant in his heart the germ that would spring to life and bring forth fruit an hundred-fold. This little life that had been risked for him was precious above all others. Georgie did not know this, but she felt a perfect trust in Clement. If he could restore her to the rights of her sex in so delicate a manner, and treat her with all the respect due

the highest lady in the land, surely she had nought to fear from so kind a friend as he had proved himself to be.

With these thoughts uppermost in her mind, she pressed a kiss upon the flowers he had sent her, and, with them clasped tightly in her frail little hands, she breathed a prayer to heaven for his safety, and sank to sleep.

Meanwhile, Clement busied himself with looking after his farms and making preparations for the coming winter. He always procured all manner of provisions they would need from the nearest town before the winter set in and the roads got bad. Sometimes, during the winter, the roads were impassable, on account of the severe snow-storms. He sent Uncle Abel and John to town with two large two-horse wagons and orders for family supplies. There had to be pork killed and fat beeves selected from the cattle to supply the meat market at home, beside what game and fish they disposed of. Clement was a bountiful provider; his table groaned under its supply of good things, and his servants were sleek, fat and well fed. His home was a marvel of thrift and plenty; things were kept in order both indoors and out.

The days crept by, and Georgie mended slowly, Clement coming to see her each day, and kindly inquiring how she was, and always receiving the same sweet look of gratitude from the gentle black eyes, and the same kind response from the tender lips, "I am better, thank you."

In a couple of weeks from her first consciousness she was so near well she insisted Marinda should dress her and let her go to the parlor in the evening. Clement had gone out for a ride. She persuaded Marinda she was well enough to sit up all day. She had been sitting up a large portion of each day during the week. Marinda gave her a nice bath, brushed the crisp, black curls from the low, broad brow.

The slender little form was very thin and weak. Marinda brought forth a beautiful ruby-colored cashmere, trimmed in ruby satin, with rich lace at the throat and wrists; she brought out the tiny little button boots, that fitted to a nicety; dressed her in fine white embroidered underwear of flannel and linen. With this neat-fitting dress, when her toilet was completed, with a delicate lace handkerchief in the mite of a pocket, and a white rosebud at the throat, she went to a large pier-glass in her room and took a survey of herself. For the first time in her remembrance she was clothed in her right attire. A flush of pleasure crept over her pale face as she surveyed herself in the glass. The locket her mother had given her, of rich Roman gold, set with Oriental rubies, was the only ornament she wore, except rosebuds. Yet she was handsome as a New York belle. Her sickness had removed all traces of sunburn from her hands and face; her delicate beauty was heightened by the becoming dress, and her eyes could not deceive her—she saw she was beautiful; but no vain thought dwelt in that young heart; tears welled up in the black eyes, and heartfelt thanks arose to her lips when she recalled all the trials and vicissitudes through which she had passed.

Marinda was loud in her praises, saying, "Oh, Miss Georgie, you is jis too purty for any use, and now, dear Miss Georgie, do be keerful and don't git no backset, kase I'se afeerd Marse Clemen' will be mad."

The parlor was thoroughly warmed; a bright fire gleamed in the grate; an easy chair was drawn up, warm and comfortable, and the only thing needed to add beauty and home comfort to the room was added when Georgie took her seat in the easy chair, with her pretty little feet set upon the ottoman. It was a picture that lived in Clement's memory *forever*.

CHAPTER XVII.

CLEMENT'S HOME-COMING.

If love abide,
If love endure,
Strong through its sufferings borne,
And through its sorrows pure,
Then whatsoever test
Prove other things unsure ;
Whatever cup of pleasure,
Filled high to overmeasure,
Be spilled or wasted
Ere it be tasted ;
Whatever plume the fates have shorn
From fortune's crest ;
Whatever losses men may mourn ;
Whatever be the prize, the treasure
Whereof the soul is dispossessed—
Who so can love can lose the rest
And still be blest.--*Theodore Tilton.*

It was late when Clement returned home ; he did not think of seeing Georgie up and dressed. He entered the parlor unexpectedly to Georgie, and the vision that greeted his eyes was sweet to him as a poet's dream. His own precious little Georgie, so tastefully arrayed in the garments he had chosen for her. He paused for a moment on the threshold to gaze upon this lovely picture. The rich colored dress added a tint to the delicate face ; the little hands lay folded calmly on the

open page of the book, and the mournful eyes were fixed in a steady gaze upon the fire. He advanced into the room, the sad eyes were lifted to meet his, and a glad flash of joy gleamed in their sombre depths as she arose to meet him. He took both her hands in his, and while his deep blue eyes beamed tenderly upon her, said:

"Georgie, I am truly glad to see you so much better."

He did not fold her in his arms, as he had always been wont to do, and call her his dear boy or darling child. Georgie felt a little thrill of disappointment in her heart, but she repressed it and said, "Thank you, Mr. Howe; I am glad to be better."

His face was lighted up with a fond smile. He motioned her to a seat, and drawing a chair near hers, sat down to converse with her.

A conscious blush mounted the fair face when she thought he would mention her disguise and ask why she had concealed her sex for so many years.

He saw the expectant look on the earnest face, and said kindly, to relieve her embarrassment, "Georgie, you should have trusted me when first we met. It would have been better for both of us."

"I know it would, Mr. Howe," she replied with downcast eyes and burning cheeks; "but—but I was afraid you would send me away, and you were the only friend I had ever known in my miserable life, and—and," she stammeringly replied, "you hated girls."

He gazed upon the downcast eyes and trembling lips and said, "Georgie, dear, I never hated you, but I have every reason to respect and love you as a very dear friend. Twice you have been the means of saving my life, once at the risk of your own. Do you think I could hate any one that had done so

much for me, especially one so helpless as yourself, even if you had done nothing for me?"

The lustrous black eyes were raised to his, humid with tears. In that timid, beseeching look he read a revelation of pure and truthful affection that language would fail to tell. He understood that child's friendless condition, and he resolved to be a true and earnest friend to her. He spoke kindly, saying, "Tell me, child, how it happened you were sent west as a boy?"

She related all the incidents in her life, from her earliest recollections up to the present. Her sufferings in the city of New York; the days of hunger and nights of fear and helplessness. She told him her male garb was an advantage in protecting her from insult and abuse; of the weary working days in that crowded city, from which there seemed no redress. She told him of the hope Mr. Whitelaw Reid gave the boys that life would be nobler and better in the west; of the trip west; of Bill Johnson's abuse to her, and Joe Clifford's gallant defense of her; of her terrible sufferings at Jerushy's.

All this she told him, with trembling lips and aching heart, fearing, when she had finished, he might despise her for her deception. He sat with a look of deep compassion on his noble face, exclaiming, at intervals, "Poor little child; poor little Georgie; how you must have suffered;" and when she had completed her tale of woe, he answered her kindly, saying, "Rest easy from now henceforth and forever, dear child; your trials are all over, and you shall suffer no more hardships."

"And," she inquired, with hope beaming from her eyes, "you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, child; I have nothing to forgive. You have been my precious guardian angel. I have grown selfish since

I knew you; I have cared less for others, more for you, Georgie. Thinking you were a boy, I have planned many pleasant hours for the future; now it is all changed;" and for a moment a shadow seemed to hover over his face.

Georgie spoke quickly, saying, "I am your friend, all the same, Mr. Howe, as if I were a boy; I have sentiments of friendship and affection for you just as strong as a boy could cherish."

"I do not doubt that in the least, Georgie; but then I will have to give you up; you must go away to school."

Here was what Georgie mostly feared—separation. How could she live apart from the only friend her desolate little heart had ever known.

A sharp cry rang from the quivering lips, and she said, "Oh, no, no, Mr. Howe! please do not send me away from you. I would die."

"Yes, but child, how on earth am I, an old bachelor, a man, to teach you the things a lady should know to fit you for society, so you will be qualified to fill the position you ought to fill in the years to come."

Georgie uttered no further word of remonstrance, but sat, pale and silent, like a crushed lily; the color all gone from her face, the glad light from her eyes; the hope was all stricken out of her heart.

Clement glanced at the quiet little figure nestled down in the recess of the large chair, and saw the patient, shrinking little face with a world of suffering in it. A pang smote his heart, and the thought crossed his mind that he had no right to make her suffer so. She was the only person that had ever truly loved him, and what right had he to make her suffer by sending her away from him? She did not raise her eyes from the fire, but sat patiently waiting to hear what

more he had to say. Life held no charm for her outside of his presence. He was the sun that daily shed light and joy o'er all for her, and without him life was a hopeless burden.

He gazed upon her in silence, while his life passed in retrospect before his mind's eye. He was a man thirty-five years of age; he had been cruelly disappointed; silver threads gleamed amid the short, gold curls that clustered around his brow; lines of care had crept around the corners of his eyes and mouth, and he felt aged in mind for a man in the prime of life. He knew there was only one way he could keep Georgie, and that would be as his wife. He knew she was only a child in size, perhaps in years, while he felt quite old under his thirty-five years.

In reality Georgie was almost sixteen; she looked much younger, her features were so delicate and her form so slight. He felt it would be wrong to win this child's love and bind her to him in her youth, and when she had grown older she might despise the old man for a husband, and condemn him for taking advantage of her youth and loneliness. These thoughts drifted through his mind, while he sat looking upon her. She never moved or changed; every particle of light and gladness seemed to have died out of that young face forever. He arose, and went to her side; he drew his chair nearer to hers, and taking her limp little hand in his said: "You are not offended with me, Georgie, for sending you away to make a lady of you?"

"No, Mr. Howe; not offended, but so sad." And the patient little voice sounded like the quivering notes of a wounded bird; the hand lay cold and passive in his.

He pressed the little hand, saying, "Look at me, Georgie; speak to me, tell me it is best for you to go."

The childish lips trembled, but no words came. He put

his strong arm around the slender little form, drew her close to his warm, beating heart, and whispered softly, "Georgie, darling, there is only one way you could stay alone with me forever, and that would be as my wife. Do you love me well enough to be my little wife, and live here in the 'Eagle's Eyrie' with an old man like I am?"

The dusky little head nestled closer to its warm resting place, and the scarlet lips murmured, "I will be anything; do anything; only don't, please *don't* send me away from you."

He pressed the unresisting little form close to his heart, and said, "Bless you, my precious darling, for these words. I shall strive to make you happy, and help you to forget the miserable past of your unhappy childhood."

Georgie was happy, with a perfect happiness that knows no fear. She loved and trusted Clement Howe with a perfect confidence and faith. Her young heart knew no guile. Such love was sweet to the lonely and desolate heart of Clement. He had *once* thought he could never love or trust a woman on earth; yet there he was, loving this mite of a girl with all the tenderness of his noble heart. He smoothed back the clustering curls from the polished brow, and looking into the modest, blushing face of his young love, said, "Georgie, child; I trust my honor, my life's happiness, in your hands. Remember, I was once betrayed where I loved and trusted with my whole heart, and if the time comes when your fancy changes, and your love for an old man grows cold, come to me honestly and tell me, and I will release you from your vows."

She lifted his strong white hand in hers, pressed it to her lips, and said, "Mr. Howe, when my heart has grown cold in death, and my lips silent in my coffin, I will have ceased to

love you with an earthly love, but my love will have grown to a heavenly love that knows no change."

He looked into the beaming eyes, and, believing her, was happy. The fire still glowed and burned in the steel grate, and the hour was yet early; but Clement was very tender of his young love. He told her he must be obeyed, and she must retire early to get the roses back to her cheeks again. He took the little hands in his, and looking down upon the slight form, bade her good night, pressing a kiss upon her pure white brow. He led her to the door and bade her sleep and dream pleasant dreams.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLEMENT REFLECTS ON THE PAST.

Far off the world's loud tumult breaks
Like waves upon a distant shore,
While near at hand an angel sings
The past is past, regret no more.

Hour after hour went by, and Clement sat alone in the parlor, reflecting on his life. For years he had been very lonely until he met George. When he thought he had found in the boy the one necessary friend to make him happy he had grown to love the child with a true and tender affection, and when he saw that young life risked to save his own, the tender flesh exposed to the deadly knife to ward the blow from his heart, he felt a deeper, warmer, love for the boy; and when he discovered he owed his life to a timid, shrinking little girl, his great heart thrilled with a tenderness he could not express. He had once looked upon woman's love as the highest, holiest sentiment on earth, but when his love received its death blow from his heart's idol he had grown cold and indifferent to woman's charms, believing women to be a cruel, heartless set. Now he was compelled to change his mind; he did not believe Georgie was false; he would have staked his life on her truth and honesty. He resolved to let the past be forgotten, to live for the present, and let the future care for itself. He would keep Georgie at home, at Eagle's Eyrie

until she had thoroughly recovered from her illness; he would assist her in her studies and music, and when she was fully recovered he would persuade her to leave him for awhile and go to school at Denver City. He resolved she should have the advantage of school and society before she became his wife. Her little childish notions should be humored until her health was fully restored, but then he would convince her it would be for her good, and his own, too, that she should be better informed. He would then take a house in the city and employ a chaperon for Georgie, and give his little love the advantage of society before he bound her irrevocably to himself.

The reader will discover that Clement Howe was, in the truest sense of the word, a gentleman. The highest and purest sentiments of his heart were given to little Georgie, who, happy as a birdie in its nest, was snugly hidden away between the sheets in her downy bed and was sleeping the sleep of the innocent.

Earth held no sorrow for Georgie that night. Clement had promised she should not be parted from him, and Clement's word was a gospel truth to Georgie. She believed him, and was happy; she was too young to comprehend the fact that, however happy Clement might make her, she yet needed the womanly training and information that makes woman attractive in the eyes of him she loves. Men, as a class, are hard to understand; they desire a woman to be constantly advancing in beauty and information; they look each day for the unfolding of some new charm, never realizing that woman's highest hopes are attained when she has obtained her husband's love. Too many women sink into nonentity when they are married. They have ascended the loftiest height of which they have ever dreamed, and in

place of going from one improvement to another, doing something to retain their husband's love, they are constantly retrograding. If the many wives in our land would seek to improve their minds, to make their homes pleasant, to carry peace and order in the daily routine of their duties, and make home, as it should be, a place of rest and comfort, there would be more happy homes, and the husband would seek pleasure at home, where now he seeks it in the crowded bar-room or gilded palace of sin.

In wedded life it is meet that each should do his or her part. The husband should bear in mind the many cares that fall to the lot of his wife. Day after day it is the same monotonous round of duties; the same rooms to sweep, the same meals to prepare, the same dishes to wash, cows to milk and children to keep clean. All this requires much head-work as well as hand-work, and where such is woman's lot, it ill becomes her to go through life growling and fretting because her lines have not fallen in pleasant places. Make the best of things! No cloud so dark but it will pass away, and the bright sunshine gild the gloomy places. There is no life so wholly dark but some bright spot will illumine it by and by.

But I diverge from my subject. These were not the thoughts that occupied Clement's mind; he felt he could be happy with Georgie in her innocent, childish ways; but he felt it would be doing her injustice to bind her to him irrevocably before she had seen and become acquainted with the ways of the world and learned her own heart. He wanted her to come to him untrammelled by any obligation or feeling of gratitude. He determined to give her the opportunity for improvement, and he believed she would become a lady

of deep culture; she already possessed the true refinement essential to a lady's character.

At a late hour he retired to rest, but not to sleep; his thoughts were busy with his past sorrow and present happiness. He slept a short time and awoke early. He walked out to his stables to look at his horses. He gazed upon the beautiful scenery the mountain range presented; he followed the tortuous windings of the rapid-flowing river on its downward course. As his eye rested on the beautiful and fertile valley reaching away to the south, different emotions stirred his heart to any he had hitherto experienced since he had lived at Eagle's Eyrie. Thoughts that he would some day be a husband, and perhaps a father, and his sons and daughters would occupy this beautiful mountain home, thrilled his heart with a strange, deep tenderness. Yesterday morning he had looked upon this same scene with indifference; then he was a single man, a confirmed bachelor. This morning such bright, new thoughts came to him; he seemed to stand on the threshold of a new existence, and all because he had some one to occupy his thoughts—some one to love. The little, slender form that had upheld him during the terrible storm and saved his life, and the same tender form had shielded him from the assassin's knife, had found a place in his heart he had deemed forever closed to woman's tender influence. But now the fountain of his great heart was unloosed, and he poured a copious flow of adoration at his loved one's feet. His every thought was mingled with some tender sentiment of his beautiful darling; the very earth would have been dreary to him without her affection.

He returned to the house and soon the bell summoned him to breakfast. Georgie was neatly dressed in white with rose-colored ribbons at the neck and waist. She was, if possible,

more lovely than she was the evening before. A look of perfect contentment had settled over her features; she greeted Clement with a shy tenderness in her face that was very precious in his eyes.

Do not scoff, gentle reader; this hero of mine had been so many years a skeptic in regard to woman's love, he had considered it a myth—a something that existed only in the weird fancies of men's brains. He now believed it to be a veritable reality. He loved this girl of tender years with all the deep and abiding love of a heart like his. This love glowed in his face, beamed in his eyes, and thrilled in his voice. He led her to the table, and seated her with all the politeness and true gentlemanly ease in the world. Though he had been long absent from ladies' society, the inborn respect he had for woman had never died, and though he at times believed he hated women, yet the perfect gentleman showed in all his acts. He helped her to the best that bountifully spread table afforded, yet she scarcely tasted the food, but sat toying with her spoon; tasting the fragrant coffee, while Clement made a hearty meal of his breakfast.

After breakfast Clement inquired if she would like to take a ride that day. The memory of her first ride flashed over her mind, and her face became crimson.

Clement hastily spoke, saying he had sent by John to procure a lady's saddle for her, when he sent for her wardrobe.

She brightened up immediately, and signified her willingness to go.

What was her surprise upon entering the room, to find Marinda unfolding a beautiful riding habit of dark green. He had also procured a fine black riding-hat, with drooping white plumes of ostrich feathers. She admired the beautiful

hat and habit, and donned them so as to be ready and not keep Clement waiting.

Soon his pleasant voice was heard calling cheerily, "Come, Georgie; John has brought the horses around, and Fleetfoot is anxious to try his speed."

They soon mounted and descended the mountain side at a gentle pace. That was a glorious ride to Georgie. She sat on Fleetfoot with all the ease and elegance of a trained rider; her neat-fitting habit displayed her figure to advantage, and the black hat with its drooping plumes was becoming to the short curls of jet clustering about her fair forehead. They rode on in silence for some time, Georgie rapt in pleasing admiration of the beautiful landscape. Autumn had scattered her brilliant hues over the forest and nature reveled in a grand display of gorgeous colors. The noisy mountain stream went dashing down into the canon, scattering pellucid drops of water, clear as crystal, to please the eye and quench the thirst of many God-created beings.

Clement was gazing upon his beautiful betrothed, almost oblivious to other surroundings. Georgie turned her eyes from the grand picture of nature to meet the ardent gaze of her betrothed husband, bent upon her, rapt in admiration. Her sensitive mouth quivered, and her soul-lit eyes glowed with happiness. Georgie felt a rapture inexpressible creep into her inmost being, and she exclaimed almost inaudibly, "How beautiful! Oh, how beautiful this earth seems to me to-day!"

To her poor overburdened and harrassed life had come the soothing, tranquilizing peace of love; she was not living in a false position now; Clement knew all, and had not turned her away. She was too young and simple-minded in the ways of the world to think there could be any harm in her

living on with him forever, regardless of society or marriage bonds; but Clement was a gentleman in principle; he took no advantage of the trusting love she gave him. He had promised her she should not be separated from him, but he determined to win her consent to that separation until she had gone to school awhile.

They enjoyed their ride, returned home to a late dinner, and spent the evening with their books and music. This was but a repetition of each day's living for several weeks, until Georgie's health was fully restored and her cheeks blossomed like a new-blown rose. She grew more beautiful each day, and Clement became more infatuated with her tender beauty and winsome manners.

The short autumn days were drawing to a close, and winter, stern and gloomy, had already sent its keen blast drifting down from icy regions to warn the people of its coming. Clement knew he must send Georgie away to school before the mountain roads became impassable. He knew it would be a bitter day to poor Georgie when she was told she must go; she had trusted him so entirely, believing he would not send her away. Day after day went by, and still he could not muster courage sufficient to tell her she must go.

He had been busy most all day, the day of which I write, and Georgie had been very lonely. When he came in for dinner, and Georgie met him, she was so glad that she could not hide the pleasure in face and voice. She said naively, "Mr. Howe, it is dreadfully lonely in the house all day without you. May I not put on my hat and cloak and go with you this afternoon?"

He told her he should remain in-doors after dinner, as he wished to discuss an important matter with her. They re-

paired to the parlor, where they talked of almost every subject but the one Clement most desired to discuss.

At length he said, "Georgie, I am thinking seriously that you ought to go to school."

A quick look of fear darted into her eyes, as she lifted them to his face. She made no reply.

He continued, "Georgie, I do not want you to think ill of me; I know I promised you I would not send you away; but Georgie," and here his voice grew husky with emotion, "I love you with a love too pure to keep you here alone and take advantage of your youth by binding you to me ere you had learned the ways of the world and know your own heart."

There came into Georgie's eyes the same old patient look she had worn so long ago. No words of remonstrance; no pettish tears, but a patient, waiting sadness, that seemed to say, "My heart is breaking; my life drifting away under this command of yours, but I will obey."

He paused, and waited for reply. She gave him none. He looked at the little face, which a few short moments ago was full of gladness unspeakable; now a gray pallor had settled over it, and the loving eyes were bent earnestly upon the fire smouldering in the grate. He arose, went to her side, seated himself beside her, and spoke kindly, saying, "Look at me, Georgie; speak to me; do not condemn me so bitterly by that face of yours."

He drew the shrinking little form close to his heart and held her there tenderly, and gently stroking the short black curls back from the low broad bow. She felt that was her sweetest resting place, near the throbbing heart of her beloved, and she felt, if he desired her to do a thing, it was her duty to obey. And when she lifted her head from its resting

place near his heart, there was a firm determination in that little face to battle for the right, to obey Clement, and go to school, even if she went contrary to her own inclinations.

Georgie had learned the lesson of patience and submission in her young days. Although her resolution to do right and give implicit obedience to her best friend gave her a heart-ache, nevertheless she resolved to go to school. She would leave her pleasant home, her dearly loved friend, and go among strange young ladies who had had every opportunity of improvement, while her lot had been cast among the lowly ones of earth. She knew she must study hard, and try to become worthy of Clement's love, so he would not be ashamed of his little girl-wife.

She said, "Mr. Howe, I will endeavor to do the best I can at school; I look forward to our separation with more pain than I can express; I have known so little of kindness in my life, you are my only friend, and I feel like, when I give you up, I am utterly alone."

He pressed her nearer his side, and exclaimed, "My darling, I understand how friendless your life has been, and I shall strive to make you happy; but I feel you are capable of vast improvement, and as your best friend, your lover and betrothed husband, it becomes my duty to be separated from you for awhile, so you may become an accomplished young lady."

Georgie had now become reconciled to his views. He told her they would start on the following morning for Denver, where she would remain for two years; that he would visit her at intervals, and when she had finished her education they would be married, if she was still in the notion of marrying an old man like himself. He said this sorrowfully, thinking how dreary his life would be without his darling.

She had never ventured to caress her lover before, but lifting her little hands, she placed them on each side of his face, and looking timidly into his deep blue eyes, said earnestly, "You can never be old to me, Mr. Howe."

He kissed the sweet face tenderly, and said, "I hope your words may be true, little one. But now we must part; this is the last of many pleasant evenings we have spent together in this old room. It has grown very dear to me in its many pleasant associations with you, and I will be very lonely when you are gone, but you must sometimes think of your old friend, sitting here alone and wanting his little Georgie."

At the thought of his loneliness her tender heart ached and the ready tears sprang to her eyes. He bade her good-night, and told her to be ready to breakfast with him early next morning.

They now separated for the night. Georgie, sad-hearted, to toss restlessly on her pillow all night; Clement, solemn and thoughtful, because he felt he was giving his loved one up to others to be won away from him, perhaps. Yet he felt it his duty, and he became more reconciled.

Morning came, and the excellent breakfast served in that elegant dining-room was scarcely tasted.

Hope complained to Marinda, saying: "We jis' mite as well set on cold bread and 'taters for all de good it does; dey hasn't eat scarcely a bite. Dat poo' chile is jis' full ob tears, poo' motherless little thing, 'case Marse Clement is gwine to send she to school."

"Who wouldn't be full ob cry?" sniffed Marinda, "when dey was compelled to leave a nice home an' all dey loved on de yeth, an' go away among strangers. It is sad to live in a strange land, I kin tell you; an' sides Miss Georgie jis' worships de groun' Marse Clement walks on."

While Hope and Marinda discoursed on the state of their master's and his ward's affections they were busily engaged packing Georgie's wardrobe for her departure.

The party arrived in Denver safe. Georgie was entered at a select school for a two years' term of tuition, and Clement held the sobbing form in his arms and kissed the little tear-stained face for the last adieu, telling her to be a good girl, and then he was gone.

All of Georgie's firmness gave way when he left. She sat down upon her chair, and, burying her face in her hands, wept long and bitterly. The kind madam soothed her, saying, "Never mind, dear; your papa will return often to see you, and your school life will be much pleasanter than you anticipated."

Georgie sobbed out, "He is not my papa; he is my betrothed husband, and it just breaks my heart to come to school and leave him all alone—boo-hoo."

The madam smiled indulgently; she understood the lonely condition of her pupil, and resolved to be a friend to her.

And here for awhile, in Madam Durand's excellent female seminary of learning, we will leave Georgie and return to Dr. Throop and his sorrow-stricken bride.

CHAPTER XIX.

DR. THROOP'S SORROW FOR ADELAIDE.

The stars by which the sailors steer
Not always rise before the prow,
Though forward nought but clouds appear,
Behind they may be breaking now.

Things looked gloomy to Dr. Throop. He did not doubt his young wife's truth, but he felt she was concealing something from him. Their journey to Denver was soon completed, and they stood in the streets of the great western emporium and watched the crowding thousands, and while they looked both felt a nameless pang shoot through their hearts. Horace wondered if he should find the face he had followed half across the continent. Dr. Throop thought of Georgia's delicate little girl, and his sorrow-stricken bride; while Adelaide mourned in secret for her dead brother, and dreaded to tell of his dishonored life and sudden death. The clouds of misfortune seemed for awhile to envelop them with its gloomy pall. Each one of the party felt dreary beyond all expression. They had taken rooms at an elegant hotel, and Dr. Throop had pressed a well-filled purse into Adelaide's hand, telling her to replenish her wardrobe. Adelaide could not think of dressing in gay colors so soon after her brother's death. She purchased a handsome black silk, also a fine black cashmere.

Her husband smiled, saying, "Dear Adelaide, I did not think your tastes were so sombre."

She colored painfully; there was something in her manner that showed Dr. Throop she was concealing something from him. How plain the least coolness is to those we love; how perceptible the lightest change of manner. Dr. Throop felt, that in some undefinable manner, Adelaide had drifted into a channel separate from his love; he felt that some undercurrent of grief, regret or distaste to himself had suddenly been roused in her nature. For the first time a thought came into his noble heart that she had married him in haste, because of her helpless condition, and when she had time to realize her situation had turned from him with loathing, because he had forced himself upon her. Then he thought she might have had a former lover and her heart had gone out after him in vain regrets after she had become his bride. The first doubt of her truth flitted through his mind and he became miserable. The following lines are expressive of his unhappy condition :

There is no heaven so high as faith,
No hell so deep as doubt,
No haunted spectre like the wraith
Thy fancies wile or flout.

He fancied a thousand nameless things, and each hour grew more miserable; he could not think of intruding himself in her room at the hotel. He had procured two rooms for her, bedroom and parlor, and conversed with her for awhile about the beauties of Denver. When night came he sat in her parlor for awhile, and told her of his hopes of meeting or hearing from Georgia's child amid the great mass of emmigration west. He told her he anticipated trouble in finding her. He then told her of Clifford's hopeless life, but never a

word of the deep sorrow that was gnawing at his heart strings with the desperation of a hopeless love.

Poor Adelaide tried to appear interested; she longed to throw herself in his arms and tell him of her brother's unhappy fate, and beg his pardon for deceiving him into a marriage with one whose name was so deeply disgraced; but each lacked the courage to broach the subject nearest their hearts. If they could have read each other's feelings, how differently they would have felt. They both suffered untold agonies, which a few moments of true and open conversation would have set aside, and made them happy as the angels in heaven; but they suffered on in doubt, and when the time came to retire, Dr. Throop arose, and with trembling hands and aching heart bade her good-night. He pressed the hand lightly to his lips, while his whole frame was trembling with deep emotion, and he longed to clasp her to his throbbing heart and cover her sweet face with kisses, such as only a loving husband can give; and yet he feared she would shrink from him, because he forced himself upon her in marriage; while she fondly hoped, to the last minute, he would stay with her as her husband and protector, share her room and forgive her for marrying him and bringing his good name to disgrace by association with that of a murderer. They each retired to their separate rooms, but not to sleep.

Adelaide lay silent, with wide-open black eyes, thinking what was best for her to do. Ought she to offer to leave him, tell him of her brother's misfortune, and beg his forgiveness for accepting him? She felt he was the only man on earth she could ever love; she looked upon him as the noblest, best man in existence, and when she felt that he doubted her it was misery to her almost beyond descrip-

tion. She prayed in secret, asking the care and guidance of the great All-Father, and trusting him implicitly, believed he would send peace to her troubled heart. She had a deeply religious nature, and she felt, though the dark clouds of affliction should hover over her for awhile, the bright sun of gladness would burst once more in all its radiance over her troubled head. Thus praying and trusting, she sank asleep.

Dr. Throop was a strong, well balanced man; a man of high and noble principle; of sound judgment and common sense; but he was terribly upset by the bride's manner. He thought she ought to have asked him to share her room; he remembered she was not afraid to call him to sit beside her on that lonely, storm-rent prairie, when the hungry wolves were howling in the dreary night time, and she was alone and helpless; but here (and his heart grew bitter at the thought) she is surrounded by friends; she cares not for her husband's love; she is grieving for the lover she had proven false to in an hour of weakness. He was restless and unhappy; he walked the floor and almost felt like swearing. The great strong man shook with the emotion in his soul; he cried out, "Oh, Adelaide, Adelaide! I would rather you had died on that dismal prairie than to live to deceive me. Then you were all my own, my beautiful, peerless love; and here, oh, bitterness! you recoil from the heart that loves you, the husband that adores you."

At times he felt almost resolved to go to her door and ask for admittance to her chamber; but he remembered the terrified look that swept over her face when she recovered from that fainting fit and cried out, "Oh, *leave* me alone; leave me *alone*!" He felt his presence was offensive to her, and his pride revolted at her scorn of him; and he thought

he would not intrude himself on an unwilling bride. He would work and wait until she would come to him of her own sweet will, and say, "Take me, Frank; I am truly and wholly thine own Adelaide."

He knew she was a high, pure-minded woman, and he felt that some inward grief had for a time overcome her; that she must have time to recover from her secret sorrow, whatever it was. *Secret* sorrow! The thought roused his bitterness again. What right had his wife to hold secrets from him? The thought was maddening, and the devil of doubt took possession of that noble heart and wrung and tortured it with its soul-destroying power; and that noble man became for a time a demon in disposition and thought. He could not stand the confinement of his room; he wandered forth into the streets where the roar and tumult of the city seemed more in sympathy with his troubled heart. He felt that life was a failure, and he had rather die than to live and be tortured with jealous doubts and fears, such as he now experienced.

On and on he walked, reckless in his mind and regardless of the course he was taking. Suddenly two masked men darted out from a by-alley; one dealt him a blow on the back of the head, while the other grasped him by the throat and choked him senseless. They rifled his pockets and left him for dead, alone in the street, at dead of night, in a strange city. Here he was found early next morning in an insensible condition. The blow on the head had stunned him; the night had chilled him; his mind was driven to a pitch of distraction by his troubles before he received the blow, and he was now in what doctors would call a very precarious situation.

He was taken to a hospital more dead than alive. When

the attending physician at the hospital was called in he examined the wounds on the head and saw they were very bad, but not fatal; he also saw the man was in a high state of mental anxiety, and in his delirium raved constantly for Adelaide. One moment he would speak in low, pleading tones, telling her she was his own loved wife, his precious darling. The next moment he would cover his face with his hands and shriek, "Curse her, curse her; she has deceived me, betrayed me; married me when she loved another."

The doctor saw his patient was of the highest class by his appearance; his clothes were fine and his face bore the unmistakable stamp of culture and refinement. All his surroundings bespoke the gentleman of ease and fortune. He made inquiries of how the man came to be left at the hospital. He soon learned that he had been found alone and apparently dead in the street. He immediately inserted an advertisement in the *News*, giving a description of the doctor and telling of his dangerous condition. This advertisement caught the eye of Adelaide, who was in a state as near approaching insanity as a person with good sense can well be.

She had sank to sleep, and awoke early in the morning with an undefined sense of dread in her mind. She resolved to tell her husband all, and throw herself at his feet and ask his forgiveness for not telling him before they were married. She arose, took a bath, arrayed herself in a neat fitting dress, and waited, hoping her husband would come to her parlor to escort her to breakfast, or order breakfast in their room. This she hoped he would do, so she would be able to tell him all her troubles, and set her heart at rest. Hour after hour she waited anxiously, hoping he would come. At length she could stand it no longer, but decided to go to his room. What were her consternation and dismay upon entering his room, to

find it had not been occupied during the night. There lay his overcoat where he had flung it down; in the side pocket was an account book and a large sum of money. She thought, perhaps, he had gone out on business, and had been detained. She returned to her own room, and waited, in a state of great mental anxiety another half hour; then she wrote a note, and sent it to Mr. Clifford, asking him to come to her room for a few moments. Horace came immediately, for he had grown very lonely, thinking Dr. Throop had forgotten him in the society of his bride. What was his surprise to learn that Dr. Throop had not been seen since the night before.

Adelaide disliked to tell him of the coolness existing between them. She merely said he had returned to his room at an early hour the evening previous, and she had not seen him since. This troubled Horace, for he did not think Dr. Throop would have absented himself from his young bride purposely.

They had no clue to his whereabouts. They immediately began to make inquiries at the hotel. One of the night watches remembered seeing Dr. Throop leave the hotel about midnight; that was the last seen of him. This news threw Adelaide into a terrible state of suffering; she imagined he was murdered or hurt in some way; she felt he would not absent himself from them if he could help it.

Horace went immediately to the head of the police force in Denver, and soon had several able detectives in search of the missing man. What a wretched day that was to poor Adelaide can be better imagined than described. The past few days of her life had been days of suffering and trial. First she had been injured by the storm, and the few days following had been days of pain and exposure; immediately following her wedding came the disastrous news of her only

brother's death; then the estrangement from her husband, which the secret she was concealing had caused, and now came her husband's strange disappearance. This, altogether, drove her into a state bordering on frenzy. Each hour of that terrible day seemed a week long to Adelaide. The injury her spine had sustained from the storm prevented her walking, or she would not have stopped off her feet; but her back was so painful she could not walk constantly; she sat in a chair, white, hopeless, despairing.

If Dr. Throop could have seen his bride then he never would have doubted her love again. She moaned out in tearless agony, "Oh, my husband! my darling love! Where is he to-day? I am miserable, miserable without him! If I had done as a wife should, I would have given him my confidence, and he would have told me where he was going." She cried out pitifully, "Oh, Frank, Frank! If I ever see you again we will never be separated for a moment as long as we live!"

The waiting girl brought food to the desolate bride, but she could not taste it; life was cheerless, food tasteless and death preferable to the state she was in at present. The kind-hearted girl urged her to take a cup of tea, telling her no doubt her husband had been called to some friend in distress, as he was a physician. This in a measure restored her, and she thought it possible he might have been called for in a case of extremity, where it was impossible for him to send her word. She knew so little of his former life, she thought, perhaps, he had friends in Denver, where he was unavoidably detained. She consented to eat a morsel of toast and drink some tea, which, in a measure, restored her strength. She sat wrapt in deep thought, with great anxiety on her countenance.

The girl brought in the *Evening News* and placed it on the table, telling Mrs. Throop she might find something in its columns to divert her mind from her troubles. Almost the first item that caught her eye was the advertisement inserted by the thoughtful physician who had the care of Dr. Throop at the hospital. There was no way by which she could identify this strange man as her husband except by seeing him. She immediately called a carriage and ordered the driver to take her to the hospital named, where she was soon by her husband's side, listening to the wild ravings of his delirium. How bitterly she reproached herself for this suffering. She felt if she had invited him to her room, instead of driving him away, as she did the night of her marriage, there would have been none of this suffering. The doctor was tossing and raving as only a strong man in a burning fever, with a troubled mind, can rave.

Adelaide took her place at his bedside, and soon her light touch upon his forehead and soothing voice had the power to lull him to a temporary rest. She sent immediately for Horace, who came, pale and worn from his anxiety of mind and pain of body, as his arm had become very painful from its recent hurt. Together they watched beside the sick man, and Adelaide listened in sorrow to his ravings about her conduct. He would say, "No, no, she is not false! My Adelaide has some overpowering grief that drives her to this coolness, this set despair; she would not have married me had she loved another."

Horace said, "He wanders in his mind; he thinks you do not love him, but it is only the wild raving of delirium; he will come all right as soon as his fever subsides."

For three days and nights he hovered between life and

death; brain fever led him near the cold river of death, but a merciful Providence spared him to his desolate young bride.

When reason was restored he opened his eyes, and his first glance rested on the pale, beautiful face of his wife. She bent her face to his, and pressed a long, loving kiss upon his polished forehead. That kiss was the seal of forgiveness to him for doubting her, and the emblem of her undying love for him. It was all his weary heart desired. A look of tender love lighted up the blue eyes; he put his weak arms around her, and drawing her close to his heart, whispered, "Thank God for my precious wife; she loves me."

In a few days he was able to be removed to his hotel, where they spent a few happy weeks together before he again set out in search of Georgia's child.

Adelaide had made a clean breast of it; told her husband all of her sorrow for her erring and unfortunate brother; of the disgrace attached to her name on that brother's account; of her seeing the announcement of his sudden death on the night of her marriage, and her grief occasioned by it.

When she had finished, Dr. Throop folded her in his arms and kissed her, saying, "Never be afraid to trust me, darling; I know you are pure, and you can not help the misfortunes of your brother. Let us draw the mantle of charity over his unhappy fate, and remember only the good he has done, while he sleeps the silent sleep of death, in care of the great Eternal."

And while they are resting happy in each other's love, we will invite the reader's attention to Joe and Mr. Brown, who are still piling up the precious ore that is to bring them so much pleasure, as well as some danger and suffering to keep it.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MOUNTAIN ROBBERS.

And the flickering rays of the faint moonbeams
Shone over a ghastly sight,
While the wild night-hawk, with hideous screams,
Shrieked murder on that night.—*Author.*

With steadfast purpose and determination, Joe and Mr. Brown had toiled for several weeks; during that time they had amassed quite a fortune. Now their main work lay in getting their treasure to the nearest station without being robbed. The mountains were infested with a band of cut-throats, who had committed various depredations upon miners and settlers in that region. They packed as much of the treasure about them as they could carry in safety. They then took the strong hide of a mountain deer they had killed, sewed it in strong bags, filled them with the precious ore, and prepared for their return to Leadville. They stored the remainder of the ore in the cave, closed the entrance with rock, and replaced the vines so as to cover the entrance to the cave. They marked the entrance by a figure "4" cut in the stone, so as to distinguish the place where the fortune was placed.

They now prepared their breakfast, and when they had eaten, they packed a hamper of dried venison and hard bread

for their journey. They were heavily laden with provisions and ore, and their walk through the mountains was very toilsome. They journeyed on two days undisturbed; on the evening of the third day they camped for the night on the side of a mountain, where a clear stream of water trickled down its side. They did not build a fire for fear of attracting attention from the roving bands of Indians. Rumors were afloat of the savage hordes of Utes, led on by their notorious chief Drifting Goose, who were killing and robbing people, burning and destroying all the property they could find within several hundred miles. So, with the fear of the mountain robbers and the savage Indian tribes, they felt themselves in danger of losing both life and property. The shadows of night fell heavily around them on the mountain side. They felt an unaccountable gloom pervade their hearts on that night. The distant roar of the mountain stream as it dashed madly on through dark canons, sounded ominously to their listening ears. At length, tired out with their day's journey, they sank to sleep, and near midnight they were aroused by the loud swearing and rude jesting that came from a band of armed men who were camped but a short distance from them.

Simultaneously, Joe and Mr. Brown sprang to their feet, grasped their swamp angel six-shooters in their hands, and prepared to do battle instantly. They listened for some time. They soon found out that the robbers were ignorant of their whereabouts. There were ten of them in number, and from the conversation Joe and Mr. Brown overheard, they soon discovered they had three prisoners in their hands, which they were intending to dispose of—two men and one woman.

Joe's heart throbbed heavily in his bosom as he thought of his own dear mother, and he resolved to help rescue the

woman from their vile clutches or die in the attempt. The two men were bound hand and foot with strong ropes, and tied to a tree, while the woman was firmly secured a short distance from them.

Joe and Mr. Brown listened to their hellish schemes, and their hearts burned within them; they intended to shoot the men at daylight while they were still bound to the tree, and take the woman to their mountain cave and consign her to a life of hopeless misery with a band of mountain robbers.

Joe and Mr. Brown knew their only chance lay in releasing the two men and placing arms in their hands; then attack the robbers suddenly, each taking his aim and killing his man at the first shot. This would leave six more fierce, reckless villains to deal with. They learned that the rendezvous of the robbers was about five miles distant, in a westerly direction, and hither they intended to pursue their way in the morning.

After a time they subsided into quietness, and Joe and Mr. Brown felt that now was their time if they would rescue those men from the red hand of lawless murder.

Away on the mountain side a wild night-hawk sent up a shrill shriek and the distant roar of falling waters made the hour and the scene ten times more gloomy. One man was left on guard while the others slept. Slowly and cautiously Joe and Mr. Brown crept nearer the bound men. They crept close to the trees and uttered a low "*hist*," saying in a whisper, "Be quiet; we are friends." They then severed the ropes that bound them; released them, and placed a loaded revolver in the hands of each.

Joe whispered, "Be still, just in the position you are; do not move until we are all ready for action. That guard is evidently drunk or half asleep, and all we have to do is to

bind and gag him in order to conquer the others." Slowly and cautiously, Joe crept up behind the burly figure, and with the rapid, supple power of a tiger, he seized the unsuspecting man by the throat, jerked him backward to the earth, choked him into silence, and in less time than it has taken me to tell it gagged and bound him. He was just returning to Mr. Brown and the other, when the leader of the band awoke, and, springing to his feet, scented danger in the camp. A shrill call to arms roused the sleeping band of armed men, and they sprang to their feet ready to fire. Our men resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and before the robbers were fairly awake a deadly volley of shot was poured into their midst, carrying sudden death to four of their number and dismay to the remaining ones. The other five thought they were surrounded by a band of armed men. They fled in every direction, leaving their dead and wounded uncared for. This was what our friends desired. They did not wish to kill any more human beings than it was strictly necessary they should to enable them to preserve their own lives and liberty. For a few moments all was confusion; the woman still remained bound to the tree, but as soon as the danger was past one of the men rushed to her, severed the cords that bound her, and clasping her to his heart, cried out, "Thank God, my darling, your life is spared from a fate worse than death."

With white lips and tearless eyes, she clasped her arms around her husband's neck, and with dry lips whispered, "Oh, my own loved one; I felt that you must die in my sight, and I was powerless to help you."

When order was finally restored, and they gathered about the camp fire to relate their adventures and escapes, they, for the first time, learned who each other were.

The prisoners were none other than Dr. Throop, his wife Adelaide, and his friend Horace Clifford. They had left Denver for Leadville; had arrived at Leadville and determined to visit all the mining localities in that vicinity, and see if they could learn any thing of the boys they had come west to seek. They procured some mountain ponies, and had for several weeks been traveling through the country, admiring the mountain scenery, camping out at nights and gaining health and strength in the bracing mountain air. They had been attacked and captured by a band of robbers, who had overtaken them in an out-of-the-way place, and were now taking them to their mountain rendezvous, where they intended to put the men to death, and keep Adelaide for a fate far worse than death. Had it not been for the timely meeting of Joe and Mr. Brown with the robber band, they would have carried out their nefarious intentions.

But the hand of the Almighty had wisely directed them, and when the hour that father and son should meet had arrived, they met amid scenes of danger and suffering, that unloosed the bonds of hatred in that young heart, and turned the tide of bitter contempt to love and pity.

When they recovered sufficient calmness to converse easily, Dr. Throop kindly inquired to whom they were indebted for their rescue.

Mr. Brown informed him of their discovery of the robber band, of how they had listened to their plans, and resolved to save them if it lay in their power. Here he referred to Joe, saying, "If it had not been for Joe's manly courage and determination you might have now been as dead as these robbers are."

Joe had remained in the background; he had received a flesh wound in the arm that was bleeding profusely, and he

was endeavoring to staunch the bleeding. The attention of the company was now drawn to Joe. They invited him to come forward. When he came in full view, before the fire-light, his pale face and burning blue eyes sent a pang to the heart of Horace Clifford.

He arose to his feet, and with quivering lips and outstretched arms, cried out, "My God, it is the long sought face of my beloved Austria."

Joe was indeed a perfect miniature of his mother; the proud bearing, the deep blue eyes and golden hair, were the exact counterpart of what Austria had been at his age.

The little company had heard the words come from Horace's lips, and all eyes were instantly turned upon him. He spoke again, saying, "Tell me, tell me quickly, if you are Austria Clifford's son."

Joe's fearless blue eyes flashed with scorn as he replied, "What can it matter to you, sir, whose son I am?"

"'Tis he—'tis he," exclaimed Horace, with emotion. "The curse that Austria flung into my face flashed in that gleaming eye and quivered on that proud lip. If you are indeed Austria Clifford's son, tell me, oh, tell me, and end this anxiety—this suspense in my heart."

Joe replied in tones ringing with scorn, "Yes, *sir*; I am the son of Austria Clifford; but pray tell me who you are, that you inquire so persistently whose son I am."

Horace broke forth, "Oh, my son, my son; I am Austria's husband, and your father."

The young face grew set and stern. The deadly calm that once came to Austria's when she was the disowned wife of Horace Clifford, years ago, crept into the steel-blue eyes, and he said, coolly, contemptuously, "So *you* are the author of *my* existence—the husband and father whose brutal mean-

ness drove my helpless, innocent mother out into the cold and cruel world, branded with dishonor, a disowned wife. Curse you!" hissed the red lips of Joe Clifford.

Horace broke forth: "Oh, my child! my son! forgive me! Could you know the agony, the remorse, the years of torture and regret I have spent for one hour's work, you would pity, not breathe a curse upon your broken-hearted father. Hear me and forgive me!"

And there, before that little company on the mountain side, while the gloom and darkness of the dreary night surrounded them, and the glimmering light of the camp-fire shone over his pallid face, Horace Clifford poured into his son's ears a tale of suffering, of remorse and regret.

Joe no longer withheld his hand from the proffered clasp of his father's hand, and when Horace had clasped the form of his son to his sad and aching heart, he exclaimed fervently and reverently, "My God, I thank thee that thou hast so kindly spared me to see this hour!"

Joe's young bosom heaved with emotion; he remembered his mother's life of struggle and hardship; the chilling want in the tenement house in New York; the old dark days when his mother had toiled with her needle to keep the wolf from the door; the crusts of bread and cold potatoes that had been so carefully hoarded to keep them from starvation; the memory of the stigma cast upon his mother's name; the suffering she had endured—all passed in rapid review before his young mind, and a feeling of revulsion crept into his heart. Then he recalled her parting words to him: "If you should ever meet your father, Joe, be kind to him. It may be that I have done wrong in hating him so bitterly." Joe remembered his mother's precious words, and a mighty sob shook his young frame. He had always obeyed

that mother; she was the one sole being upon earth he had looked upon with fervent love and respect; and now, when he recalled her wishes, he determined to obey her. Hot tears crept from the burning blue eyes and washed away all the hatred his young heart had cherished toward his father. In the place of contempt, pity crept into his heart, and his father found a strong advocate in his son, and one who would plead for his forgiveness from his mother.

That night, though fraught with so much danger and suffering to the little company in the wild regions of the Rocky mountains, was the happiest time Horace Clifford had known for many long years. They sat around the camp-fire. Adelaide rested her head on her husband's shoulder, and slept with a thankful heart and trusting confidence, believing that the overruling power of God was able to lead them to a peaceful haven of rest. Horace sat clasping the hand of Joe, and pouring eager questions into his ears, asking of Austria and her life, saying: "Tell me of my beloved wife. I have never ceased to look for her, and regret the mad act that drove her from my presence. Oh, when can I see her once more? I will plead on my knees for her forgiveness. She will—she must—pardon me."

It was a pleasure to Dr Throop to witness the happiness in his friend's behavior. He was so happy to hear from Austria; he would talk for a few moments to his son, telling him of his desolate life, of his weary wanderings up and down the earth seeking his lost wife, and then for a moment he would pause, saying, "God grant she may be living yet. If long years of repentance and remorse can atone for my sin, then I shall receive forgiveness. Oh, Austria! my wife, my darling! How you must have suffered through all the dreary

years of your life; but you shall never toil or suffer again if God permits me to find you."

Joe could not cherish hatred in his heart for his father, when he saw him so broken in spirits and health.

The morning dawned at last, and they resumed their journey at the first gleam of day, fearful the robbers would return with a stronger force and kill all of them. Their course lay along the bank of a beautiful stream of water which came tearing down through a dark canon from its fountain-head in the mountain side, and flowed on over beds of snow which had never felt the sun's warm rays, down to beautiful grassy plats where fragrant flowers bloomed in rich luxuriance. The trail now became a well beaten path. They traveled on until near sunset through this glorious country, stopping at times for a few moments to admire the grandest scenery ever painted by the master hand of the universe. At every step the scene became more enchanting. At length a sudden turn in the path brought them in view of the beautiful home of Clement Howe. Eagle's Eyrie was perched away up on the mountain side; the dying rays of the setting sun lighted up the gleaming marble front, with its low, French windows of glittering plate glass. It was a picture gorgeous to behold; away to the north rose the snow clad range of the Rocky mountains, seeking to pierce the skies with their frozen peaks of eternal snow; down the mountain side were many large, drooping, feathery pines, sighing ever a wild threnody of music.

Our party paused, entranced, enraptured, at the beauty displayed by the taste of man, working in such complete harmony with the majestic grandeur of nature. That large and elegant mansion, that was founded on solid rock and fitted up with so much taste and luxury, seemed to have grown there

in nature, so perfect were all its surroundings, and so elaborate was its architecture. The party surmised and wondered; some one thing, some another; one suggested the mansion to be the home of a foreign prince in exile; another that it was the wild whim of some rich man's brain that craved the solitude of a mountain home. They determined to seek the entrance to the grounds and implore rest for the night. It was dusk by the time they arrived at the entrance.

Dr. Throop rang the bell a hearty peal, that brought Marinda flying to the door. She was considerably nonplussed to behold a company of four men and one woman, desiring admission and accommodation for the night. She courtesied deeply, saying, "Deed, gemmen, you will have to wait here until I calls master; an' he kin tell you if you kin stay or not."

Soon Clement came to the door and invited the company to enter. They were surprised at the luxury and magnificence displayed in that home, and felt almost as if they had entered fairy land. Clement led the way to the back parlor, which was warmed and lighted. He invited them to be seated, and waited for them to make themselves known.

Dr. Throop informed him, in a few well chosen words, of their journey through the mountains; of their encounter with the mountain robbers.

This was sufficient excuse for them. Clement excused himself a moment, went to an adjacent room, called his servants by a bell, ordered the best rooms made ready for the guests, and an excellent supper prepared.

Hope and Marinda immediately set about preparing a tempting supper. Silas lighted the fire, which was all the preparation the rooms needed, as they were kept well aired each day by the strict attention of Hope and Marinda.

Clement returned to the parlor and entertained his guests

with pleasant conversation, until Silas entered the room with a respectful bow, and announced that the apartments were ready. They were then shown to their rooms.

Dr. Throop and his wife occupied the room lately occupied by Georgie Kent. Horace and Joe had a room together, and Mr. Brown one by himself. Here, with bright fires, fresh water, combs and brushes, they soon made themselves presentable. The bell soon summoned them to the supper table, which was spread with all manner of good things, in the elegant dining room at Eagle's Eyrie.

Clement was the most generous host in existence. He urged his guests to partake of the dainties spread before them until they had eaten their fill.

After supper they gathered around the parlor fire to relate their adventures. Horace Clifford was the only one ill at ease; now that he had found his son he longed with such intense feeling to see his beloved wife.

Dr. Throop and Adelaide were perfectly happy. Joe was in a measure contented; his trip west had been crowned with success beyond his highest anticipations. He had set out for the west in April, an object of charity, aided by those generous-hearted gentlemen who had requested Mr. Whitelaw Reid to accept their money and use it for charitable purposes. He was now returning with money that would enable him to enter business and build up a name and fortune; his mother's name would be cleared from the stigma she had borne for many years, and peace and plenty would be hers, crowned with her husband's tender love. He believed she would forgive his father and be happy. His thoughts dwelt on the many years of hardship she had undergone, and he longed, with a child's tender devotion, for his mother to be happy. While he sat thinking, his mind reverted to the

boys who came out west with him. He had lost sight of them at Parsons, Kansas, and had never heard a word from any of them. He thought of George Kent, and the memory of George's heart-broken look haunted him. He recalled the look of entreaty in George's eyes, which said so plainly, do not forsake me. A strange influence seemed to hover over him in regard to George, and he sat seriously thinking of the delicate boy.

His father addressed him, saying, "Of what are you thinking, my boy?"

"I am thinking of the boys who came west at the time I did, and wondering if they had met with as much success as I had. I have made a fortune and found my father," said honest Joe, his blue eyes shining with a joyous look.

The father looked with pride upon his noble boy, and said fervently, "God has, indeed, blessed me beyond my deserts, and I hope I may, in the future, be more faithful in the discharge of my duty, both to God and to man. But you were speaking of the boys who came out with you; was there any particular one you think of more than the others?"

"Yes," replied Joe, "George Kent, with his patient face and sad black eyes, has haunted my memory more persistently to-night than ever before."

Clement Howe had been conversing with Mrs. Throop; at the mention of that name, he paused, with a glow of expectation lighting up his dark blue eyes.

Dr. Throop sprang to his feet like an electric shock had passed over his body, and exclaimed, "Who did you say? George Kent, tell me of him quickly."

Joe and Mrs. Throop were surprised at the interest manifested by the whole company about George Kent.

Joe proceeded to relate all he knew of George, telling of

the trip out west and their separation at Parsons, Kansas, and ended by saying he had not heard from him since, but to-night he felt strangely reminded of the patient little face.

A look of disappointment crept over the face of Dr. Throop, and he exclaimed, "Poor little Georgie, it is my sad lot to hear of you always, but never to find you."

Horace spoke kindly, hopefully, "Do not despair, Frank, think how many long hopeless years I have been seeking my loved ones, and at last, thank God, I have found my son, and hope soon to be able to regain my darling wife."

Clement Howe had listened in silence; he now inquired, "Who is this Kent that creates such an interest in each one's mind?"

Dr. Throop then related the sorrowful tale of Georgie's birth in a foreign land; his sister's death; the perfidy of the Italian nurse; the child's life amid the slums of New York's vilest ones, and finally of his being sent west; of their unavailing search; of the terrible storm on the prairies, and his fear that Georgie had perished.

Clement listened intently, and when the doctor had finished he arose, approached him, and reaching out his hand said, "Dr. Throop, I want to take you by the hand, and while I clasp you by the hand let us thank God for his merciful providence in preserving poor little Georgie's life, and throwing her amid friends."

The whole company looked on in astonishment and when those two strong men clasped hands it was with a feeling of lasting friendship pervading each heart, and cemented together by their tender love for poor little friendless Georgie Kent. One was the strong tie of relationship, an uncle's worthy love; the other the purest, holiest, truest, love that ever warmed a man's heart, the love that desired to claim

little Georgie for his own dear wife and keep her forever from every care that earth can give.

Clement Howe then related his travels across the plains, the never to be forgotten storm of the 23d of May, 1879, that swept with such terrific fury over northern Kansas; his near approach to death and his wonderful preservation by Georgie; his life after he had brought him to Colorado; Georgie's terrible ride upon Fleetfoot; the attempted assassination of himself which was prevented by Georgie at the risk of her life, and which revealed the secret of her sex which had been so strictly guarded up to that time; of Georgie's recovery; of her relating all she knew of her life; of her pitiful little struggling hands toiling for her bread in New York; of her life of terror for fear she would be discovered; of her reluctance to leave him and go to school. While he talked each one of the company seemed spell-bound, and when he had finished there was not a dry eye in the room. Hot tears crept down Adelaide's cheeks while Dr. Throop would ejaculate at intervals, "Thank heaven for that child's preservation. I had dreaded so many unpleasant things for her. Oh, what did I not fear when I knew she was a little girl adrift upon the mighty current of humanity, homeless and friendless; but the God of the friendless has mercifully preserved her from a fate that is worse than death."

Clement told them she was now in Denver City at a celebrated Female Academy of learning, where she was to remain two years, and when she had completed her education she was to become his wife. He told them of her beauty, of her rare musical talent and the interest she had manifested in her studies. He said, "I was a man alone in life with every hope in heart crushed and my faith in woman kind ruined. I shunned the marts of civilization so that I should never

meet with woman. Providence threw her across my path, and unknown she enlisted every sympathy in my heart by her noble conduct and pure, sinless ways. She bound me to her with a thousand nameless charms and I longed to make her my wife and keep her here forever. She rekindled the beacon fires of hope on the desolate altar of despair in my life and made me a better, more forgiving man. I would not take advantage of her youth and inexperience and bind her to me by irrevocable vows. I determined she should become accomplished and educated in the ways of the world, then if she chose a younger lover I would bind up her image in my desolate heart and yield her up as best I could, knowing that whatever she did it would be at the honest conviction of her own pure heart.

He ceased speaking, and the company gazed upon this Rocky mountain recluse with wonder and admiration. They understood how it was that a noble nature like his could lose faith in woman and become a wreck. Dr. Throop recalled the time when he for a moment doubted his Adelaide's truth, and his heart trembled with sorrow when he realized what his life would have been had she betrayed him. Horace Clifford recalled the seventeen long years of his life, and he saw again the towering form, the gleaming eyes, quivering nostrils, and heard again the deadly curse as it came from the stern lips of his wronged and tortured wife. She had sent scathing, burning words to his heart when she said, "Curse you for a wretch and a fiend." He felt that he deserved that curse with all its deadly meaning, and he resolved to kneel at her feet and plead for pardon until she forgave him.

Oh, how betrayed human hearts will cry out in their agony and grow reckless in their torture until they break

under the affliction that scourges them too deeply. The company were too excited to think or sleep; the hour had grown late unnoticed, amid so many exciting thoughts and rehearsals. The little ormolu clock on the mantel-piece tolled out the midnight hour, and Aunt Hope entered with a waiter full of night lamps, deposited them on the side table, and departed. This recalled Clement to his duties as host, and he immediately inquired if they wished to retire. They signified their willingness to do so. Horace was anxious to be on his way to New York city to seek his wife. Dr. Throop was impatient to see Georgie Kent and take her to his elegant home in New York. Mr. Brown was anxious to return to his farm in Kansas, where he could see his wife and little ones, and invest his newly-found fortune. Joe and Mr. Brown did not like to leave their money in the cave, but they felt almost certain it would not be discovered, and Joe was so anxious to see his mother. His father would not listen to returning for his money, saying, "My son, I have ample wealth for us both. All I want upon this earth is to be permitted to meet my beloved wife and hear her words of forgiveness."

When they had retired to their rooms for the night, Clement returned to the parlor, where he had spent so many pleasant evenings with Georgie. His heart was very heavy to-night; he felt he would have to be parted from his darling; he knew Dr. Throop would take her on East, and he almost wished he had listened to her childish entreaties and made her his wife. Then he would have had the power to keep her. But such a thought was unworthy of him; he banished it almost instantly, and determined to abide by her decision. He felt he had done right and acted the part of a gentleman by her, and he believed she truly loved him

now, whatever she might do when brought in contact with younger and better-looking men. Foolish man! If he could have seen little Georgie as she crept to bed that night, with his picture in her little dimpled hand, and heard the whispered words of love from her innocent lips as she kissed the noble face, he would not have doubted her love for him. She soon sank to sleep with the picture of her lover clasped close in her hand, her little patient face was beautiful as an angel in its sleeping trust of him she loved with all a maiden's first fond love. But he knew not of this. He sat alone, while all the household was wrapped in slumber, and listened to the wild wailings of the autumn wind, as it came tearing down the mountain side, with icy coldness in its breath. He felt that it would be like tearing heart-strings asunder to take her from him, and he bowed his stately head upon his hands and the hot tears trickled through the white fingers, and he sobbed, "My God, spare her to me. Life will be so lonely, so cold, so desolate to me without my little Georgie." After a time this strong man's agony subsided; he grew calm, but there was a dreary sadness in his blue eyes that showed an undertone of sorrow in his heart.

Next morning dawned bright and clear. The men servants kindled fires in the rooms. Hope and Marinda prepared a delicious breakfast of fresh biscuit, tender venison steak, fried chicken, fresh eggs, fragrant coffee, with a dessert of jellies and preserved fruits. This breakfast was heartily relished by the guests, who complimented Clement on his good cooks, his beautiful home and elegant surroundings in every respect. Clement extended to them a cordial invitation to continue their visit to an indefinite length of time, telling them he would be delighted to entertain them as guests during the winter. Horace and Joe plead the

necessity of their immediate return to New York. Dr. Throop and Adelaide felt their homes could not longer be neglected, but they all promised at some future time to return and spend the summer in the beautiful home of Clement, Eagle's Eyrie. After breakfast the horses were saddled and brought out, and the company set out upon their journey to Leadville, intending to continue their way on horseback until they arrived at the nearest station that would take them to Denver. The men were well armed; the country at that time was in a terrible uproar. The Ute Indians had left their reservation, and were scouring the country in savage hordes, burning, killing, and destroying everything that fell in their way. Mr. Meeker, the Indian agent, had been killed. Major Thornburgh started to rescue the pioneer families near the reservation. He, with quite a number of men, had been murdered. There was need of our party being well armed, as they did not know who they might encounter e'er they arrived at the railroad station. Fortunately they were not disturbed, and in two days from the time they left Eagle's Eyrie they were aboard the cars and en route for Denver city, where they arrived late in November. Georgie was greatly surprised when she was called to the parlor to meet friends, as she did not expect Clement until Christmas, and not then if the mountain snow-storms had been severe, as the mountain roads often became impassable during the winter season.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MEETING OF GEORGIE WITH HER UNCLE.

'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark our coming,
And grow brighter when we come.--*Byron.*

Georgie was all unconscious of the surprise in store for her. She entered the parlor and saw many strange faces; but one dear familiar face amid the crowd greeted her eyes, and with a glad cry of joy she sprang forward, clasping Clement's outstretched hands, saying, "Oh, I am so glad, so glad to see you, Mr. Howe."

There was no need of the words to tell him so; the glad face, the brightly beaming eyes, all told the tale her lips gave utterance to. He folded her in his arms for a moment, pressed a kiss upon her pure, white brow, and said, "Now, Georgie, let me introduce you to your uncle and your friends."

She was surprised to hear of an uncle, but she never doubted Clement's word. When her eyes rested on Joe Clifford's face, and his fearless blue eyes met hers, she went to him with childish simplicity and thanked him for his kindness in protecting her from the insults of Bill Johnson on their trip out west.

Dr. Throop was overjoyed to find Georgie so beautiful and possessed of so much good sense and so many lady-like quali-

fications. They were all happy but Horace, he could never be happy until he had found his beloved Austria. He and Joe decided to set out immediately for New York and urge Dr. Throop to accompany them with his wife and niece. When they spoke of returning to New York, and Dr. Throop asked Georgie to return with him, a look of fear came into her black eyes and she drew near to Clement's side and looked at him with appealing eyes, saying, "Dear Uncle, I can not go with you; I am Mr. Howe's promised wife, and he promised me if I would come to school he would never allow me to be separated from him."

"I know all this," her uncle replied; "but, Georgie, you are only a child now, and Mr. Howe wishes you to become educated."

She replied, "I do love Mr. Howe with my whole heart; he is all the friend I ever had, and I will not leave him unless it is his request for me to go."

Clement looked into the trusting eyes and felt the little form quiver with suppressed emotion as she shrank closer to his side. He said to her: "Do as you please, my darling. I told you if you would come to school I would never lay another command on you."

The black eyes grew luminous and the little face radiant with joy as she said, "Thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Howe; I will stay with you forever."

Georgie had developed rapidly in the bracing mountain air; she was now sixteen years of age and beautiful to look upon. Her small form was perfectly developed; the little face was sweet and fresh as a spring rose.

Dr. Throop saw that Georgie's heart was perfectly devoted to Clement Howe, and he knew that Clement was in every respect a noble, true-hearted man and one worthy of his

niece's affection. But he did not feel like leaving her out here alone, now that he had found her, and he said, "Georgie, there is only one way I will be satisfied to leave you out here, and that is as the wife of Clement Howe."

She replied, while a blush mantled her face, "But, uncle, it is not time for us to be married yet; I have not finished my education."

Here an idea occurred to Clement and he added, "What is to hinder us from being married while your uncle and his friends are here, and you can remain at school until spring, and then I can take you to our home at Eagle's Eyrie."

This seemed to be the only way her uncle would consent to leave her. They decided for the wedding to take place that evening at church. Clement pressed a well filled purse into Georgie's hand, saying, "Make yourself look sweet, my darling, for your old bridegroom."

He was only thirty-six, and looked much younger; but he felt he looked old beside his blooming *fiancee*.

Adelaide and Georgie went out shopping, accompanied by Dr. Throop and Clement. Horace and Joe went to take a view of the city of Denver, and when evening came, Clement and Georgie were quietly married at the elegant hotel at which they were stopping. Georgie was elegantly attired in white satin, with a wreath of orange blossoms upon her childish brow. Her little face wore a grave and womanly look. She was happy beyond all expression; she knew she would not be separated from Clement for long at a time. Her faith in him was perfect. She had loved him with a strange, unaccountable love ever since she had held up the beautiful face and shapely head from drowning out in the wild storm on the plains of Kansas. Her childish affection had grown into a sweet womanly love that could find no hap-

piness save in the presence of her loved one. And now she felt her life's happiness was to be consummated; she was to be the wife of the only man she loved on earth.

Clement did not claim his child wife with a husband's right. He preferred she should have rooms of her own at the hotel while her friends remained in Denver, and when they started east she would go back to school to remain until spring, while he returned to his home. He intended to take her home in the spring. She acted like a perfect little lady. She bade her aunt and uncle a pleasant good-by, and when her parting came with Clement, she kissed him with sweet gravity, and bade him be careful about robbers. She had always feared something would happen to him.

We will now go with the party to New York and leave Georgie at school, while Clement returns to his lonely life at Eagle's Eyrie.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MEETING BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND HORACE.

I have found her
At last, after long wandering and dull delays
I have found her,
And all my life is turned to joy and praise.
I have found her.

Fast as the eastern bound train flew on its course, puffing fire and smoke from its flaming mouth and leaving flying sparks glinting along its track, it sped not fast enough for Horace Clifford. He had found his son, and the one wild cry of his heart was to find his wronged and suffering wife. He now felt that his son would intercede for him. When they reached the city of New York his impatience grew until he was almost maniacal in his conduct. He would clasp his hands to his head and moan out words like these, "What, oh what if she is dead! Great God, thou can not torture me so!"

Dr. Throop talked consolingly to the distressed man; indeed, he feared for his reason if Austria should be dead. He saw Horace was wrought to a pitch of excitement little short of insanity. He said, "Horace, try and compose yourself; it will be all right. Think how miraculously we have been led through the wilderness in the west, over storm-beaten plains, through lofty mountains, amid scenes of dan-

ger and distress; yet we have been led on and protected by an invisible hand to the highest goal of our desires. You have found your noble son; I have found my little niece. God has been very good to us, not only through the past few months of our existence, but all through our lives, and you must trust him still. There is no night so wholly dark but daylight's gleams will follow. So cheer up, Horace; we will proceed to the head of the police department and set Detective Sharp in search of your wife if she has changed her place of residence since Joe left. We will advertise in all the daily papers, and I insure you inside of three days you will clasp your long-lost wife to your heart, and you will be the happiest man in New York, except myself," saying this with an arch glance at Adelaide.

At last they were at their journey's end. They proceeded to a hotel until they could get possession of their houses. The doctor's house was a substantial brown stone house, with a delightful home look of comfort about it. This home he was soon to occupy with his darling wife, as soon as the family could remove who had occupied it while he was away. Horace had a beautiful palace home of gleaming white marble, glowing plate glass windows, and everything that art and taste combined could render elegant. This beautiful home had been naught but a source of sorrow to him. He felt he had done Austria an injustice by never taking her to this home in the first days of their wedded life. He resolved, as soon as she could be found, to remove here and spend his declining years in the sweet companionship of his beloved wife and son.

Joe and Horace went immediately to the tenement rooms, where Austria and Mary had lived when Joe went west; but, as the reader already knows, Mary had been married to Mr

Parke and Austria made her home with them in their stately home on Fifth avenue. Here Austria had lived, working with as much diligence as she had worked in the humble tenement house in the days gone by of her most abject poverty. She had become successful as an authoress; her works had been eagerly sought after by the reading public, and she had devoted herself assiduously to writing. Often in the dead hour of night, while the hum and roar in the busy city grew less distinct, she sat and wrote burning, thrilling words that found an echo in many a poor, tried and tempted soul. She had grown to look upon Horace Clifford as the quintessence of baseness personified; her proud heart scorned the man that could lure a woman to her ruin by his damnable treachery, then betray and taunt her with the disgrace of not being his wife. There was little forgiveness in Austria Clifford's proud heart for a wrong such as had been done her. She tried always to think of Horace with loathing and contempt, yet there were times in her life when her woman's heart cried out in agony and despair, when she longed with all the power of a deep, strong nature like hers to see her husband and be with him as she was in the sweet days of halcyon contentment, e'er the hideous monster of intemperance had entered their little Eden and drove her forth from its blissful enjoyment. She recalled the many happy hours they had spent together, and she blushed, after seventeen long, long years of poverty and hardship had been endured, when she thought of his gladness, his praise of her, when he first knew she was to become a mother. He had folded his arms around her, and said so tenderly, "Austria, darling, I am the proudest, happiest man in New York city to-day; be careful of yourself, my precious one." And but a few short months of time had told their length until he had driven her

forth in drunken fury and disowned her as his wife. Austria did not know it was the mad raving of the devil of intoxication that had turned her darling husband to a hideous monster that had driven her out in the cruel world, a homeless, friendless creature. Had she known his talk was the wild raving of drunkenness, she would have been more forgiving; but she thought he had married her in an hour of infatuation with her, had tired of her and wished to be rid of her. She believed he had a living wife, and the knowledge of his perfidy drove her to desperation, and in the frantic agony of that moment she had cursed him with a deep and lasting curse and gone out from his presence, as she believed, forever. She sat here alone, in a beautiful room, furnished in elegant style. It was late on the night following Horace and Joe's arrival in New York. She was dressed in a black dress of some rich material; her beautiful face wore a look of deep unrest; she was anxious about her son; she had not heard a word from him since his arrival in Leadville, in June, and now it was growing late in November. She had not expected many letters, but to-night her heart ached with a feeling of vague unrest, and her beautiful blue eyes wore a look of deeper pain than usual. She felt that something was about to occur that would bring either great joy or great sorrow to her.

It had grown to a habit with Austria while she was laboring under deep mental anxiety to write, and to-night she grasped a pencil and wrote rapid, glowing words. She took no note of time, but at last, worn out with writing, she pushed aside the manuscript and sat with clasped hands, thinking of her son. From her son her mind drifted to her husband, and for the first time since she had left him in anger seventeen years ago, she determined to try to seek him out and know what had become of him. She thought she could stand to know it if he was

another woman's husband, the father of another's children. There is no thought in nature so bitter to a woman's heart as the thought that she has been deliberately betrayed; that her husband is a vile wretch and had another wife ere he wedded her. This thought had burned in Austria's brain until she almost hated the name of man. But though her mood had changed, she felt that she would like to look upon Horace once more. She little knew he was at that moment pacing his room at the hotel and crying out to himself, "Oh, she is dead, dead, and I shall never see her any more, or hear her words of pardon for my abuse of her. Oh, God, I can not stand this, it is driving me wild."

Horace and Joe had found the tenement house, but no trace of Austria could be found. The people in that house were transient movers. Indeed the rooms formerly occupied by Mary and Austria had had many different occupants since they had lived there.

Joe's heart sank with despair when he realized his mother was gone. The steel blue eyes took on a look of deep, soul suffering, too deep for expression. He had no words of comfort to offer when his father smote his forehead with his hands and cried:

"Oh, my beloved Austria; she is dead, dead!"

Man and boy, father and son, suffered together. Joe did not reproach his father and say it is your fault, but his face showed deep and heartfelt anguish. They made inquiries but could find no trace of Austria. They now returned to the hotel to consult with Dr. Throop. The doctor advised them to employ the police and also to insert advertisements in the daily papers. They immediately set about doing this, and when all had been done that could be done they returned to the hotel to wait until morning.

Joe sat by the window in silence, thinking what a change had come over him since he had left New York, a few short months ago. Then he was a homeless, nameless boy, without friends or money, an object of charity; assisted by the noble-hearted generosity of some unknown persons he had started to the far west. Now he had returned with wealth at his command as the fondly cherished son of a father who was proud to claim him for his own and longed to surround him with all the wealth and honor he could bestow. But he had lost what he had prized more than wealth, fame and honor—it was his darling mother—she who had tended him in his infancy, who had toiled through long years to help him on in the world, and now she was gone and her fate wrapped in uncertainty.

It required all the power that steady, honest Joe possessed to maintain his self-control in this trying hour. His heart was throbbing furiously, and his lips were dry and parched with an inward burning. He pitied his father, for he believed him to be truly repentant, but he could offer him no consolation in this dark night of his affliction. They were sufferers together. Joe was suffering for a parent's wrong; the torture was none the less intense to him because he was in no way to blame for their present suffering; the innocent oftentimes suffer for the guilty, and he was bearing his share manfully. The night dragged wearily on, and when midnight came Joe said, kindly: "Father, you had better lie down and rest; I hope we will hear something in the morning."

Horace broke out, "Oh, my son! my son! there is *no* rest for me. I feel that you must hate and despise me for bringing so much suffering and disgrace on your precious mother!"

Joe replied, "You reproach yourself needlessly, father; try and compose yourself to-night, and we will renew our search in the morning."

Thus soothed and consoled to some extent by his son's kind entreaties, Horace sought his bed, but not to sleep, and when the first gleam of morning light broke over the city he was up, restless and impatient as ever. He had really worn himself into a mania of distress by his constant thinking. He could not taste food. He drank a cup of strong coffee, and set out to the police department to learn if they had discovered any trace of her. He learned that two women answering the description of Mary and Austria had left the tenement house in company with Mr. Parke, and one of them had become his wife. Here was a fresh source of sorrow for Horace. What if Austria, driven to believe he had cast her off, had married again! He moaned out in his anguish, "Austria another man's wife! Oh, I want to die!" But Joe instantly assured him, saying, "I feel it is Aunt Mary that is married—not my mother."

"Oh, my wife, my Austria! If she is only alive I can not offer thanks enough to Him who so mercifully cares for us all."

They took a carriage and drove immediately to Mr. Parke's stately residence, which fronted Horace Clifford's own home on Fifth avenue.

Mr. Parke, Mary and Austria had gathered at the breakfast table; the morning papers were brought, and the first item that caught Austria's eye was the advertisement making inquiries for herself. When they had finished breakfast and repaired to the parlor to discuss more particularly the advertisement, the bell rang, and soon Joe and Mr.

Clifford were announced by the pompous waiter at Parkhurst.

Austria sprang to her feet, a glad cry of joy on her lips, and soon had her son clasped in her arms. Austria, in her gladness, had not observed Horace, who had entered unobserved, and had witnessed the meeting between mother and son. When Austria had recovered from her glad surprise she beheld him, gazing upon her with anxious, earnest eyes. Seventeen years of pain, suffering and remorse had wrought a sad change in Horace; but the eyes of love recognized, in that sad face and those gloomy eyes, her once fondly worshipped husband, and she cried out quickly, "Horace."

He advanced and stood humbly before her, saying, "Austria, forgive me."

Joe took his mother's hand, placed it in that of his father's, and said, "Forgive now, mother, for my sake; and when you know all, forgive him for his own."

For Joe's sake, yes, she would forgive. That meeting can not be described; there they stood, husband and wife, who had been separated for seventeen long years, and their son stood there entreating for their reconciliation.

Reader, does it bring to your mind the scene at the cross, where the son of God stood, interceding as a link between a lost and ruined world and a heaven of holy and divine love? There was not a dry eye in the room.

When Mr. Parke and Mary had, in a measure, recovered from their surprise, they retired to another room, inviting Joe to accompany them, and left Horace and Austria to make their peace.

Horace clasped her in his arms, and leaning his worn head upon her bosom, wept great scalding, burning tears of joy, saying, "Oh, my darling! I have found you at last, through

long years of weary wandering, of torture, of remorse. I have sought for you unceasingly. At last, thank God! I have found you, and you do not cast me off. My life is turned to gladness. I shall strive through all the remainder of my days to atone for the sin I have committed against you, my precious wife."

His wife! These words recalled their parting to Austria, and she started back as if stung by an adder, and exclaimed, "Your wife?"

"There darling, do not shrink from me so; you are my wife, my only love on earth. I was drunk, mad, crazy, whatever you may call it, when I uttered those cruel words so long ago."

"And, Horace, am I in deed and truth your wife?"

"Yes, darling; in deed and truth; the purest, best, most wronged wife that ever lived."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Austria, and the hot tears rained down from the blue eyes, burning out all the sorrow, the torture and regret of the years that were past. His wife; and he was glad and proud to own her. It was enough; Austria's cup was filled to overflowing; henceforth life held no sorrow for her. Hour after hour of the forenoon sped by as husband and wife sat clasped in each other's arms and listened to the suffering each had endured.

Mr. and Mrs. Parke and Joe would not molest them; they knew two hearts estranged could better make their own reconciliation than all the friends in christendom could do it for them.

Joe told his kind Aunt Mary of many of his adventures, of his success in mining, of meeting his father in the robbers' camp, of their rescuing the prisoners from the robbers, of Dr. Throop's kindness, and of the thousand and one things

which the readers already know. Mr. Parke sat by an interested listener.

When a sufficient length of time had elapsed, they returned to the parlor to find Horace and Austria fully reconciled. That was a day full of gladness, ever to be remembered by Austria and Horace. It was the happiest day in all their lives. Mrs. Parke, ever kind and thoughtful of the welfare of others, dispatched a servant to bring Dr. Throop and his wife to Parkhurst, so they could all have a day of perfect enjoyment together. When evening came, Mr. Parke would not consent for them to depart, but urged them to remain until their homes were ready to receive them. It was a source of great pleasure to Mary and Austria to know they would live near each other all the remaining days of their lives.

Horace Clifford was happy as a boy; the night of his suffering had ended, and a day of perfect peace now followed.

Joe soon sought his old friend, Birdie Elliot, who had never ceased to mourn for her friend Joe. She was supremely happy to find he had gained the money he had gone west to seek, and said earnestly, "Now, Joe, I am glad I saved my pennies for the Children's Aid Society, because it helped you to gain your fortune; perhaps it may help some other boy to gain a fortune also."

Joe heartily endorsed these sentiments, and ever remained a liberal contributor to benevolent institutions. He succeeded in procuring the cottage home where he was born, and erected on the site where the cottage stood a large and elegant building, which he endowed with money sufficient to provide for many helpless women and girls who were unable to toil for their support.

Noble-hearted Joe; he had seen so much of want and suffering among worthy women and girls in the close tene-

ment houses of New York that he thought money and time well spent in preparing a home for the homeless.

When the homes of Dr. Throop and Horace were ready, they were soon domiciled in them. It was not long until Horace resumed his place at the head of his business in New York. His solicitors, Allen & Allen, had managed his large estates so successfully that he was now one of the wealthiest millionaires in the United States. He lavished everything wealth could procure or honor bestow upon Austria. She was a happy but a humble woman; she visited the suffering and destitute in New York, and many a poor struggling seamstress was helped to a pleasant home by her munificent gifts. Horace never stayed her lavish hand, but bade her do with money as she liked, saying, "Dear wife, you have spent a large portion of your life in destitution through my ill-doing; now my only happiness consists in making you and my son happy."

Joe entered a preparatory class to fit himself for college. But he was never too proud in his high station to stop and talk to the newsboys and grimy little bootblacks that throng the streets of New York. He was voted the very prince of good fellows, and was never happier than when he was helping some poor little struggling boy to buy some coal or wood to warm his mother and the little ones at home, or filling a basket with good things to send to some destitute family.

We will now leave our friends, united, prosperous and happy, and return to Eagle's Eyrie. Clement returned home, but life seemed so lonely to him; he felt he could not live there during the winter. A myriad times he found himself longing for the presence of his child-wife. He missed the dainty little form, the winsome face of his darling. He resolved to return to Denver at Christmas, and remain

until April, when he could bring her home with him. He told Hope and Marinda of his marriage with Georgie, which delighted them beyond measure.

"Dar, now," said Hope, "didn't I tell you Marse Clement jis worshipped dat chile, and I tell you I is *truly* thankful to hab so kind a missus."

"Yes," responded Marinda, "an' it was jis a miracle she saved his life out dar in dat storm, an' he tinkin' all de time she was a boy. Dar surely is a mystery about dat chile; I like to know what drove de poor ting to wearin' ob male habiliments."

"Deed I don't know, and I don't keer," responded Hope. "I only know I'sc glad Marse Clement got so sweet a lady fo' our missus. She'll be content to stay at home 'long o' he; she won't be gallivantin' off ater de city style an' ways an' puttin' on all manner ob hifalutin ways."

Clement made all necessary arrangements to leave home until April. There were plenty of provisions laid in for the servants; he left orders for the horses to be well cared for and set out on his journey a week before Christmas, so he could be in Denver at the opening of the holidays. He arrived in safety, and hastened to meet his sweet young bride. There was no sham acting on the part of Georgie; she truly and devotedly loved her dear husband, and found no pleasure in life save in his presence. She had studied hard and improved rapidly. She had also developed very rapidly; the healthy, bracing air of the west had helped her in every way. Since her marriage she had employed a dressmaker, who had lengthened out her dresses, and the dainty little form swept regally into the presence of her husband; but when she discovered who it was, her manner changed in an instant, and she was clinging to him, kissing him, and crying out, "Oh,

Mr. Howe! do not leave me any more; I am *so* lonely without you."

He promised her to remain in the city during the winter. She was delighted to have him near her.

Clement took rooms at the Metropolitan in Denver, and every evening when school was out he took Georgie out to some place of amusement. Together they visited all the places of interest, and when spring came she was still his child bride. He had never taken her to his rooms or claimed a husband's privilege of entering her's. He was anxious for spring to come so he could take her to their beautiful home in the mountains, and she was also anxious to return to Eagle's Eyrie.

Spring came at last and they returned to their home, gladly welcomed by their servants. They sent invitations to their friends in New York to come west and spend the summer with them. Eagle's Eyrie was a delightful resort for a summer residence. Dr. Throop and his wife, Horace Clifford and his wife and son, and Mr. and Mrs. Elliot and Birdie, all accepted the invitation. Mrs. Parke could not go, as she was the happy mother of the future heir of Parkhurst and Mr. Parke was the happiest father in New York; he now had a son and heir to perpetuate his name and inherit his vast wealth.

Time sped on and a few years brought many changes. Georgie made a loving wife and mother; Clement lost every vestige of his old time hatred for women, and was the kindest, most devoted husband in existence.

And now kind readers our friends are all happy, in the full enjoyment of this earth's pleasures. They have passed through many dark hours of affliction, but they had hope in the future and trusted in God through their darkest hours.

We will now leave them, hopeful, trusting Christians, doing their duty and preparing for a home beyond the grave; and as we close this book and reflect on the trials and sufferings they endured, we realize that

There is no life so wholly dark,
So deeply set in gloom.
But joy may send its cheering light,
Our pathway to illumine.

THE END.

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