

T. S. ARTHUR'S GREAT HOUSEHOLD WORK

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TRIAL AND TRIUMPH;

OR,

FIRMNESS IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

AUTHOR OF "A YEAR AFTER MARRIAGE," "THE IRON RULE," "LADY AT HOME,"
"LOVE IN A COTTAGE," "LOVE IN HIGH LIFE," "TWO BRIDES," "DIVORCED
WIFE," "BANKER'S WIFE," "PRIDE AND PRUDENCE," "CECILIA
HOWARD," "BROKEN PROMISE," "ORPHAN CHILDREN," "IN-
SUBORDINATION," "LUCY SANDFORD," "AGNES; OR, THE
"POSSESSED," "THE TWO MERCHANTS," ETC., ETC

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TRIAL AND TRIUMPH.

CHAPTER I.

"MARY LYNN! I will not believe you in earnest!" said Philip Emerson, addressing, in a passionate tone, a young lady who sat near him on the sofa, and whose blushing face, as it bent to the floor, was half veiled by the sunny curls that fell over it. He caught the maiden's hand, and tried to raise it to his lips; but she drew it quickly away, thus preventing the act of endearment.

"Philip," was replied, in a low, tremulous voice, "I am in earnest."

"Impossible! Mary, this cannot be! Have you not given me every encouragement to believe that a sentiment tenderer than mere friendship was in your heart. No! By all the sweet hours we have passed together, I will not believe this."

The face of Mary Lynn bent lower, and her fair ringlets veiled it still deeper. As the young

man strained his eyes to catch the expression of her half concealed countenance, he saw a tear fall upon her hand.

"No, no! I will not believe it!" he added, more passionately; and again he grasped her hand and tried to raise it to his lips. But Mary resisted the effort as firmly as before, saying, as she did so, with unexpected decision, and with something of rebuke in her voice,

"Philip, I said a moment since that I was in earnest; and I again repeat the words: I am in earnest. I cannot become your wife."

"Why, Mary? Why?"

"Do not ask for reasons, Philip. Do not distress me by vain importunities. Go! And forget that you ever knew me."

"Ask me to forget myself, Mary. The task were quite as easy."

"Philip Emerson!" exclaimed the fair young creature, suddenly lifting her head, and

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throwing back the veil of sunny ringlets—"Be a man! I have said that I never could become your wife. Is not this enough? Would you take that hand"—extending her right hand as she spoke, and placing the other upon her breast—"while the heart, here, cannot go with it?"

The young man arose and stepped back a pace or two, while an expression of painful surprise passed over his countenance.

"Mary," said he, in a changed voice, "you have trifled with me!"

He looked at her, sternly, until her eyes sunk beneath his gaze and fell to the floor.

"No, Philip," she murmured, "I have not trifled with you. Heaven is my witness for that!"

"Then you love me?" As quick as thought he was by her side, and seeking to gain possession of her hand. But she resisted him as firmly as in the beginning.

Again he arose and stood before her, with his eyes fixed upon her form. Thus he stood for nearly the space of a minute, after which, without speaking, he retired from the room. A few moments more, and his step was heard along the passage. Then the closing of the street door told the eagerly listening girl that he had left the house. Starting from her seat, on the instant, she glided from the room, and went quickly up to her chamber. Over her face,

that was now pale, tears were gushing, and her slightly made form was quivering like an aspen leaf. She had just passed through the severest trial of her life, and had come out of it completely exhausted in mind and body. How great the trial was, the reader will understand, when we say that she did, indeed, love Philip Emerson; and had loved him for a long time, with all the truth and tenderness of a spirit that knew no guile. Her rejection of his suit was no maiden caprice—no girlish trifling with an ardent lover. She had acted from a principle of right; and, in doing so, had committed violence upon her own feelings.

Long before Mary had recovered her self-possession, her mother entered her room. She came in with a slow step, and a countenance that was sad, even to distress. She was dressed in mourning garments. On the part of Mary, there was an immediate effort to hide, as far as possible, her own feelings.

As Mrs. Lynn took a chair by the side of her daughter, she sighed heavily, and her face became still more overcast.

"More bad news," said she, in a troubled voice.

Mary looked at her mother inquiringly, but did not speak.

"I saw Mr. Williams again this morning, and he informs me that United States Bank Stock has gone down to fifty."

"So low as that," sighed Mary.

"Yes. It has fallen ten dollars in a single day."

"Does Mr. Williams think it will go up again?"

"Yes. He says I must not be alarmed—that a reaction will soon take place. He is certain that the stock has reached its lowest point. But I am afraid we shall lose every thing."

"Why not sell the stock now, mother, and secure what it will bring?"

"I urged this upon Mr. Williams; but he says that we mustn't think of such a thing."

"Better save part than lose all."

"So I think; but Mr. Williams positively objects to such a sacrifice. I wanted him to sell at the first depression in prices; but he would not listen to the proposition then, nor will he hear to it now. He says that he has the fullest confidence in the soundness of the Bank. Oh, dear! I am distressed to death. What will become of us?"

"Mother, had we not better act from our own judgment in this matter?" said Mary. "Better lose half than all."

"Far better. I will go and see Mr. Williams and direct him to sell."

"Do. Let us save a remnant. There is yet enough for our wants, if we live prudently."

"We will have to give up this house, and reduce our establishment in every way," said Mrs. Lynn, in a troubled voice.

"That need not affect our happiness, mother," replied

Mary. "Our income will still be sufficient for every comfort."

"I think more of you than of myself," said Mrs. Lynn, in a meaning tone.

"Of me, mother! Why of me?" quickly answered Mary, looking earnestly and inquiringly into her mother's face as she spoke.

"The change may seriously affect your prospects in life."

"How?" Mary fully understood her mother, and yet she asked a reason. This was almost involuntary.

"Was not Philip Emerson here this morning?" asked Mrs. Lynn, with a significance not to be misunderstood.

Mary's eyes fell to the floor while a deep crimson overspread her face.

"If he should become aware of this sad change in our circumstances—"

"Mother!" said Mary, quickly, interrupting any further remark, "I have just declined Philip's offer of marriage."

"Girl! Are you mad!" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn, her whole manner suddenly changing. "Declined his offer!"

"Yes, mother," replied Mary, with forced calmness. "Surely, you did not expect any thing else, after what we have just heard."

"And was that your only reason?"

"Yes. It was my only reason. But, surely, that was enough! He has forfeited my respect,

and shaken my confidence in his principles."

The answer of Mrs. Lynn to this was a mere expression of angry impatience.

"Your own heart must tell you that I am right," said Mary.

"It tells me that you are wrong!" answered Mrs. Lynn.

"Reject an offer like that, on such grounds! Do you expect a man to be as perfect as an angel? What have you to do with his business life? Enough that he loves you, and is ready to make you his partner."

Mary saw, too clearly that to argue with her mother would be worse than useless, and she, therefore, remained silent. Severe enough had been the trial through which she had passed, without having this added. Already her heart was palpitating with pain. To grasp it, thus rudely, was to increase the pain to agony. Drooping her head, as when before her lover, until her curls veiled her face, she sat, unanswering, in the presence of her excited parent.

"Mary Lynn!" said the mother, forcing back her excited feelings, and speaking calmly, and with something of authority in her voice—"you must recall your foolish words to Philip. A more suitable and advantageous alliance than this may never offer again—*will* never offer again. He loves you tenderly—can your heart ask more?"

But Mary did not reply even to this. She remained with her

bent head and her shaded face, motionless, almost, as if inanimate. Thinking that she was making the impression desired, Mrs. Lynn continued—

"He is in good circumstances and well connected. Few young men can boast his personal attractions. His affection for you cannot be doubted. What more do you ask? Surely, my daughter lets some trifle, too near the axis of vision, throw a dark veil over intrinsic excellencies that she ought to see in the clearest light."

"Do you call dishonesty and cruel selfishness mere trifles?" said Mary, slowly raising her face, and letting her eyes rest steadily on those of her mother.

"Do you think that I could give my hand to any man in a union so sacred as that of marriage, when there was in his heart a fountain from which such evil things flowed? No, mother! I would be untrue to myself were I to make such a sacrifice."

"Dishonesty! Why will you stamp with such a name mere acts of business that are of every day occurrence. Men must look to their own interests in trade; must take care of their own, or they will find success a mocking delusion."

"There is a wide difference between a man's regarding his own interest, and totally disregarding the interests of others," replied Mary. "The first is a man's duty; but, to disregard and trample upon the interests

of others, is shameless dishonesty, and the man who can do this has in him a principle of baseness. Rather than be the wife of such a man, mother, I would suffer any physical evil to which a life of poverty might subject me. I feel an inward sense of suffocation at the very thought. It is impossible for such a man truly to love a woman; for, genuine affection, and a love of self so strong that it deliberately seeks to wrong and oppress others, can never live in the same bosom."

"You misjudge Philip," replied Mrs. Lynn. "You take things as they appear, and place upon them your own construction."

"I do not think I misjudge him, mother," said Mary. "None knows, but myself, how hard the struggle has been to give him up—to turn from him. It has been like giving up almost my own life."

"Evidence enough that the act was wrong," remarked Mrs. Lynn, promptly.

"No, mother; I do not believe that. As to misjudging Philip, as you allege, I am clear in my own mind that this is not so. The man that could, at his age, deliberately cheat in business, and moreover, withdraw from a helpless old woman who had nursed him when he was a babe, and ministered to his wants in childhood, the support a mother's bounty had willed, but not legally provided, and let her spend her last days in

an alms-house, must have a base principle in his heart, too base for mine to consort with."

Mary spoke deliberately and with that eloquence of tone and manner that marks a feeling condemnation of what is wrong in principle. For a few moments her mother was subdued by this manner, but she quickly resumed—

"I do not believe half what we have heard on this subject. Stories of this kind lose nothing in even a short journey—this one has come over a hundred miles."

"Mrs. Glover is not a woman likely to magnify any story. While in D—, and in the circle where Mr. Emerson's family was well known, she heard of Philip's unkind and, I will say, cruel treatment of his old nurse. Not being willing to believe such a statement, except on the most direct and reliable authority, she took the pains to go to the alms-house and see the person to whom reference had been made. She saw her as you heard her relate, was deeply touched by the interview, and came away shocked at the cruel desertion to which the poor, helpless old woman had been subjected. Philip's mother, she said, had generously provided for the nurse, after sickness had rendered her unable to take care of herself, and had frequently promised that she would leave her, at her death, a life annuity, sufficient to make her comfortable. This,

it appears, she neglected to do; but Mrs. Glover says that she conversed with a lady who was with Mrs. Emerson during her last moments, and that she heard her solemnly charge Philip to provide for the nurse, as she had been providing so long as she lived; and that Philip gave the requisite promise. Moreover, he continued to do for her, in accordance with this promise, for several years; but, finally, withdrew the trifling sum required for her support. "You are too ready to believe an evil report," said Mrs. Lynn. "In that you do me injustice, mother. I was slow to believe this as well as other reports, and gave Philip the benefit of all conceivable doubts. But when I learned that Mrs. Glover called to see him, and made an appeal for his poor old nurse, and that he received her coldly and almost insultingly, I gave him up. A man who could be dishonest in business, and cold hearted and cruel as this act showed him to be, never could so love an object out of himself as to make that object happy." "Weak, silly girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn, impatiently. "Is it thus lightly that you throw away the offer of an alliance that hundreds as good as you would spring to accept? And this, too, at a moment when threatened with the loss of property and social position?" "Dear mother!" said Mary,

with much feeling, "don't speak to me in this way. Think of me as having made a painful sacrifice, and as being deeply afflicted in consequence. Pity me—sympathize with me—seek to give me strength to bear my great trial; but do not rebuke me thus. I have sought to do right."

Mary's voice was broken by sobs, as she concluded this appeal; and she bowed her head to hide the tears she could not restrain. Though little affected by all this, Mrs. Lynn, who was a calculating woman of the world, deemed it best to say no more at the time, and so left her daughter, remarking as she retired—

"I will talk with you farther on this subject."

CHAPTER II.

A FEW weeks have passed. Mary, in whose beautiful eyes the light has grown dim, and from whose cheeks the bloom has faded, is sitting alone, with a sad, dreamy countenance. The door opens and her mother enters.

"Mary; Mr. Emerson is in the parlor, and desires to see you."

"Tell him," was the firmly spoken reply, "that I wish to be excused. I cannot see him."

"You must see him, Mary!" the mother answered.

"Why does he importune

me in this way?" said Mary, drawing up her slender person, while a flash of indignant feeling went over her countenance.

"He wishes, in justice to himself, to explain away circumstances that have placed him in an unfavorable light in your eyes. An interview for this purpose you cannot deny him."

"How does he know the reasons that influenced me in declining his offer?" asked Mary, in a tone of surprise.

"I informed him."

"You! mother?"

"He asked of me a reason for your conduct, and I gave it."

"Let him explain to you, then!"

"He has done so, and to my entire satisfaction."

"What has he to say about his poor old nurse in the alms-house?"

"There was a mistake in the whole matter. He never meant to withhold a support from her while she lived. She is no longer in the alms-house."

"Why did he withhold the support, then?" asked Mary.

"Haven't I just said that there had been a mistake in the matter?"

"He didn't say this to Mrs. Glover when she called on him."

"Mrs. Glover! Don't speak of her! She's a woman who meddles in things that don't belong to her. Philip wouldn't

stoop to explanations when she called to interrogate him."

"She asked for no explanations. She simply called upon him with a petition in behalf of the old woman, and he met her with a repulsive coldness that was almost insulting."

"That is her story."

"And I believe it, mother."

"Believe it if you will; but see Philip, and, in justice to both yourself and him, hear his personal explanation."

"I do not wish to see him, mother," returned Mary. "It can do no good, and will only add to the pain I already feel. If he is innocent of what has been alleged, so much the better for him; let conscious innocence be his sustainer. As for him and me, we can never bear to each other a different relation from the present. To this resolution, my mind came weeks ago; and all subsequent things have but confirmed the resolution."

"Girl! Girl! Will you sacrifice every thing to this perverse and stubborn spirit?" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn, unable to control her angry disappointment. "Can you forget the peril of our present position? The fortune left by your father a breath may sweep away. It is already reduced two-thirds, and, to-morrow's sun may rise and see us beggars! Philip is not, I am persuaded, aware that all our property is in these stocks. Accept his offer, then, before this knowledge reaches

him, and save yourself and family from ruin and disgrace."

Mary arose, while her mother was speaking; and there was a look of unfeigned surprise in her flushing countenance.

"Would you have me deceive him, mother?" she asked, with a calm dignity, before the expression of which Mrs. Lynn felt rebuked.—"Surely you are not in earnest!"

"Philip is waiting below," said the mother, after a pause, speaking less arrogantly. "He asks to see you. Do not the relations that have existed between you for so long a time give him a right to ask this?"

"I will see him, mother, on one condition," was Mary's answer to this.

"Name it."

"That you first inform him of our altered circumstances."

"Are you beside yourself, girl?" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn.

"No, mother, I am in my right mind. Not for a moment did it occur to me that Philip was ignorant of the great reverse with which we are threatened; and I, therefore, gave him credit for an attachment uninfluenced by sordid feelings. Now, you not only raise a doubt in my mind, but place me in a new relation to him."

"Oh, Mary! you do vex me beyond measure," said Mrs. Lynn. "Every thing will be ruined by this perverseness of temper. What have you to do with all these disturbing considerations? Why will you go

out of your way to mar your best prospects in life?"

Mary did not answer to this, and her mother continued her importunities for some time longer. At length, seeming to change her purpose suddenly, Mary said—

"I will see him, but it must be alone."

"As you like," was replied; "but remember that your happiness for life hangs upon the result of this interview."

"I will remember it," said Mary, in a low, solemn voice, as if speaking to herself. Without a word more, she left her room and descended to the parlor, where Emerson awaited an interview. The young man, who was walking the floor as she entered, came quickly towards her, with his hand extended, saying,

"Mary! At last I see you."

He tried to smile, as he grasped the hand she could not, in courtesy, refuse to give, and fixed a look of the most earnest inquiry upon her face. Mary looked at him for a moment only, and then her eyes were cast upon the floor. Seeing that she made no answer to his salutation, Emerson led her to a seat, and placed himself beside her.

"You look pale, Mary," said he. "Very pale and changed. Have you been ill?"

"No," was faintly murmured.

By this time she had succeeded in withdrawing the hand Emerson had sought to retain.

There was now an embarrassing pause, which the young man broke by saying,

"It seems, Mary, that some enemies of mine have been busy, and with too good success, in the work of poisoning your mind against me."

"Oh, no, Philip," quickly answered Mary. "No one has been busy in this work."

"Then I have been wrongly informed," said he, in a tone of surprise. "Your mother certainly gave me to understand this as the reason for your suddenly manifested aversion. And I have asked an interview in order to hear the charges from your own lips, and to answer them."

"I have no charges to make, Philip," replied Mary.

"Then why this change in your feelings?"

"Philip," said the young girl, "I have changed, because a better knowledge of your character has satisfied me that we could not be happy together. Will not this reason suffice?"

"What point in my character? Upon what acts, or supposed acts of mine do you base your decision?"

"Philip Emerson!" Mary arose from her place by his side, and stood before him. "It is not just to me, this importunity for a reason in a matter of so trying and delicate a nature. I have been sincere to you from the beginning; I am sincere with you now. At our last

painful interview, I told you that I was in earnest; and I can but repeat the words on this occasion. Go, and forget me! But you need not think of me unkindly, for I have no unkind thoughts toward you. My present action is the result of a deliberate conviction that I should not accept the flattering offer you have made—not of angry or offended feeling—and be assured that I cannot change my well-formed resolution. That I am a sufferer, your own eyes have already informed you. I shall still be a sufferer; yet will I not change. Spare me, then, further pain. Let me plead for this; even by the pleasant memories of the past."

There was a tremor of emotion in the voice of Mary as she thus spoke, that deeply affected her auditor; and, in spite of her words, he ventured yet to plead his cause. But, ere he had uttered a sentence, tears gushed over her face, and she turned from him, and left the apartment.

For Emerson to have remained longer, would have been as hopeless as indelicate; and so he retired, ere Mrs. Lynn, who had been anxiously awaiting the termination of the interview, had time to intercept him.

Scarcely had the noise made by the closing door ceased to reverberate through the house, ere the bell was rung, and Mrs. Lynn, who was already on her way to her daughter's apartment, paused on the stairs to

listen. As the servant opened the street door, she heard a man's voice; then a man's step sounded in the entry.

"Mr. Williams wishes to see you," said the servant, coming up to where she still remained on the stairway.

The name caused the heart of Mrs. Lynn to give a sudden throb. The visit was untimely, and boded either good or bad intelligence—bad she had too good reason to fear. Hurriedly descending, she entered the parlor, and found Mr. Williams standing in the floor with a troubled countenance.

"Dear madam," said he, in an agitated voice, "our worst fears are at last realized! There has been a sudden collapse in the stock market. Shares fell to-day as low as fifteen!"

"Oh, Mr. Williams!" exclaimed the distressed widow, clasping her hands together, and growing suddenly pale. "Then am I indeed a beggar!"

"Thousands are involved in a like ruin. How little did I dream of this?"

"Oh, why did you not let me sell, months ago, when I was so anxious to save a portion of my own and my children's property? Now all is hopeless ruin!"

And the distressed woman wrung her hands and wept. "I advised you for the best," said the rebuked agent, in a deprecating voice. "I never dreamed that this stock was worthless. So entire was my

confidence in its ultimate value, that I as steadily refused to part with a single share held on my own account. I am, therefore, a loser with others, and to a large amount."

"But I wanted to sell, Mr. Williams. I felt that all was insecure from the first. At seventy cents, I would still have saved a handsome competence. At fifty, I would still have had twenty-five thousand dollars.—Even at forty, I would have retained a remnant, and I begged you to save even that. But, no, no! And now, all is ruined!"

"Still I acted for the best," said Mr. Williams. "It was your interest, not my own, that I regarded. If I have erred in judgment, thousands have erred with me. No one believed that the affairs of the bank had become so desperate. All looked upon the panic as momentary, and the pressure upon the stock certain to be removed. It was for this reason that I have steadily opposed your sacrificing your property; and I acted by you as I would have acted by my own sister. It now appears that I fatally erred in judgment. But say what you wish done now, and I will act promptly. Shall I sell your stock at fifteen?"

"At fifteen! Oh, ruin! ruin! ruin! Fifty thousand dollars shrunk down suddenly to seven thousand! No! better throw all into the sea! It cannot be worse!"

"It is a terrible sacrifice!"

said Mr. Williams. "Terrible! Fifteen dollars for what cost a hundred and twelve! Who could have dreamed of this? I would have risked a dozen fortunes here. But this great depression can only be the effect of a panic. Prices must advance again, Mrs. Lynn. The bank owns a vast amount of property, and, I still think, will ultimately redeem a large proportion of her stock. The temptation to sell at fifteen cents is so small, that it seems like folly to throw away the prospect of ultimately realizing from forty to fifty thousand dollars for the paltry consideration of six or seven thousand."

"What is to become of me!" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn, still wringing her hands, and now beginning to move about the room with every exhibition of distress.

"Calm yourself, my dear madam," said Mr. Williams. "The best way to meet an evil is to look it steadily in the face."

"Don't speak to me of calmness," replied the widow, impatiently. "Ask a man on the wheel to be calm!"

"What will you do? Save what may now be saved—or await the issue of this business?"

"Sell at fifteen! What will that avail? To lose every thing can be little worse. It will be ruin at best. No, Mr. Williams I cannot consent to such a sacrifice."

"I will not advise you farther," said the agent.

"What had I best do?" now asked Mrs. Lynn. The moment she felt that upon herself rested the responsibility of further action, distrust and doubt arose.

"I cannot advise you," repeated the agent.

"Do you think prices will advance?"

"I cannot tell, madam."

"Do you think they will be lower?"

"This it is equally out of my power to say."

"Oh, dear! What shall I do! I wish you would advise me, Mr. Williams. I am at my wit's ends. Even seven thousand dollars are better than nothing!"

"True."

"It will keep the gaunt wolf want from our door a little while."

"Yes. Better that than nothing."

"Go and sell out, then, Mr. Williams! Go quickly, while there is a chance of saving this poor remnant."

The agent bowed in acquiescence, and was moving from the door, when Mrs. Lynn said, eagerly,

"Stay! This is too great a sacrifice. Oh, sir! advise me! You understand these matters better than I do. I do not like to take the responsibility of throwing away my children's property in this way. My husband said that I must confide in your judgment. What had I better do?"

"Thus far your confidence

has proved utterly vain," replied Mr. Williams. "You must now decide for yourself. If you direct me to sell your stock at present prices, I will sell. But the responsibility must be yours."

Again Mrs. Lynn commenced wringing her hands and weeping, whilst she sobbed,

"Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!"

"Compose yourself and think calmly over the matter during the day," said Mr. Williams. "In the morning I will call again, and then act upon your decision."

"But, won't you say what I had best do? What are you going to do in your own case?"

"I'm going to wait longer," was the unhesitating answer. "I've made up my mind to run the risk of losing all, rather than sell at present rates. But you must not be guided by my action. You cannot afford to lose all."

"If you were in my place, what would you do?"

"Don't ask me that question. I am not in your place. But, do as I have suggested. Compose your mind, and think calmly over the matter. Sleep on the question. To-morrow morning I will hear your decision."

"Do you think there is any hope of an advance in price, Mr. Williams?" asked Mrs. Lynn, in a voice that implored an answer to the question.

"I am totally in the dark, madam," replied the agent.

"Sure, you have some opinion! Pity me, and advise me!"

"I can say nothing now, Mrs. Lynn. To-morrow I will see you. Perhaps I can advise you then more understandingly than now."

The agent departed, and Mrs. Lynn sunk upon a chair, where she remained lost in painful abstraction, until the thought of Mary and her late interview with Philip Emerson, caused her to start quickly to her feet, and pass from the room to seek her daughter's chamber.

CHAPTER III.

"A most distressing affair this," remarked a business friend, to Philip Emerson, a few weeks later in the history of events.

"What affair?" inquired the young man.

"I allude to the failure of the United States Bank, and the ruin it has brought into hundreds of families."

"Oh! Yes; that is a distressing affair, truly. I saw poor Mrs. Meriam a little while ago, and the sight of her made my heart ache. She is reduced, with her children, from competency to want and dependence."

"And Mrs. Lynn, too?"

"What?"

"Every thing left by Mr. Lynn, was invested in this stock. Of fifty thousand dollars, but five thousand are left."

"Are you not in error here?" asked Emerson.

"No, I saw her agent, Mr. Williams, half-an-hour ago; and he told me that he had just paid into her hands the proceeds of five hundred shares at ten dollars a share."

"Bless me! I never dreamed of this."

"It is too true. Poor woman! I feel very sorry for her."

The friend retired, and Emerson fell into a mood of deep thoughtfulness. A generous impulse first moved over the surface of his heart; but the rippling waves soon met a counter current, and all was in commotion. A selfish and sordid principle ruled in his mind, and this opposed the almost instant determination to renew his offer of marriage to Mary Lynn, and thus show her how devoted was his attachment. For the whole of that day the struggle went on, and was continued in the loneliness and silence of his chamber, when he retired at night.

Philip had been as sincere in his attachment to Mary as it is possible for any one to be, who admits worldly and selfish considerations into his mind. It is not at all probable, that he would have permitted his love to centre upon her, had she not possessed some attractions beyond what were personal. She was a lovely, pure-minded, right thinking girl, with every quality to give happiness in

marriage; and the better Emerson knew her, the more clearly was this perceived. As their intimacy became closer, he lost sight, to a considerable extent, of some of the first mercenary ideas that influenced him, and his affection assumed a truer character. But, now, the baser qualities of his love again appeared. The stream that ran so pure, was troubled. Circumstances had become materially changed.

It was near midnight before the mind of Emerson grew calm in a generous purpose. Then he wrote a letter to Mary.

"I have just heard," thus he addressed her, "of the sad loss your mother has sustained in the failure of the United States Bank. Until now, I was not aware that her property was invested in the stock of this institution. The intelligence has deeply grieved me, and, were it not for the relations that exist between you and myself, I would at once hasten to offer your family, in person, the sympathy which I feel. Except for this unhappy event, I should not again have ventured to address you. But, now that I see dark clouds of adversity gathering over the head of one in whom I feel the deepest interest, and hear the distant roar of the coming tempest, I am impelled by something that I cannot resist to renew the offer she a little while ago declined. Dear Mary! believe

me; that I address you in no selfish spirit. Do not turn from me again without looking deep into your own heart. If my image is there—and I believe that it is—do not lightly efface it. Drop a line, on receiving this, and say that a visit from me will not be unacceptable. Speak but a single word of encouragement, and I will be instantly at your side."

While writing this letter, Emerson felt all the glow of a generous impulse; but as he read it over and over again, and thought of a marriage in which not a single worldly advantage would be gained, his mind became once more troubled, and he wavered in his resolutions.

"Shall I humble myself again?" he said aloud. "Shall I put myself in the way of another repulse, that will be more humiliating than former ones? Shall I lay my genuine regard at her feet that she may trample upon it?"

Again he entered upon a struggle, which continued until near day dawn. Then he slept for a few hours. His mind was calmer and clearer when he awoke. After thoughtfully reviewing his relation to Mary, and considering her altered condition, he resolved to send the letter he had written, and did so.—But scarcely had it passed from his hands beyond recall, ere he repented of what he had done. In spite of all

his efforts to resist its influence, the fact that Mary, if she now accepted his offer, would come to him a portionless bride, was changing, materially, the state of his feelings. The force of attraction with which he was drawn towards her, was sensibly weakened; and he was conscious of the fact.

Emerson was an importer and dealer in elegant and fancy articles. His store was much frequented by fashionable people, especially ladies. About an hour after his letter to Mary was dispatched, and when his sober second thoughts were bringing repentance for the act, a young and beautiful girl entered with the design of purchasing some article. She was the daughter of a manufacturer in good circumstances, named Barker, and in her person and accomplishments combined many attractions. She smiled winningly upon Emerson as he met her at the counter. The young man was struck by her beauty more than on any previous occasion; and there was in the tones of her voice a melody he had not perceived before. She lingered longer than usual in making her purchases, and seemed quite interested in the conversation he addressed to her; and, as she left the store, turned, on gaining the street, to glance back at the handsome young dealer.

More than flattered was Emerson by this manifestation of interest on the part of the beau-

tiful girl, and her image was distinct before his mind for a long time after she had retired; so distinct, as partially to obscure the image of Mary Lynn.

From that time the heart of Emerson beat with a more troubled motion. Hourly he waited, in expectation of an answer to his letter. His pulse would give a quicker throb at the entrance of any one who seemed like the bearer of a communication from Mary. But the day wore on, and no answer came.

The letter sent by Emerson to Mary Lynn, came first into the hands of her mother, who unscrupulously broke the seal, and read the contents—with what feelings the reader may imagine. She then placed the letter in a new envelope, re-directed it, and had it sent up to her daughter's room, who received it without the least suspicion that her mother knew what it contained. Mary read it over hastily, and wept as she read. While it remained open in her hand, Mrs. Lynn entered. The first impulse of Mary was to conceal the letter, and she made a movement to do so, but checked herself.

"Who is that from?" asked Mrs. Lynn, at once referring to the letter in Mary's hand.

"From Philip," was replied, unhesitatingly.

"Indeed!" Mrs. Lynn affected surprise. "Can I see it?"

Mary handed her the letter, which she read over for the second time.

"A noble, generous-hearted young man!" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn, with enthusiasm. "Surely, Mary, you cannot but respond to this in the spirit with which it is written!"

"I wish it had not been written," was murmured, in reply.

"Why do you say that?" inquired Mrs. Lynn.

"Because it will be to me the cause of renewed pain. I had hoped that this trial was over."

"Mary, in the present extremity can you for a moment hesitate? Think of me; think of your brother and sister. Will you see us go down into poverty and suffering, when a word from you could save us?"

"Oh, mother! Why will you tempt me in this way?" said Mary, in great distress. "If you love me, let me be alone for the present. Give me time to reflect and look upwards."

There was more in the manner of this appeal, than in the words, that affected Mrs. Lynn. She felt conscious of having taken an ungenerous advantage of her daughter, and an emotion of shame went over her selfish and worldly heart. For a few moments she lingered in her daughter's room, and then retired. The moment she closed the door, Mary sunk on her knees and buried her face in her hands. For a long, long time, she remained in this attitude, almost motionless. When, at last, she rose, her face was calm, and elevated in expression. A little while afterwards she left the house and took her

way towards a less fashionable part of the town than that in which she resided. At a moderate-sized, comfortable-looking house, she stopped, and on ringing, was admitted. Running up stairs, as familiarly as if at home, she entered one of the rooms, where sat a lady past the prime of life, in whose countenance was impressed the beauty of a truly wise and virtuous spirit.

"Mary, dear!" she said, affectionately, as the young girl entered, and she kissed her fair cheek with the tenderness of a mother.

"Dear aunt!" replied Mary, leaning her face against her, and trying to repress the sobs that were ready to break forth. "I have come to ask you a few more questions, and to seek further your advice."

"Say on, child," returned the lady.

"I wish to speak of Philip," said Mary.

"Does he still persecute you with his offers of marriage?" was remarked, in a voice of surprise.

"He has heard of our loss of property, and comes forward again. But here is his letter—read it."

The aunt—she was the sister of Mary's father—took the letter of Emerson and read it carefully.

"I hardly expected this of him," she remarked, as she folded the letter, and handed it back to Mary. "It certainly

places him in a more favorable light."

"Does it alter his real quality of mind?" asked Mary.

"All acts that spring from unselfish motives, change, in a degree, the evil qualities of the mind. A man who does right from a deliberate purpose, is just so much the better. He may recede or advance from the point gained, according as he afterwards gives place to good or bad influences."

"Yes, I can understand that. But I wish to ask you one or two questions about Philip."

"Say on."

"About the two pictures he sold to Mr. Harding. You are certain that Philip represented them as having just been received from his agent in Paris?"

"So Mr. Harding informed me!"

"And you are still further certain that he bought them for a mere trifle, at a sale in New York?"

"I am. The pictures belonged to an old friend of mine in that city. I have seen them on her walls hundreds of times. When I saw them again at Mr. Harding's, and heard his story about having paid Emerson five hundred dollars for the pair, as choice old pictures, just received from his agent in Paris, I was curious enough to write to my friend. She informed me that she had sent a part of her furniture to auction—these pictures among the rest—and that the latter had sold for ten dol-

lars apiece. I didn't like the look of this. Knowing Emerson's intimacy with you, I determined to gain some certain information on the subject, and so wrote to my friend asking her as a favor to ascertain, if possible, from the auctioneer, the name of the purchaser of the pictures. In a few days I received an answer, stating that the name was Emerson. I wrote still further, inquiring as to his residence. It was in this city. That I might be entirely certain in the matter, I then related to my friend how the pictures had been sold for five hundred dollars, and under what representations, and asked if she would oblige me by a still more particular inquiry of the auctioneer, who happened to be a friend. Her reply was conclusive. Philip Emerson is the man. Moreover, she wrote that the auctioneer expressed himself as not in the least surprised. 'That,' said he, 'is one of his every day tricks. I shall hear all about it on his next visit to New York. If his own stories are true, he has made several thousand dollars in the last few years by operations of this kind. He's a shrewd fellow; and thinks nothing of a business lie. All fair in trade is his motto.'

Mary sighed deeply as her aunt ceased speaking.

"He is not an honest man," said she, at length, in a firm voice.

"Actions like this do not

flow from an honest principle," replied the aunt.

"A good tree cannot bear evil fruit."

"Nor a sweet fountain send forth bitter waters," added the aunt. "Still, Mary, we must take this into consideration, that men engaged in business are very apt, in their eagerness for gain, to lose sight of the landmarks of strict integrity. Where trick and overreaching is resorted to on every hand, even honest men may be led, almost imperceptibly, away from their integrity."

"Not honest men, aunt," replied Mary. "If there were not a basis of dishonesty in the mind, a man would shrink from a dishonest act as quickly as shrinks the leaf of a sensitive plant when touched."

"You are no doubt correct in this," remarked the aunt.

"I am in a great strait," said Mary, in a sad voice. "Mother knows of this letter from Philip, and expects me to return a favorable answer. If I regarded myself alone, I would not hesitate a moment. But, in my decision, the happiness and comfort of others are involved. Mother has lost, by the failure of the bank, nearly every thing. We are left without the means of support. If I accept Philip's renewed offer, little apparent change will take place in our external circumstances. But, if I decline it, we sink down at once from our present position. As for myself I am ready to

meet any form of worldly reverse, to bear any privation and toil that may come, rather than give myself to a man in whose integrity I can place no sure reliance. How could I unite myself to the moral wisdom of my husband, when in heart he was dishonest? My spirit, instead of uniting in a glad and happy union, would shrink away and turn from him. Instead of a gradual union, going on from day to day and year to year, there would be a gradual separation, and both would become wretched. Oh! the very thought appals me! Dear aunt! think for me, and advise me in this fearful extremity."

"As each one is responsible for his own actions, with each individual must rest the determination to action."

"I know that, aunt. But feeling too often obscures the judgment. The mind of one in my position can hardly be said to be in equilibrium."

"The minds of all are held in perpetual equilibrium, Mary. Every one who sincerely desires to do right, will, in passing through life's trials and temptations, see the right way so clearly that not a doubt will remain. And so it will be in your case. All that is needed is firmness to do right in the face of all consequences."

"If I cannot respect Philip—if I utterly condemn the principles that govern his business life—if I see him to be so blinded by selfishness as to do

wrong to his neighbors, ought I to marry him?"

"Answer the question yourself, Mary."

"Most emphatically do I say no," was the earnest reply of Mary Lynn.

"Right, my child! Right! The evil consequences of such a union may not be calculated," responded the aunt, warmly. "It is not the mere person that is loved, in marriage; nor is it the intellectual endowments; nor graces of mind and action. No, love goes far below all these, and seeks for mental and moral qualities, and, if it does not find what is good and true, it droops, and withers, and dies. If you would not put your happiness both here and hereafter in jeopardy, decline this offer."

"My heart blesses you for these words!" exclaimed Mary, grasping the hand of her aunt. "They give strength to my own weak purpose in this time of painful trial."

"You must look higher for strength, my dear child; for you will need a greater than human aid to sustain you in passing through the fire."

Mary's eyes glanced upwards involuntarily.

"How sadly mother will be disappointed at this decision," murmured the young girl, breaking, soon after, the silence that succeeded her last remark.

"The time, I doubt not, will come," said the aunt, "when she will rejoice that you had the

firmness to reject an offer that promised so much of worldly advantage, with so little of genuine happiness."

"Until that time, what will I not have to suffer? Oh, how my heart shrinks from the trial," sighed Mary.

"God will give you strength," was answered. "Be true to yourself and him, and you will be fully sustained."

Again the maiden's eyes glanced upwards, and she breathed a prayer for sustaining power.

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY had elapsed since Emerson despatched the letter to Mary, renewing his offer of marriage, and yet no answer had been received. Scarcely had that letter passed from his hands beyond recall, ere he repented of what he had done, and from that time he was in a state of restless anxiety, which drew a veil between his perceptions and all that was lovely and attractive in the girl he had been so desirous to lead to the marriage altar.

On the next morning, Miss Barker visited his store again. She looked even more beautiful in his eyes than on the day previous; and there was in her manner a winning grace that captivated his feelings. She lingered at his counter longer than usual, and, in going away, remarked that she would call

again in the afternoon to look at some elegant fans which Emerson said he was about to open.

"Why did I act so precipitately?" said the young man to himself, with a troubled feeling, as the graceful form of the beautiful girl faded from his eyes, yet still remained distinctly present to his mental vision. "What could I have been thinking about? So much for giving way to a mere generous impulse!"

Some one entered the store at the moment. Emerson turned his head, and saw that it was the city despatch carrier. How suddenly his heart did throb. The man came back to where he was standing and presented him a letter. His hands shook as he broke the seal. A moment more, and the suspense was over. It was simply an order from a customer for goods.

For a short time Emerson felt as weak as if just from a bed of sickness, and moving slowly back to a remote part of his store, sat down to recollect his thoughts and get control of his feelings.

"Why does she not answer my letter?" he said to himself. "What am I to understand by this delay? I am entitled to at least a prompt response. Or, does she mean to treat this generous offer with silent contempt?"

An indignant emotion swelled in the heart of the young man, as he gave utterance to the last

sentence. For a few moments he remained in deep thought. Then turning to his desk, he took up his pen and wrote, hurriedly, these few words, addressed to Mary Lynn.

"Let me ask, as a favor, that you destroy my note of yesterday, and forget that it was ever received."

Without pausing to reflect or change his suddenly formed purpose, Emerson dispatched this brief communication.

It was towards evening, on the day previous, when Mrs. Lynn repaired to the room of her daughter, in order to learn her decision in a matter that concerned them both so deeply. She found Mary sitting at a table, in the act of folding a letter which she had just written.

"Have you replied to Philip yet?" she asked.

"Yes, mother," said Mary, in a low, yet firm voice.

"How have you replied?" was the next, and eagerly asked question.

Without a word, Mary handed her mother the letter she had just written. Mrs. Lynn almost tore the folds in her eagerness to get at the contents. They were as follows, and were taken in at a glance:

"I am touched by the manner in which you have renewed your offer of marriage, and thank you most sincerely for the generous sentiments expressed. But, deeply conscious that a union would fail to secure either your happiness or mine, I am

constrained to adhere to my first decision. Philip! Try and forget me."

As the eyes of Mrs. Lynn rested on the last words, she tore the letter into ribbons, and scattered them passionately on the floor.

"And this is your love for me, foolish girl!" she exclaimed.

Mary trembled in every nerve, and shrunk beneath the angry gaze that was fixed upon her. She felt a strong impulse to say, in a spirit of self-sacrifice,

"I will accept his offer." But something held her back; and she remained silent.

"Is this a time to hesitate?" resumed the mother. "When it is in your power to save yourself and family from poverty, humiliation and distress, will you refuse in obedience to some girlish fancy? Happiness! How could you use the word in such a connexion? Where do you expect happiness to come from?"

"I do not expect much in this life," replied Mary, tears falling slowly over her face. "But I would avoid an abyss of wretchedness, a single glance into which has filled my heart with terror."

To this the mother answered only with an expression of impatience. In the silence that followed, both grew calmer. Mrs. Lynn then changed her mode of address, and sought to influence her daughter by appeals that the poor child found it almost impossible to resist.

Again the struggle was renewed in her mind, and once more she passed amid the clouds and shadows of doubt. A further time for reflection was granted. The anguish of the night that followed, Mary did not forget in many years. Brief was her sleep and sadly troubled; and the morning found her still unprepared to act. When she thought of accepting the offer, her whole nature appeared to rise up in opposition; and when she thought of her mother, her heart grew faint, and she shrunk from the trial that was before her.

Twice during the morning had Mrs. Lynn appealed to Mary against a longer delay.

"It is not just to Philip to keep him thus in suspense," she said.

But Mary was not prepared to act.

It was about eleven o'clock, and the deeply tried girl sat writing another answer to Emerson's offer of marriage—it was the same as the first—when Mrs. Lynn burst into her room with a pale, agitated face, and an open letter in her hand.

"Mad girl! See what your delay has wrought!" she exclaimed, flinging the letter on the table before Mary, who caught it up eagerly. It was from Emerson, and read—"Let me ask, as a favor, that you destroy my note of yesterday, and forget that it was ever received."

"Thank God!" murmured

the tried and tempted girl, clasping her hands together, and lifting upwards her eyes that were suddenly filled with tears. "Thank God! It is over!"

Then covering her face with her hands, she sobbed until every nerve and muscle quivered in the intensity of her emotion.

CHAPTER V.

WE pass over two years with but a glance at its events. The disappointment of Mrs. Lynn, at the failure of Mary to accept the hand of Mr. Emerson, was very great, and her feelings, in consequence, much embittered towards her daughter, who was rendered thereby very unhappy. Misfortunes rarely come alone. So it proved in the case of Mrs. Lynn. The five thousand dollars saved out of the wreck of her property, was deposited, temporarily, in one of the city banks, until such time as a good investment of the sum could be made. The failure of the bank, ere the deposit was withdrawn, swept away this poor remnant of her fortune, and left her helpless and almost penniless.

To a weak minded woman whose heart is filled with a love of the world, a reverse like this is paralyzing. Such a woman was Mrs. Lynn. Up to this time, since parting with her depreciated stock at ten

dollars a share, she had sought to keep up the old appearance of things in order to deceive others in regard to her real condition. Mary's steady rejection of so good an offer as that made by Emerson, tried her sorely. But she still had hope that her beautiful and accomplished daughter would attract some suitor of equal merit. In this, however, her hope found no realization. Mary was neither wooed nor won when this second disaster came—and ruined every thing.

As is usual in such cases, only a few friends were found to draw near and sympathize with the distressed family, and these had little to offer but good advice as to how they were to help themselves. In the eyes of a woman like Mrs. Lynn, there is something disgraceful attached to useful labor. The idea of either herself or daughter working for money, shocked her the moment it was presented. But Mary's mind was of a better quality, and she had, in her aunt, one to advise her who saw with a far better vision than did her mother. In every state of doubt and trial, Mary went to her aunt Edith, and she usually found, in the calm and just views of life and life's duties, strength to walk patiently and firmly in the way that opened before her.

For three days after the failure of the bank in which had been placed the little remnant

of her property, Mrs. Lynn, completely prostrate in mind and body, kept her bed and refused to be comforted. In this unhappy state of affairs, Mary wrote to her brother, a lad in his seventeenth year, who was away at school, advising him of the total wreck of their fortunes, and desiring him to come home immediately. His name was William. Her sister Agnes, younger than William by three years, was at home. The brother did not hesitate a moment in obeying the summons. This action on the part of Mary gave offence to her mother, who accused her of taking upon herself more than she was entitled to assume. This Mary bore without reply; but, when her mother desired her son to return to school immediately, she did not hesitate to ask—

"How are we to pay the expense?"

"One would think that your tongue would cleave to the roof of your mouth in asking that question!" was the unfeeling retort of Mrs. Lynn. "For this extremity we may thank you."

Mary drooped her head meekly and remained silent.

"William must go back to school," said the mother, firmly. "He must complete his education at every sacrifice."

"We have nothing to sacrifice, mother," urged Mary. "When the bills become due how are we to pay them?"

But Mrs. Lynn would hearken

en to none of these suggestions of her daughter. There was still in her mind the purpose to keep up an appearance, and one of the means of doing so was to let William remain at an expensive school, regardless as to whether the bills for board and tuition were ever paid or not. She did not succeed, however, in carrying out this plan, for William refused, positively, after a long and earnest conference with his sister, to return to school, and, in the face of his mother's angry remonstrance, procured for himself a situation in a store. For service therein he was to receive a hundred dollars a year. The boy, like Mary, had in him something of the upright and independent spirit of his father.

For the house in which Mrs. Lynn was living at the time her fortunes became so sadly changed, she paid the annual rent of six hundred dollars. She was still in this house, although her resources were exhausted, and debts were beginning to accumulate at every point, while those who knew something of her real circumstances, were beginning to wonder how she could maintain so expensive a style. Of course she was in a state of wretchedness scarcely to be described—and Mary was almost as wretched as herself. Many plans for aiding in the support of the family had passed through the mind of the latter; but, while living at the present expense,

exertion on her part was felt to be hopeless, and she awaited, passively, the issue of events.

The end of this came at last. Landlord, grocers, market men and others, became impatient for their money, and Mrs. Lynn was compelled to sell the best part of her furniture to satisfy their claims, and then to move into a smaller house. Here she made a slight stand against the pressure of adversity; but it was only for a brief space. She had yet to go down lower. Without an income what else could she have expected?

At the end of two years we find them poor indeed. They are living in a part of a small house, in a neighborhood through which Mrs. Lynn would, in her better days, scarcely have permitted her coachman to drive. Their only income is from the labor of their hands. Yes, they are poor indeed, and Mrs. Lynn, struggling angrily against her fate, is very wretched. Not for a moment has she forgiven Mary for refusing the hand of Emerson.

Up to this time the work done by Mary and her mother has been needle-work obtained at the Ladies' Repository.—Work was procured here because it could be done without exposing the fact to the parties worked for, who left their garments at the repository, and received them again, without knowing by whose hands they had been made up. This saved

from mortification the false and stubborn pride of Mrs. Lynn; but it reduced them to the necessity of long and fatiguing labor and a meagre income, while Mary possessed higher abilities, which, if brought into use, would have yielded a far better return than needle-work. These abilities, the true-hearted, right-thinking girl at last determined to bring into exercise. What led particularly to this resolution on her part, was a consciousness of the defect suffered by her sister in not attending school.

"Agnes must receive a better education," she said to herself. "If the present time is lost, she suffers a detriment for life. Let mine be the task of procuring the means."

While revolving this subject in her mind, she read, in a morning paper, that fell accidentally into her hands, an advertisement for a governess.—Without consulting her mother, or any one else, she went immediately to the place where applicants were desired to call. It was at a large and handsome dwelling, and the name of Barker was on the door. On being admitted she was shown by the servant into the back parlor. As she sat down she observed a gentleman and lady in the other room, but did not notice them particularly, until startled by the familiar tones of the former. It was Philip Emerson!—and he was conversing in a gay, familiar voice, with his companion.

The reader will scarcely won-

der that the already uneven pulses of Mary Lynn throbbed with a deeper disturbance at this discovery. Turning her face away, so that the young man could not see it, Mary awaited the appearance of Mrs. Barker, the lady who wished a governess, struggling all the while to repress her emotions. After the lapse of about five minutes, a lady entered the room, and said, as she sat down near her, in a voice that could be heard distinctly through both parlors—

"So you wish to inquire about this situation of governess?"

"I do," replied Mary, in a low voice.

"Have you ever acted in this capacity?"

"No, ma'am."

"I'm afraid you are too young. What is your name?"

"Mary Lynn," was answered in the same low voice with which she had at first spoken.

"Mary Lynn," repeated the lady so loud as almost to awaken an echo in the adjoining room.

Mary knew that Philip was at once aware of her presence and her errand; and she could not prevent a quicker motion of her heart, nor keep back a crimson flush from her face.

"Mary Lynn." Mrs. Barker again pronounced the name, adding, as she did so, with a smile, "There is something familiar in the sound. Are you any relation to Mrs. Justin Lynn, widow of the late Justin Lynn?"

"She is my mother," replied Mary.

"Your mother. Is it possible! What then does this mean? Has there been any change in her circumstances?"

"Oh yes, ma'am. All her property was in United States Bank Stock. By the failure of that institution, she lost every thing."

"I am really grieved to hear this," was the sympathising answer. "Your mother and I were young girls together; although we have not happened to meet for years. Did you say that she had lost every thing?"

"Yes, ma'am, every thing. By the labor of our hands, we now procure the means of living."

"Oh, that is sad! sad indeed! And you are now seeking the place of a governess?"

"I saw your advertisement, and have come to make some inquiries on the subject," replied Mary.

"You have had a good English education, I presume?" said Mrs. Barker.

"I believe so," was modestly answered.

"I have three little girls, two daughters and a niece, for whom I wish to employ a governess," said Mrs. Barker, who had from the first, felt a prepossession towards Mary, and whose mind was already made up to give her the place if she would accept of it. "They are eight, ten, and twelve years old. I want a person who will take the

entire care of them, as well as give them all required instruction in English. For music and the languages, teachers are to be employed. The situation will be a responsible one, and the duties rather trying; but, to the right person, we are ready to give a liberal compensation."

"How large will be the compensation?" asked Mary.

"Five hundred dollars a year."

"I think that I could give you satisfaction," said Mary.

"I feel certain that you could," replied Mrs. Barker, "and, if you are willing to come, we will at least make the trial. My intention was to ask references from all applicants, as a measure of just precaution; but I believe that I will waive this, in your case. I like your face and manner, and will take you on their recommendation."

"That would hardly be wise," said Mary, smiling. "I can give you the names of a few ladies who knew me best in our brighter days. I do not think that they would speak of me otherwise than kindly. As for my ability to fill the place of a governess, that can only be known on trial. I like children, and believe that I have patience and perseverance. I know that I will try, in all sincerity, to do what is right."

"And thus trying, you will succeed," replied Mrs. Barker, with some warmth of manner. "No, Mary, I will not seek to go beyond my own personal es-

mate in this brief interview. If you are willing to come for a few weeks on trial, I will look no farther."

"When do you wish me to come?" asked Mary.

"As early as it will suit your convenience."

"In a week?"

"Yes, that will answer.—Where do you live?"

Mary replied to this question, and then went away, promising to call in a few days to make more definite arrangements for becoming an inmate of the family.

"A very interesting girl, that," said Mrs. Barker, as soon as Mary had retired, entering, as she spoke, the front parlor where Philip Emerson sat conversing with her oldest daughter, Caroline.

"Who is she?" asked Caroline.

"Her name is Lynn—Mary Lynn. She is the daughter of the late Justin Lynn, who was a man of considerable property when he died. But, the unfortunate failure of the United States Bank, has swept every thing from his family, and his daughter now seeks a means of livelihood."

"Poor girl!" sighed Caroline, in a voice of real sympathy.

Emerson made no remark; but he felt ill at ease.

"I knew her mother when I was your age. We went to school together. Her father was highly esteemed, and had the

reputation of being one of the most scrupulously just men in the community. If his daughter is like him in character, her introduction into our family will be a most desirable thing."

Mrs. Barker then left the room. Caroline continued to remark on the sad change of fortune in Mary Lynn's case; but Emerson did not trust himself with a word on the subject. He lingered but a short time after Mary retired.

CHAPTER VI.

THE unexpected appearance of Mary Lynn in the family of Mr. Barker, and the prospect of her becoming an inmate, disturbed the mind of Emerson very greatly. He did not like it at all.—The more so, as from what had reached him, he was satisfied that Mary's refusal to accept his offer of marriage, was based upon a knowledge of some of his overreaching transactions in business.

"She must not enter this family," said he, with an emphasis, and a compression of the lips, that marked the earnestness of his purpose. And he quickened his pace as he gave utterance to these words.

When Mary informed her mother of what she had done, Mrs. Lynn was both surprised and indignant.

"You become a governess, and to Sally Barker's brats!"

was her coarse and angry response. "Never! I will work my finger ends off, or starve, first."

"She will pay me five hundred dollars a year. Think how comfortable that will make you all," said Mary, in her meek and quiet way.

"Don't mention it again. I will not accept of comforts at that cost!" replied Mrs. Lynn, passionately.

Mary said no more; but she was none the less determined to avail herself of Mrs. Barker's offer. Her mother had much that was unreasonable to say, but the true-hearted girl entered into no useless argument, content with her own unfaltering conviction that what she purposed doing was right.

Some two hours after Mary's return from the house of Mrs. Barker, a letter was left at the door for Mrs. Lynn. On opening it, she found to her astonishment, that it was from Philip Emerson. The contents were these:

"MY DEAR MADAM:—I have just learned, with painful surprise, that your circumstances have become so reduced that you are in great extremity. To have saved you from this deep depression, would have constituted my greatest pleasure in life, but my ardent attachment to your daughter was not reciprocated, and so this pleasure was denied me. Still, the memory of the past, as well as the

impulses of a naturally generous heart, prompt me, in all sincerity, to offer you aid in your present necessities. Pray accept, as an earnest of my good will, the enclosed sum of one hundred dollars. Every three months you will receive a like sum; and if that should not be sufficient for your wants, more will cheerfully be added.

"Your sincere friend,
"PHILIP EMERSON."

With all her pride, Mrs. Lynn had no true delicacy nor independence of feeling. This letter awoke in her mind a thrill of pleasure, and, moreover, created a new hope. It was plain to her that Emerson still entertained a sincere attachment for Mary, and that this was but another advance towards a renewal of his addresses.

"Read that!" said Mrs. Lynn, in an excited, exultant voice, placing, as she spoke, the letter of Emerson in her daughter's hand.

"Oh, mother! Send it back! Send it back!" exclaimed Mary, as soon as she comprehended the meaning of the letter. "Don't touch a dollar of his money! How could he dare do such a thing!"

With unfeigned astonishment, Mrs. Lynn looked at her daughter.

"No, I will not send it back," she replied.—"Do you think I would thus insult his generous spirit? No! Deeply thankful

am I for such a friend in this trying extremity."

"He is a false friend, mother, and such you will find him," said Mary. "Oh, do not touch his money!"

But she might have talked to the wind as well. The hand of Mrs. Lynn had clutched the timely supply with an eager grasp, and more than the opposition of Mary was required to make her release her hold.

If Mary had in the least wavered in her purpose to become a governess in the situation offered, this circumstance would have determined her. She felt that he had made up his mind to persecute her, and that in Mrs. Barker's family she would be safe from all advances. That her mother should accept his proffer of money, touched her with a sense of shame and humiliation; and she resolved that, with her first earnings, she would cancel the debt.

"I have checked that move," said Philip Emerson, to himself, as he sealed and despatched the letter to Mrs. Lynn, containing a hundred dollars. His manner expressed exultation, though not unmingled with concern—"Mary Lynn must not become an inmate of Mr. Barker's family. At least not for the present. She might mar every thing. Three months more, and she may come and go at her pleasure. I wish I had never known the girl!"

"You look sober, Philip," said an intimate friend of Emer-

son's, on calling in to see him that evening.

"Do I?" The young man affected to smile.

"You certainly do. Is any thing wrong?"

"Yes."

"Ah! what is it?"

"You know what a long siege I've had with Caroline Barker, or, rather, with her family?"

"Well?"

"Every thing has been going on as merry as a marriage bell since the old folks gave up their opposition, and I now stand with them A. No. 1. In three months I lead Caroline to the altar, and become the happiest man alive."

"Any thing so terrible in that?" said the friend, smiling.

"No, not in that. But there's an enemy in the camp."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. You remember that affair of mine with Mary Lynn?"

"Very well. At least I remember your being once her devoted lover, and that she jilted you. But the why and the wherefore I never heard."

"Curse the hypocritical jade!" said Emerson, with some bitterness of manner. "I'm mad with myself whenever I think what a fool I was to repeat my offer of marriage after she had once refused me. If I had only known her reason!"

"What was it?" inquired the friend.

"You wouldn't guess for a week."

"I shall not waste time with trying," was answered.

"She didn't like my way of conducting business."

"Indeed!"

"No. I wasn't green enough for her."

"I don't take your drift."

"You remember the two pictures I bought so cheap at a sale in New York, and afterwards sold to Mr. Harding?"

"I believe so."

"I mentioned it to you at the time. They were sent to auction by some one who didn't know their true value, and I got them for a song. Of course, I was entitled to receive for them what they were really worth."

"Certainly you were."

"For what cost me twenty dollars, I received five hundred."

"A handsome profit, certainly. But why should your young lady object to this?"

"Of course, I had to throw a little dust in the eyes of Mr. Harding."

"Ah!"

"I showed him the pictures, after getting them cleaned up a little, as two fine old subjects of the Flemish school, just received from my agent in Paris. An innocent deception, you know, such as is practised in trade every day."

"Yes. Well?"

"Somehow or other, as the old Nick would have it, this fact, as I have since understood, with a few others of a like character, came to the ears of Mary, and, forthwith, the little saint

takes it into her perverse head that I am a monster of iniquity, and so gives me the mitten. I've blessed my stars that she did so a hundred times since. I was fool enough, in a fit of weak generosity, it is true, to renew my offer when I heard of her mother's reverse of fortune; but while she was delaying an answer, in fear of showing too much eagerness to fly into my arms, I prudently withdrew my proposal."

"For which, of course, she has never forgiven you."

"I presume not. Well, to go on with my story. To-day, while I was holding a pleasant *tele-a-tele* with Caroline, who should drop in but Mary Lynn."

"Is she a friend of the family?"

"No. Mrs. Barker advertised for a governess, and she came to apply for the situation."

"Oh!"

"I was sitting in the front parlor with Caroline, and heard the whole interview between her and Mrs. Barker."

"Did she make an engagement to come?"

"Yes. And now you understand why I say that there is an enemy in the camp. Old Barker is as suspicious as he can be; and although he is agreeable enough, I am perfectly aware that he doesn't consider me as the most desirable son-in-law in the world, and that, if he could find a pretty good reason, he would oppose this marriage even now."

"Do you think Mary would

try to poison the family against you?"

"I wouldn't trust her. At any rate it is better to keep danger at a distance."

"True. But how will you accomplish this?"

"I've made one move, that I thought at first would be effectual. But in thinking more about it, I feel less confidence in the result. I sent her mother—the family is in extreme poverty—a hundred dollars, with a promise to supply an equal sum quarterly. This will remove the necessity for Mary to go from home."

"What reason did you assign for such an act of extra generosity?"

"My interest in the family, and all that."

"I don't think it will answer," said the friend. "If Mrs. Lynn has a particle of womanly spirit, she will return the money."

"She hasn't done so yet, and some hours have elapsed since I sent it."

"You'd better ward off the danger in a more effectual way."

"How?"

"Don't wait until she sows the seeds of prejudice against you in the family of Mr. Barker. Sow them first against her."

"Ah, ha! I didn't think of that!" said Emerson, with a sudden warmth of manner.—"You're right. I'll do it."

"You'll have to act guardedly."

"I know. Let me see. How shall I proceed?"

"If you appear in the matter, the slightest error will ruin you. My advice is, that you say nothing about her."

"Then I can do nothing."

"That doesn't follow. You can write a letter, can't you?"

"A letter?"

"Yes; an anonymous letter, warning the family not to put confidence in a certain young lady who has applied for the situation of governess. It will not be necessary to name her. A fair description will suffice. You can insinuate any thing against her you please. But I would not go beyond insinuation. That will do your work effectually."

"That's it. I wish I'd seen you before I threw my hundred dollars away."

"That was a useless waste of money."

"Confound the girl! I wish she'd keep out of my way. I don't want to do her any harm. But I can't and won't permit her to step in between me and one of the dearest objects of my life."

"You'd be a fool if you did."

"Wouldn't I? A precious fool!"

"What is done in this matter," said the friend, "had better be done quickly. And as I can't help you in the work, I'll leave you to go about it at once. So, good evening, and may all come to a safe issue."

The friend then retired, and Emerson sat himself down seriously to the task of creating a

base and ruinous suspicion against the pure-minded Mary Lynn.

CHAPTER VII.

THE unwavering purpose of Mary to accept the offer of Mrs. Barker, met with the strongest opposition from her mother, which was continued up to the very moment of her leaving their humble place of abode to enter upon her new home. In the hope of influencing her daughter, Mrs. Lynn resorted to language of a most heartless character, and used some words that stung the poor girl cruelly.

With her mind, from this cause, in a state of agitation, Mary went forth to lead her new path of duty, feeling sad, even to wretchedness. If there had been but a single cheerful, encouraging word from her mother, how bravely and even happily would she have entered upon this new and toilsome path in life! But all was opposition, harshness, and smarting condemnation.

With a heart laboring heavily under its burden of painful feeling, Mary went forth from the cheerless home of her mother, and took her way toward the residence of Mrs. Barker. She did not observe, as she drew near the house, that a young man was just in advance of her, and that he stopped at the door to which she was going; for her

eyes were upon the ground, and her thoughts were not cognizant of any thing passing around her.

No wonder that she started, nor that a crimson flush mounted to her face, as she set her foot upon the step in front of Mr. Barker's house, and, looking up, met the eye of Philip Emerson. The young man was as much surprised at this unexpected meeting as herself. But not the slightest sign of recognition appeared in his countenance. For a moment he looked coldly upon her, and then turned, as a servant opened the door, and passed in.

Mary followed, asking, as she did so, to see Mrs. Barker.

Caroline Barker met Philip Emerson in the front parlor, where they entered into conversation in a low tone of voice, while Mary sat, in view of them, in the back parlor, trembling in every nerve from the excitement created by the unexpected meeting with her former lover.

Several minutes elapsed before a servant came in and desired Mary to walk up into the sitting room, where Mrs. Barker wished to see her. The moment Mary came into the lady's presence, she perceived a change in her manner from what it was at the previous interview. She did not smile, but received her with a grave formality that instantly chilled the feelings of the unhappy girl.

"I have come, as I promised,

madam," said Mary, so soon as she had taken the seat proffered to her.

Mrs. Barker slightly inclined her head, and looked still more serious. A servant was in the room, and seemed disposed to linger.

"You can go up and see to the children," said Mrs. Barker to the servant, who, after lingering a short time longer, left the room.

The heart of Mary was beating, by this time, with a heavy, oppressive motion, that was actually painful. A few moments of silence ensued, which Mary broke, by saying—

"If you have seen reason to change your mind towards me, do not hesitate about the matter."

Mrs. Barker did not hesitate to comply with this invitation to speak out plainly—and she said—

"I have seen reason to change my first intention in regard to you, and frankly own that I have well grounded doubts as to the propriety of introducing you into my family. Forgive this plainness of speech, but plain speech, in these cases, is always best."

At these words, the face of Mary Lynn became very pale, and for a moment or two, she seemed to gasp for breath. Recovering herself quickly, she said, in a husky voice—

"Then your objection lies against something in my character?"

"It does," replied Mrs. Barker, with a severity of tone that, while it stung Mary, aroused in her mind a sense of virtuous indignation.

"Of course," said she, speaking with more self-possession, "you have received information against me since I was here a few days ago. Then all your feelings seemed to be in my favor."

"True; such is the case," said Mrs. Barker.

"May I ask the source of this information, and the nature of the allegations made?"

Mrs. Barker drew from her pocket a letter, and placed it in the young girl's hands.

Opening it, Mary read as follows:

"TO MRS. BARKER.

"MADAM:—Having learned, accidentally, that a certain young personage is about applying to you for the situation of governess, I feel it to be my duty to caution you against her, as one whose introduction into your family may give trouble. There are many things about her conduct that do not look well, and among them is the fact that she receives sums of money from a former lover, who is about uniting himself in marriage with the daughter of one of our most respectable citizens. I will not mention her name; but you will know her by this description. She is a fair-faced, light-haired girl, slender, a little above the me-

dium height, and rather pretty. Her mother is a widow, who lost all her property by the failure of the United States Bank. Be warned against her.

A TRUE, BUT UNKNOWN FRIEND."

For a short time after reading this, Mary sat immovable. Then starting up, suddenly, she ran swiftly down stairs, with the open letter in her hand. Surprised at this sudden movement, and wishing to regain possession of the letter, Mrs. Barker followed the retreating girl, who, to her still greater surprise, entered the parlor, where sat her daughter and Philip Emerson, and advancing toward the latter, held the letter before his eyes, and said, in a quick, imperative voice—

"Did you write that?"

"Who are you? What do you mean?" exclaimed Emerson, starting to his feet, and contracting his brows angrily. He did not feign astonishment; he really felt it.

"My name is Mary Lynn," was answered. "Do you know me now?"

"I never saw you nor heard of you before," said Emerson.

"The girl is mad."

Mary crushed the letter in her hands as she clasped her temples; stood for a moment, looking wildly upon the young man, and then, with a gesture of agony, turned away, and without a word more, left the house.

"Who is she?" asked Emerson, his face red to the forehead. "What did she mean by my writing a letter? I never saw her before."

"I presume not," replied Mrs. Barker, with considerable agitation in her manner. "The girl, as you say, is mad!"

And without further remark, Mrs. Barker left the room.

As Mary Lynn retired from the house, she met at the door a young man, the son of Mr. Barker, who, struck with her appearance, and the strange agitation of her manner, stood looking after her as she went hurrying away.

"What does this mean?" said he, half aloud, as he turned, and entered the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

"CURSE the girl! She will ruin every thing!" muttered Emerson, as he passed along the street with rapid strides, soon after the unexpected encounter with Mary. "I wish she were dead!"

"A fine affair I've made of it by following your advice!" said he, on meeting the friend at whose suggestion he had written the letter of warning to Mrs. Barker.

"What's the matter now?" was inquired. "Didn't it work well?"

"No."

"What kind of a letter did you write?"

"Here is a copy of it. See for yourself."

The friend glanced over the letter, and then said,

"No wonder. It bears on its very face the stamp of its authorship."

"How so?"

"Were you beside yourself when you spoke of her receiving money from a former lover, who was about uniting himself with the daughter of a respectable citizen? Could you not see, that if the letter came under her eye, she would at once accuse you?"

"I must have been beside myself!" exclaimed Emerson, striking his hands together. "Of all insinuations against her, that is the last I should have made. But what do you think has been the result?"

"Well."

"In calling to see Caroline this morning, I met Mary on the door step. She had come, it appears, according to agreement, to enter upon her duties as governess. I did not know her, of course, but passed in, she following. Some ten minutes afterwards, as I sat talking with Caroline, Mary suddenly burst into the room, followed by Mrs. Barker. She had my open letter in her hand. Holding it up before me, she demanded if I were the author!"

"What else could you have expected? But, go on."

"I called her a mad girl, and

vowed that, until then, I had never seen her."

"Were you believed?"

"Heaven knows."

"Did she repeat the charge?"

"No. She crumpled the letter in her hand, and then rushed from the house."

"Retaining possession of the letter?"

"Yes."

The friend shook his head, saying as he did so—

"You have every thing to fear."

"I know that I have."

"Hadn't you better see her and try to compromise the matter in some way?"

"No. That would be worse than useless. She is a girl with an iron spirit that nothing can bend from its purpose."

"You must silence her in some way, or else give up your claim to the hand of Caroline Barker. That letter, if shown to her father, with such explanations as it is in Mary Lynn's power to give, will completely destroy you in his estimation. He is a stern old fellow, and would see in this a want of principle that would be fatal to your expectations."

"I know. But the first step has been so disastrous, that I am in no way inclined to take the second. Mary is the most impracticable girl I ever met. With Caroline Barker I can do almost any thing I please. But Mary Lynn is made of other stuff altogether. I wish I had never known her."

"You are certainly unfortunate in the acquaintance," said the friend.

"Most unfortunate. Confound those pictures! I'm afraid they'll prove a dear bargain in the end."

"The pictures you sold Harding?"

"Yes. I thought five hundred dollars for what cost twenty and a little business subterfuge, a very fair transaction. But, from present appearances, it bids fair to turn out most disastrously."

"It would hardly do, in the present aspect of your affairs, to miss an alliance which promises so much as this one."

"No, my friend!" replied Emerson, and a cloud fell heavily over his face as he spoke. "Something more than a broken heart would be, I fear, the consequence."

"A broken fortune?"

"There is danger of this, as you know. That copper mine bubble in which I was fool enough to risk so much, has, in bursting, swept from me such large sums of money, that I find myself badly crippled. No later than yesterday the Merchants' Bank turned down some of my paper; a thing never done before. I was unprepared for this, and it left me, I can assure you, with my hands full to meet payments for the day."

"That wasn't very pleasant."

"You may well say that. Particularly as I had to go on

the street and raise some three thousand dollars at one and-a-half per cent. a month."

"Indeed! Were you so hard pressed as that?"

"I was, and no mistake; and I shall be hard pressed until I become the son-in-law of Mr. Barker. Then my credit will stand fair enough."

"I wish the wedding day were to-morrow," remarked the friend, who was on Emerson's paper to a very large amount.

"You can't wish that more ardently than I do. But wishing is of no avail. I must wait, in fear and trembling, the end of this business. Three months is a long period where so much is at stake."

Enough touching the character and principles of Philip Emerson has been made apparent to the mind of the reader, to satisfy him that Mary Lynn was right in declining his offer of marriage. He was, in heart, a man so given over to selfishness, that it was impossible for him to form an alliance with a right-minded woman, without insuring her unhappiness. All that Mary had heard touching his want of integrity, and a great deal more was true. And it was also true, that he had, in a most heartless spirit, violated the dying injunction of his mother in the matter of his helpless old nurse, who had been left to spend her last days in the almshouse.

Mr. Barker was a man of the strictest probity and the nicest

sense of honor. When Emerson made advances towards his daughter, he was far from being pleased; for, in one or two business transactions which had taken place between him and the young man, he saw a spirit that he did not like. Accordingly, he used every means in his power to discourage his attentions, and tried to influence the mind of Caroline. But the young lady was fascinated with the handsome exterior and winning address of Emerson, and so all parental interference with the current of her preferences proved of little avail. In the end, a formal application was made for her hand. To this Mr. Barker did not hesitate to express his disapprobation.

"You are far from being my choice as the husband of my daughter," said the plain spoken father, "and I will not deceive you so much as to conceal this fact. I do not believe that you will make her happy."

Emerson protested the sincerity of his affection, but Mr. Barker was not deceived in the opinion he had formed, that the young man's love for his daughter had another basis than a regard for personal excellencies. A long time passed before Mr. Barker gave a final consent to the marriage. He delayed month after month in the hope that some circumstance, fully developing what he believed to be the real character of the young man, would transpire. But he waited in vain, and, at last, with a reluctance that he

did not take much pains to conceal, yielded the long withheld approbation.

By this time, as has been intimated, the affairs of Emerson were considerably embarrassed, owing to his having been drawn aside, in his lust of gain, into certain stock speculation, by which he lost the greater part of all he had made. He was, therefore, the more eager to consummate the alliance with Mr. Barker's family, as that would reinstate his credit, now considerably weakened.

All was going on as pleasantly as he could wish, when he was alarmed by the unexpected appearance in the family of Mary Lynn, and most unwisely sought to prevent her becoming a member thereof. In this, he completely overreached himself, and made his position in every way more dangerous than it would have been, had he not so wickedly sought to injure an innocent young girl, who had too much virtue and decision of character to unite herself in holy marriage with one whose principles she could not approve.

On the day after the occurrence of the briefly passing, yet exciting scene in the parlor of Mr. Barker, that gentleman called to see Emerson. He looked grave.

"You must excuse me, Philip," said he, "but I would like to ask you a few questions about that strange affair of yesterday."

"What affair?" inquired

Emerson. As he spoke, the color rose to his face.

"I understand that a young lady, whom my wife engaged as governess, charged upon you the authorship of a letter, making against her disreputable insinuations."

"True. She did."

"Do you know her?"

"Before Heaven, Mr. Barker, I do not!" was unhesitatingly answered. "No one could have been more astonished than myself at the sudden and unexpected charge. Surely the girl was not in her right mind."

A denial so unequivocal as this, quieted, if it did not entirely dispel the suspicions which had arisen in the mind of Mr. Barker. Yet, for all this, the subject rested with a weight upon his feelings, and he was troubled about it, in spite of all efforts to dismiss it from his thoughts.

CHAPTER IX.

A WEEK went by without Mrs. Barker having heard any thing more of Mary Lynn, and then two ladies called and spoke of her. They were acquaintances of Mrs. Barker.

"Did not a young girl, named Mary Lynn, apply to you for the situation of governess to your children?" asked one of them.

"I had such an application," was replied.

"You did not take her?"

"No. I was warned not to do so."

"By whom?"

"The warning came anonymously; but it was of a character that made it, on my part, an act of prudence not to bring her into my house."

"If any one has made evil accusations against her, they are false," said the lady who had first spoken.

"From a personal knowledge of Mary," added the other lady, "I can unhesitatingly affirm the same thing. A purer minded, better girl I am sure cannot be found; and, as the governess and friend of your children, you would have in her a treasure. Strange, that any should seek to injure one in her friendless and needy condition."

"I can conceive of no motive for such an act," said Mrs. Barker.

"Whatever the motive may have been, it was conceived in a spirit that stamps its author as a debased wretch!"

"You speak in a positive manner," said Mrs. Barker.

"Why should we not?" answered one of the ladies. "We knew Mary well, in her better days, and take some blame to ourselves for letting misfortune remove her so entirely from our observation and circle of friendship."

"May she not have changed since her mother's misfortunes? Adversity is a severe trial."

"In her case, it has but consumed the dross and made finer the gold. You know Mrs. May, the sister of Mary's father."

"By character."

"We have just seen her and had a long conversation with her on the subject, and she says that a more cruel and malicious slander was never uttered, than that by which some enemy in disguise has sought to injure her niece. Of Mary, she speaks with a tenderness of feeling that is really touching to hear. A better, truer-hearted, purer-minded girl, she affirms that she has never known."

"Who could have written that letter?" asked Mrs. Barker. "Does Mary suspect the author?"

"She does."

"Has she named the person?"

"She declines doing this."

"Why so?"

"She might be mistaken, and will not therefore utter her suspicions, lest an innocent person be injured."

"You believe," said Mrs. Barker, after reflecting for some moments, "that Mary Lynn is worthy of confidence in every way, and that I can introduce her into my family and among my children with perfect safety?"

"We do," was unhesitatingly replied.

One of the ladies added,

"Were I in want of a governess, most gladly would I take her, and think myself highly

favoured in obtaining a person so worthy of all confidence, respect, and esteem."

"You speak warmly," said Mrs. Barker, smiling.

"We do," was answered, "because we are in earnest in the matter. Depend upon it, you will never have cause to regret the entrance of Mary Lynn into your family."

"I must take a little time for reflection," said Mrs. Barker. "This puts quite a new face on the matter. As for Miss Lynn, I must own that I was very much prepossessed in her favor. A number of applicants for the situation have since presented themselves; but none pleased me. If all is right with Mary, no one could suit me so well."

"All is right with her; of that you may rest fully assured," answered the ladies.

"I will take until to-morrow to think over the matter," returned Mrs. Barker, "and if I come to a favorable conclusion, will send for her."

When Mrs. Barker mentioned what she had heard to her husband, he reflected for a short time, and then said—

"Let us take her. There is a mystery in this affair that I would like to see cleared up. I can't get over the fact of her charging the authorship of that letter upon Emerson."

"Why should he write it?" asked Mrs. Barker.

"Just the question, of all others, that I would like to have answered. He avers before

Heaven that he does not know her. If he does know her, and has a personal interest in keeping her out of our family, he has lied, to say the least of it; and that is enough for me. The man who can call Heaven to witness that he speaks truth, while giving utterance to a lie, must have a very depraved heart. But worse than this, the man who, to effect some personal end, can stab the reputation of an innocent, friendless girl, is a wretch of the basest kind. Yes, yes; by all means send for Miss Lynn. I am fully satisfied with the endorsement of the ladies who have interested themselves in her behalf. She may prove to our house a protecting angel. And I verily believe she will."

Without further delay, a servant was sent to Mary Lynn with a note, asking her to call immediately. Without hesitation, Mary obeyed the summons. She was very pale, and looked as if from a recent bed of sickness, which might almost be said to be true, for the shock occasioned by the unexpected reception she had met at Mrs. Barker's, for a time completely prostrated her.

"Have you been ill?" asked Mrs. Barker, kindly, on receiving Mary.

Tears came into the young girl's eyes. She tried to make an audible reply, but her lips quivered so that she could give no utterance to words.

"I believe I acted hastily,

Mary, in the matter of that letter. I am now convinced that it made false charges against you."

"Oh, ma'am!" exclaimed Mary, "it was a base and cruel slander."

"Of that I am now convinced," said Mrs. Barker. "But do you not know from whence it originated?"

Mary's eyes sunk to the floor, and she remained silent.

"You charged, by implication," and Mrs. Barker looked steadily at the countenance of Mary, "a young man named Philip Emerson, with the authorship. Why was this?"

"I was half beside myself. I hardly knew what I was doing ma'am," returned Mary.

"It was a serious matter to charge an act like that upon a young man who solemnly avers that he does not know you."

"It was," answered Mary, now lifting her eyes to the face of Mrs. Barker, and speaking more calmly. "But, as I said, just now, I scarcely knew what I was doing. I was under a great and bewildering excitement. Try and forget that painful scene, as I wish myself to forget it."

But Mrs. Barker was by no means satisfied with this, and tried to press the subject farther. Mary, however, was altogether disinclined to answer her questions, and the lady, seeing this, deemed it but right to forbear.

"I have sent for you," she

then said, "not only to express my entire conviction that you have been wronged, but to show my sincerity in the matter, by again offering you the situation of governess in my family. Are you still prepared to accept the place?"

"I did not expect this," returned Mary, exhibiting some emotion.

"No one has applied whom I like so well," said Mrs. Barker.

"I don't know," said Mary, with considerable hesitation in her manner, and speaking partly to herself—"that I ought to come."

"Why not?" quickly inquired the lady.

It was some time before Mary spoke. She then said,

"Upon reflection, I am satisfied that I ought not to refuse your offer, which will enable me to support my mother and keep my sister Agnes at school. In accepting it, I will take a liberty which you may think altogether out of place. If so, deny my request without hesitation. I would like one hundred dollars advanced on my salary."

"You need the money very much?"

"For a special purpose I do. Oh, ma'am, you do not know what a weight the possession of that sum would enable me to remove from my mind! Nothing but the intolerable pain occasioned by the pressure, and the panting desire I have for

its removal, could tempt me to prefer so untimely a request. In fact, with the weight I speak of resting upon me, I do not feel competent to the performance of the duties I have just agreed to enter upon."

There was that in the manner of the young girl which Mrs. Barker could not resist, and she promised, unhesitatingly to furnish the sum she required.

On the next day, Mary Lynn became an inmate of Mr. Barker's family. The children placed under her care, seemed to love her from the first moment, and to come under her gentle influence as by the power of an irresistible attraction. There was about her a sphere of goodness that all felt. No one was more drawn towards her than Mr. Barker, who, from recently occurring circumstances, was led to observe her closely, and thus to perceive the indications of her real character.

"Yes, it *was* a base attempt to injure an innocent girl," said he to Mrs. Barker, a week after Mary had entered the family; "and I sincerely hope that the wrong meditated may fall upon the head of the injurer. What could have been the motive for such an act?"

"It is not improbable," replied Mrs. Barker, "that some one who desired the situation, and who ascertained that Mary had procured it, took this method of removing her out of her

way. This has occurred to me as the most probable explanation of the circumstance."

"I never thought of that," remarked Mr. Barker, and his tone of voice expressed the relief of mind occasioned by the suggestion. "Yes—that may be the true explanation. Still, I cannot cease to think of the fact that she accused Emerson. Why should she have done this?"

"She says that she was so bewildered that she did not know what she was doing. And I can readily believe that such might be the case. So unexpected and serious a charge, would naturally shock and bewilder the mind."

"Very true. Well, I hope it is all so—that Emerson is in no way concerned in the business."

"I do not think he is. Indeed, the more I reflect on the subject, the more fully convinced am I that he is not," said Mrs. Barker. "I am afraid that your prejudices against the young man are too strong."

"Perhaps they are. Still, I cannot help them. But your suggestion as to the authorship of that letter, greatly relieves my mind. It is certainly the most reasonable one."

CHAPTER X.

SOME ten days had passed since the exciting scene with Mary Lynn in the house of Mr. Barker, and Philip Emerson was beginning to breathe a little more freely, when he was startled from his dream of safety by the following note!

"SIR—Enclosed you have one hundred dollars, the sum transmitted by you to my mother. I am enabled to return it through means of an advance on my salary as governess in the family of Mr. Barker. I trust that you will not attempt to repeat an act which, for one in your position, has no justification.

MARY LYNN."

This was the young man's first intimation that Mary had returned to Mr. Barker's family. Nothing could have more astonished and alarmed him. That evening he had intended to pass with Caroline; but he was too much disturbed to venture into her presence. The hours were spent alone. How many disturbing thoughts intruded themselves! How his heart trembled and sunk, as he saw, in clear light, the difficulties that were before him. In attempting to get Mary Lynn out of his way, by improper means, he had made the danger of her presence in the family a hundred fold greater. That she believed him to be the author

of the letter to Mrs. Barker, he did not doubt; and, with his knowledge of her character, he felt that there was every thing to fear.

Various suggestions were made to the mind of Emerson, as he pondered over the unpleasant relation in which he found himself placed to Mary. One of them was to ask an interview, and attempt to convince her that he was not the author of the letter which she had, by implication, accused him of writing. Another was, to obtain an interview, and procure her silence by threats, of consequences. But, after due reflection on each of these points, he dismissed them from his mind. He had positively asserted that he had no knowledge of Mary whatever, and he saw that to attempt an interview, or to communicate with her in any way, might come under the knowledge of Mr. Barker, or some member of his family, who would immediately ask explanations of Mary; and then enough would transpire to render his position extremely questionable in their eyes.

A still more disturbing thought came into the young man's mind as he dwelt on the subject. Would Mrs. Barker have taken Mary into her family, after the warning she had received, and after acting upon that warning, unless entirely satisfied of the falsity of the allegations made against her?

It was plain that she would not. How, then, had Mary been able to satisfy her mind, except by proving the authorship of the letter, and showing a sufficient reason why it should have been written. This view of the case came fraught with no little alarm, and greatly increased anxiety.

The longer the mind of Emerson dwelt upon it, the more likely did it seem to be true. A state of feverish anxiety was the consequence. On the day after receiving Mary's note, he found himself, as to money matters, in a very narrow place. A succession of heavy payments had not only exhausted his own means, but the means of his immediate business friends also, and, as the bank from which he had been in the habit of receiving accommodations had a second and a third time thrown out his offerings, he found himself in an extremity that was really alarming. After various sacrifices and extra exertions, however, he succeeded in getting his paper out of bank, and then called upon the friend, heretofore mentioned, whose name was Concord, for the purpose of consultation and advice as to his best course of action.

"You must have money," said Concord. "Money at all risks. If you break down before your marriage with Miss Barker, it is all over with you; but only keep going until you are Barker's son-in-law, and

you are safe. The marriage will strengthen your credit immediately; and, if the worst looks like coming to the worst, you can, in an extremity, put your hand into the old gentleman's pocket a little earlier than a feeling of delicacy would prompt to such an act."

"But how am I to get money? Just answer me that question," said Emerson, in a restless, eager manner.

"There is a way, that might be used as a temporary expedient," remarked Concord, with some hesitation in his voice.

"Name it," was Emerson's prompt response.

"It is hardly legitimate. Still it is better than doing worse."

"Speak out plainly. I must have money; though I am not quite prepared to knock a man down on the highway, or to rob the mail."

"The means to which I refer, might be used as an expedient," said Concord, speaking low, and in an insinuating voice. "It would hardly do to pursue it to a very great extent, as it is a little risky."

"Come to the point, if you please. Don't be afraid," was replied to this firmly. "I am ready to hear almost any proposition."

"You know young Baldwin?"

"Book-keeper in the Trader's Bank?"

"The same."

"Yes. I know him."

"He rides a fast horse"

"I am aware of it."

"And owns him into the bargain."

"Well?"

"Always has a pocket full of money, and always is ready to spend it freely."

"I know."

"He spends more than his salary."

"So I should think."

"Where do you suppose it comes from?" asked Concord.

"I don't know. From the bank, in all probability."

"No doubt of it. Indeed, I know this to be the fact."

"Ah?"

"Yes. And his mode of removing the deposits is peculiar to himself, and quite ingenious. But he must have some one on the outside to act in concert with him."

Emerson made no remark to this, but bent closer to his friend, who lowered his voice and continued—

"The mode of operation is this: As he keeps the deposit ledger, the checks paid out by the teller are passed over to him to post and cancel. It is, as you will see, the easiest thing in the world for him to put a check into his pocket before cancelling it, and hand it to some friend to draw the money upon it a second time. The person who draws the money is, of course, free from all suspicion, and Baldwin protects himself by a system of double charges and credits, which may

not be found out for years. The settling up of the customers' bank books being a part of his work, no one sees the discrepancy between some of the entries therein and his ledger accounts. The balances being the same, no suspicion is awakened. Among some hundred bank accounts, this system may be pursued to a considerable extent and with comparative safety."

To all this Emerson listened with great eagerness, and then opposed various objections as to the alleged safety of the operation. These were all explained away.

"How did you become so intimately acquainted with this matter?" he then asked.

"I have known Baldwin for many years. As you are aware, I am a little gay myself; like a fast horse, and see a good deal of pleasure. This has thrown the young man and myself a good deal into each other's company, and, as he was a fine, generous fellow, I liked the association. On a certain occasion, I found myself pretty hard pressed for money, and being with him about the time, I said, half jestingly—

"I wish I knew how to get my hands on some of the cash locked up in the vaults of your bank."

"Do you?" replied he, smiling.

"Indeed I do," was my feeling response.

"Are you tight up?" he asked, after a time.

"I am," I did not hesitate to answer, for I was somewhat encouraged by the way he spoke.

"How much do you want?" he then inquired.

"I want a thousand dollars to-morrow," was my reply.

"Without hesitation, he drew forth his pocket-book, and taking therefrom three checks each for the sum of five hundred dollars, handed them to me, saying as he did so—

"Draw these when the bank opens in the morning. A thousand you may use. The balance you can give me after bank hours, when I will see you."

"I looked at the checks, and found that they were drawn by three of our best merchants on the Trader's Bank. A suspicion that all was not right flashed through my mind, and he saw it. My first impression was that they were forgeries:

"What is the meaning of this?" I asked. "Are these checks good?"

"As good as gold," he promptly answered.

"But how came they in your possession?"

"Draw the money," said he, smiling, "and use as much as you want of it. When I call to see you to-morrow, I will explain all to your satisfaction. You needn't be afraid. They are genuine checks, and will be paid on presentation."

"Thus assured over and over again, I received the checks,

and on the day following they were cashed. 'There's some roguery about this,' Baldwin, said I, when he called after bank hours, 'and you must explain it.' He made the explanation of which you are already in possession. Now, if you desire to be put *en rapport* with this young gentleman, just say the word, and it shall be done. You'll find him nothing loath to a good operation."

"I'm afraid," said Emerson, after reflecting on the subject. "The whole thing involves a crime, and, if it came to light, might send me to prison."

"So would some of your custom house operations," remarked Concord.

Emerson shrugged his shoulders.

"In them, perjury is involved. Here the transaction is far more simple."

"I don't mind cheating the Government, if I can," said Emerson. "That is fair game. But using another man's check is an individual affair, and comes too near home."

"The operation doesn't touch any one's private account," said Concord. "The bank bears all the loss; and I'm sure that I would have no more compunctions about cheating a bank than I would about cheating Uncle Sam. As for the Trader's Bank, that is rich enough, and would never feel the loss of a few thousands."

"I'm afraid it isn't safe," remarked Emerson.

"Nothing could be safer," replied the tempter. "All you have to do is to present a good check and draw the money. Baldwin will manage all the rest. Even if he should be suspected and found out, you will not be involved in the matter. It will be to his interest to conceal your agency."

"Why so?"

"Because the bulk of the money drawn out will be in your possession. If you are implicated, you will have to refund. If not, he will have something to fall back upon, after losing his situation in bank. Don't you see?"

"Yes. He will have an interest in concealing the name of the party concerned with him in the transaction. But why don't you continue to act with him?"

"Because, having been helped through a tight place, I can get on without further resort to a means of raising money that is only to be used in desperate cases. Yours is a desperate case, and, therefore, I suggest the thing to you. My word for it, you will go safely over your difficulties by this means."

"I'll turn it over in my mind," said Emerson. "I don't like the look of it at all. Still, any thing is better than breaking down just now."

"Of course it is. See Baldwin, and ask him to lend you a few thousand dollars. The amount will be sure to come. Better give him notice a day or

two before you want the money. You needn't know, unless you choose to ask him, how the checks you receive come into his hands."

"True. That didn't occur to me." The countenance of Emerson brightened. "It's none of my business how he gets the money. I only borrow it from him. If he steals it, that is his own look-out."

"Certainly it is."

"Thank you for suggesting this means of raising money," said Emerson. "If I can do no better—and I see no way now—I must adopt it."

The friends parted, and Emerson pondered the subject of their conversation over and over in his mind for a long time, and he finally decided to have an interview with young Baldwin. His thoughts then turned towards Caroline Barker, and the dangers that beset his way in that quarter.

"I must see her to night," was the conclusion of his mind. "Suspense like this cannot be borne."

So he called that evening at the house of Mr. Barker. On first meeting with Caroline, there was a reserve in her manner that oppressed the feelings of Emerson. This gradually wore off, however, and she seemed to him as of old. But he saw no other member of the family. On going away, he did not feel much more at ease than before.

On the next day he was

thrown, for a short time, in company with two or three gentlemen, among whom was Mr. Barker. The conversation turned upon certain unfair transactions which had just come to light.

"For my part," said Mr. Barker, remarking on the subject, and speaking with considerable warmth, "I would rather suffer the rack than be guilty of such roguery. I call things by their right names. Any man who will cheat the Government, will rob if he gets the opportunity. He would knock a man down on the highway for his pocket-book, if he had the nerve to do so."

"Just my way of thinking," was the prompt remark of Emerson.

Mr. Barker glanced at the young man approvingly, and the latter, encouraged thereat, said—

"How a man can obtain his own consent to engage in fraudulent dealing, is more than I can comprehend. The gain, surely, cannot compensate for want of self-respect, and the danger of exposure and prosecution."

"Fair dealing is the only wise dealing," added Mr. Barker. "It brings all out right in the end; while few who begin by over-reaching their neighbors, ever attain ultimate success in business. The devil is a false-hearted wretch, and usually betrays those who trust in him."

In less than an hour after this, Emerson despatched a note to Baldwin, asking him to call at his store after the bank closed. The young man came as desired.

"I had some conversation with Mr. Concord to-day," Emerson thus introduced the subject he wished to talk about, "and I learned from him that you sometimes had money to lend." Baldwin, from the mention of Concord's name, understood him fully. His reply was—"How much do you want?"

"A few thousand dollars."

"Now?" inquired the young man.

"Not all of it at once. I want some ten or fifteen thousand dollars during the coming three months."

Baldwin shook his head, saying, as he did so,

"That is entirely beyond my ability. I could raise you a thousand dollars, in a week or ten days, perhaps, if that would be of any use."

"Not much," replied Emerson, in a tone of disappointment.

Both parties now became a good deal embarrassed. The manner of Emerson changed, and Baldwin, not comprehending exactly the nature of the change, felt somewhat alarmed.

"I will see you again to-morrow," said he, and he retired in some trepidation, going immediately to the store of Concord.

"Did you tell Mr. Emerson

that I had money to lend?" he asked.

"I did," was replied.

"What kind of a man is he?" inquired Baldwin.

"One after your own heart," was promptly answered.

The countenance of Baldwin grew brighter.

"Are you certain?"

"Oh yes. He cheats the Custom-House every month," said Concord.

A slight flush of shame mantled the young man's cheek at this not very flattering compliment to himself. But he recovered quickly, remarking at the same time,

"All right then?"

"Entirely so. If you can get him any money, pray accommodate him. He's a clever fellow, but extremely hard run just now. He was in the copper speculation."

"Was he? No wonder he is in a tight place now."

"None in the least."

"He wants some ten or fifteen thousand dollars," said Baldwin.

"You can get it for him."

"I suppose I can. But that will be operating rather heavily."

"True. But it will be something handsome to fall back upon one of these days."

"Can I trust him?" asked Baldwin.

"Implicitly. He is the very soul of honor."

This endorsement of Emerson's character was sufficient

for Baldwin. On the next day he brought him checks for the sum of sixteen hundred dollars. They were drawn by various merchants on the Traders' Bank; and one of them was a check of Mr. Barker's. The sight of this last check did not produce very pleasant sensations in the mind of Emerson.

"Don't send all these checks in at once," said Baldwin.

"Oh, no, I understand," replied Emerson.

"Twelve hundred dollars of the amount is at your service."

"Thank you! That sum, will enable me to go through to-morrow quite comfortably. How will you be off on next Monday? That will be a heavy day with me."

"I reckon I can help you some. How much will you want?"

"At least two thousand dollars."

"So much?"

"Yes; unless I find collections far better than they have been."

"I'll see what I can do, at any rate," replied Baldwin. "But don't depend on me for so large a sum."

"I guess you can raise it," said Emerson, in a coaxing tone, and with a smile meant to flatter the young man.

"We'll see," was returned, in a voice that assured Emerson that the money he wanted would be forthcoming.

CHAPTER XI.

THE position in which Mary Lynn found herself, was an exceedingly trying one; trying to her personally, as well as to her principles of action. The letter of accusation against her which Mrs. Barker had received, remained in her possession. As to its authorship, she was in some doubt. That Emerson had something to do with it—had, in fact, written it in a disguised hand, or procured it to be written—she felt almost certain. But she did not know this, and, therefore, did not feel that it would be right to predicate action thereon.

A very brief intercourse with Mr. Barker's family, served to attach her strongly to every member thereof; particularly was this so in the case of Caroline, whose goodness of heart and correctness of principle manifested themselves to her more and more daily. The feeling between Mary and the family was reciprocal. Like attracts like by the law of spiritual elective affinities. So it was in the present case.

William, the oldest son of Mr. Barker, who had been so struck with the appearance of Mary, as she left the house on an occasion previously referred to, was not the least favorably affected by the sphere of virtue that surrounded the lovely girl. Every time he met her, he felt drawn towards her more and

more; and saw in her new phases of beauty. Frequently he spoke of her to his sister, and, in such terms of praise, that Caroline at length began to jest pleasantly with him about losing his heart to the fair governess. This threw the young man's thoughts back upon themselves, and he felt rather serious on finding that he was more interested in the young girl than was agreeable, considering the different relations each held to society. So, with a deliberate purpose, he sought to turn himself from her. This, however, did not prove so easy of accomplishment. The more he tried to turn himself away, the more instinctively did his thoughts and feelings turn towards her. And, even while he was resolving not to think or care for her, he thought and cared for her the more.

We said that the position in which Mary Lynn found herself, was a trying one. It was so in regard to Emerson's relation to the family. She had rejected his offer of marriage, because she was satisfied of his want of right feeling and honest and honorable principles. Such a thing as a real union with a man like him, she believed to be impossible; and she could not conceive how Caroline Barker, in a marriage with him, was to escape unhappiness. There was the less hope of this, if, as Mary, with too good reason feared, Emerson had sought, by the most unjustifiable means, to

keep her out of the family. The fact of his having denied to her face any knowledge of her, was bad enough; but as this was not to be reconciled in her mind with any other fact than his authorship of the letter, she was forced to the unwilling conclusion, that he was far more depraved in heart, than she had, heretofore, believed him. The worst feature to her mind, in that letter, was its allusion to the money sent to her by himself; or, rather sent to her mother, and falsely made to appear as if sent to herself.

Day and night Mary thought of all this, and shuddered inwardly, as the time approached when Caroline was to pledge her bridal vows. The closer her intercourse became with Caroline, and the better she knew her, the more was she troubled as her thoughts went on to the future. Hers was a pure and true heart; and for it to be happy in a union with such a man as was Philip Emerson, in her estimation, she felt to be impossible. But could she step forward to throw a barrier in the way of that union? Was it her duty? Once she had stood in the way of Emerson's attainment of his wishes; should she do so again? If she had been absolutely certain that he was the author of the letter sent to Mrs. Barker, there would have been little hesitation as to what she should do. But many doubts on this subject harassed and confused her mind, and

made her really unhappy. That she was ill at ease, the family saw; and not unfrequently did Caroline, in particular, question her as to the cause.

In her mother, Mary had no counsellor. The mind of the latter was completely darkened by false views of life, and by the mists of selfish feelings. To her Aunt Edith, she opened her heart fully; but, from the point of view occupied by Mrs. May, she was not able to see clearly what it was best for her niece to do. To step in and seek to prevent a marriage to which both parties were solemnly pledged, was too serious an affair to be determined hastily.

"If I only knew that Philip Emerson wrote, or even caused to be written, that letter," said Mary, while in conversation with her aunt a few weeks before the wedding of Caroline was to take place, "I would know how to act. My simple duty would then be, to inform Mrs. Barker, and let her make what further investigations she pleased. But I cannot be certain of this. I have no proof."

"You accused him of having written the letter; and did so before Mrs. Barker?" remarked Mrs. May.

"Yes."

"That ought to be sufficient to raise a doubt in the minds of the family, and to cause them to look and inquire farther."

"But you know, aunt," replied Mary, "I told Mrs. Barker that when I said this, I was half beside myself, and hardly knew what I was doing."

"That was calculated to mislead her."

"I spoke but the truth. I was utterly bewildered. But she took my meaning in a fuller sense than I intended. Oh, Aunt Edith! I wish I knew what it was right for me to do. Caroline is a good girl, and will never be happy as the wife of Emerson. Knowing this, and with the power in my hands of preventing, in all probability, the marriage, what ought I to do? I wish you would advise me."

But Mrs. May was not prepared to advise her niece to any course of action.

"Wait longer," said she. "Something may occur to make your duty plain."

"It will soon be too late, aunt. A few weeks, and all interference will be vain. Ah! to see her unhappy, and to know that I might have prevented it by a timely warning, will almost break my heart. What a poor return will this be for all the kindness I have received, and am daily receiving, from every member of Mr. Barker's family."

"All do not see and feel alike, Mary," said her aunt to this. "Although Caroline may possess excellent qualities of heart, she has not your determination. She does not per-

ceive, with the intuitive quickness that marked your intercourse with Emerson, his true character; and she may not perceive it after marriage. If he is really attached to her, the beauty of goodness as it shines forth in her daily life, may win him from selfish purposes. This marriage may be permitted, providentially, as a means of withdrawing him from evil. It may be the only way of saving him from the dominion of cruel and selfish passions; or of elevating her, through disappointment and suffering, into a higher state than she would have otherwise obtained. The ways of God are not as man's ways. We are short-sighted; but He is all-seeing. Our lives here are but the preparatory states for a better life, and whatever will tend to develope and strengthen true spiritual life within us, is permitted to take place by Providence."

Mary saw enough in this argument to prevent her from interfering to hinder the marriage of Emerson and Miss Barker, but not enough to satisfy her that she was right in so doing. Hourly the subject was in her mind, and deeply was her heart troubled. So much was she affected thereby, that her appearance caused much concern in the family of Mr. Barker, and frequent earnest inquiries as to the cause of her evident disquietude of mind. To these inquiries, evasive answers were always given,

which were often made the subject of conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Barker; the former frequently coming back to the suggestion that Mary knew more of Emerson than she was willing to admit. This idea, however, Mrs. Barker always opposed.

Meanwhile, Mary's intercourse with her mother did not assume a more pleasant character. The money she had obtained in advance from Mrs. Barker she had sent to Mr. Emerson, warning him, in a brief note, that he well understood, not to repeat the act. Of this she had felt it her duty to advise her mother, that she might understand, in the beginning, that no aid would come from her for six months, and that she must, therefore, husband the money in her hands, which was now merely an advance on Mary's salary. At this information, Mrs. Lynn was greatly outraged, and poor Mary had to bear an outburst of passionate upbraidings, that, while borne meekly, grieved her to the heart.

Of the fact of Emerson's intimacy in the family, and of his approaching marriage with Caroline, Mary wisely said nothing to her mother. That intelligence, come when it would, was destined, she knew, to subject her to remarks of a painful character.

One evening, about two weeks before the appointed wedding-day of Caroline Bar-

ker, Mary was spending an hour at home. William, her brother, remarked to her, in the hearing of their mother—

"Some one said, in our store to-day, that Miss Barker was to be married to Mr. Emerson week after next. Is it so?"

"What's that?" inquired Mrs. Lynn, before Mary had time to answer.

"I heard that Miss Caroline Barker was to be married to Mr. Emerson in a week or two," repeated William.

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Lynn, quickly.—"There isn't a word of truth in it."

She hadn't given up the idea that Emerson would yet lead her daughter to the altar.

"How is it, Mary? You must know," said William, referring to his sister.

"It is true," was her simple response; and as she spoke, she turned her face partly away.

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Lynn.

"It is true," repeated Mary.

"I do not believe it!" said Mrs. Lynn, exhibiting at once a great deal of feeling.

To this Mary felt no inclination to reply. In the next moment, her mother, assuming the fact just denied, took occasion to upbraid her for having madly, as she said, refused to save herself and family from beggary, by accepting the offer of an alliance in every way so desirable.

"Are you any better than Caroline Barker?" was the

harsh interrogation of this unfeeling, selfish woman.

"No, mother," replied Mary, in a mild voice.

"She doesn't think herself too good to marry Mr. Emerson."

"But I do," said Mary, firmly. "A great deal too good. And if Caroline doesn't repent of her act before a year, I am greatly mistaken. She doesn't know him as I do."

"You'd better enlighten her a little," sneeringly retorted Mrs. Lynn.

Mary did not venture a reply to this, nor to any thing her mother said farther on the subject; and, as quickly as she could, sought to change the theme of conversation. Her visits were, from this time, made so unpleasant, by her mother's constant reference to the approaching marriage of Miss Barker, that she came home less frequently, and staid only for a short time.

CHAPTER XII.

DURING all this period, Emerson, although he called to see Caroline three or four times every week, did not obtain a glimpse of Mary, nor did any one mention her name in his hearing. In fact the only evidence he had of her presence in the family, was the letter received from her, enclosing a hundred dollars. All dread of in-

terference on her part was nearly removed from his mind, when, one evening, about a week before the wedding-day, as he sat in the parlor alone, awaiting the appearance of Caroline, he was startled by her entrance. She came in with a slow, noiseless step, her face thinner and paler than he had ever seen it, and her eyes fixed intently upon him.

"Philip," said she, in a firm voice, yet speaking only a little above a whisper. "I wish to ask you one question."

"For Heaven's sake, Mary!" exclaimed the young man, evincing great alarm, and lifting both hands deprecatingly as he spoke—"go away! Go quickly! or you will ruin me."

"I wish to ask you one question," repeated the immovable girl, approaching still nearer. "Did you write that letter to Mrs. Barker?"

"What letter? No!" he replied.

"The letter warning her not to receive me into her family; and alluding to the money you sent my mother as if sent to me?"

"Mad girl! Do you wish to destroy me?" exclaimed Emerson, in much distress and perplexity. "What right have you to interrogate me in this way? Go! Go!" And he waved his hand imperatively.

"I shall not go until I am satisfied on the subject of my inquiry," replied Mary, in a voice so calm and resolute, that

Emerson saw no hope but in trying to convince her that he was innocent.

"I have told you that I did not write the letter," said he. "What more can I do?"

"Why did you send my mother a hundred dollars at the very moment of my application for the situation of governess here?"

"That application first made known to me the extremity of your family. My letter fully explained my motive."

"How is it, that, immediately after this sum is sent, I am charged, in a letter to Mrs. Barker, with receiving money from a young man who was about marrying in a wealthy and respectable family? I want that explained, Philip Emerson! The two facts hang too nearly together. I cannot but regard you as the author of that base letter to Mrs. Barker, reason the subject as I will."

"I tell you that I did not write it, Mary," said the young man, with a show of indignation. "Is not that enough? Now leave me!"

A noise of footsteps was heard along the passage at this moment.

"Go! Go!" exclaimed the distressed Emerson, in a husky whisper.

For a moment or two Mary paused, and then glided from the room. Caroline Barker entered through another door as she vanished from the sight of the agitated young man.

"Who was that?" asked Caroline, in an indifferent tone.

"One of your servants," replied Emerson, turning his face partly away as he spoke.

"Oh! I imagined, as I caught a glimpse of her dress, that it was Mary Lynn."

"Mary Lynn? Who is she?"

"Don't you know? Our governess."

"Not the mad girl who charged me with writing some letter about her?"

"Yes; the same."

"Is it possible? I thought, of course, that she was in an insane asylum?"

"Very far from it. I wish all the world were as sane and as good as she is. Some enemy tried to prejudice mother against her in an anonymous letter, and, in the distress occasioned thereby, she wildly charged you with having written it."

"Wildly enough! I had never seen nor heard of the girl. She acknowledged, I believe, that she didn't know what she was doing at the time?"

"Oh, yes, but it was a false and cruel thing thus to seek to injure one so innocent and so friendless. None but a wicked and depraved wretch could have been guilty of such an act."

"I can well believe that." And Emerson again averted his face as he spoke.

"But what could have been the motive?" said Caroline. "That has always puzzled me."

"What is her own view of the matter?" asked the young

man, concealing the interest he felt in the answer.

"I do not know. She never alluded to the subject."

"Have you never spoken to her about it?"

"Yes; but she evades all direct answers."

"Who is she?" asked Emerson.

"You remember the late Justin Lynn?"

"Very well. She is not his daughter?"

"Yes."

"I was not aware of that. Why, I thought Mr. Lynn left a very handsome property at his death?"

"So he did. But it was all lost in the failure of the United States Bank."

"How unfortunate! And now his poor daughter is compelled to support herself by acting as governess in your family. Really, hers is a sad case!"

"Indeed it is. And we sympathize with her very much."

"She cannot be very happy," said Emerson.

"She is far more cheerful than I could ever be under such circumstances. Still, something evidently preys upon her mind. Mother thinks that it is the letter."

"Why should that prey upon her mind? No one in the family regards it in any other light than as a slander."

"I know. Still, there is a mystery about it that is unexplained. I must have a more earnest conversation with her

on the subject, and try if I cannot see a little deeper into her thoughts."

This declaration, coupled with the fact, that Mary had, only a few moments before, demanded of him explanations on the same subject, produced a state of greater anxiety than that from which he was already suffering. He replied, with affected commiseration for Mary,

"If the subject is so unpleasant to the poor girl, I don't think I would press it upon her."

Caroline made no answer to this, when Emerson changed the theme of conversation. He did not remain long on this occasion, for he was momentarily in fear of seeing Mary re-enter the parlor to interrogate him still further about that unwisely sent letter.

The new system of money-raising adopted by Emerson worked to a charm. He was no longer forced upon the street to borrow at one and two per cent. a month in order to meet his payments. All he found necessary was to give Baldwin two or three days' notice, and, in due time, checks for a few hundred dollars above the amount desired were sure to come. The excess was paid to the dashing, fast-living young man, and the remainder passed to his loan account, to be returned at some period as yet but dimly seen in the future. It was by this loan-feature of

the case that Emerson quieted his conscience; and by which he expected to clear himself from all blame, if Baldwin's dishonest transactions should ever see the light; a circumstance which he flattered himself was not soon likely to occur, as the swindling transaction was a very ingenious one, and managed with consummate skill.

Already had Emerson received from the young bank officer over twenty thousand dollars, and the drain was still going on. Baldwin was living faster and freer—so much so that the eyes of many were looking upon him with suspicion, and Emerson occasionally heard, from one and another, remarks that produced in his own mind no very pleasant reflections. Two or three days before the time at which the marriage was to take place, Mr. Barker said to him,

"Do you know this young Baldwin, who is a book-keeper in the Traders' Bank?"

"I have met him occasionally," replied Emerson, the color deepening in his face at this unexpected question, asked, as he conceived, in a meaning tone, and with a purpose.

Mr. Barker saw the change in the young man's countenance and wondered, momentarily, as to its meaning.

"He lives fast," said he, "for a young man with a salary of only twelve hundred dollars."

"He may have something be-

yond his salary," suggested Emerson.

"I doubt that," was replied. "I knew his father very well. He was a poor man, and had nothing to give his son."

"Is he a married man?" asked Emerson, affecting ignorance.

"Yes; and his wife looks like a jeweller's walking advertisement. There's something wrong, you may depend on it. Baldwin is living at the rate of at least two or three thousand dollars a year. I wonder that the directors of the bank retain him in the institution."

"If the business of his desk is faithfully done they can have no fault to find with him?" said Emerson.

"No," was replied; "not unless he puts his hand in the money-drawer."

"Surely, Mr. Barker!" exclaimed Emerson, with well affected surprise, "you don't suspect any thing of that kind?"

"A man must get money before he can spend it," said Mr. Barker. "Now where does this young man get two or three thousand dollars a year to squander at the rate he is squandering money?"

"He may go in debt," suggested Emerson.

Mr. Barker shook his head with an incredulous air.

Emerson remained silent, perplexed in thought, and doubtful whether to say any thing further, or change the

subject of discourse. Many unpleasant suggestions flitted through his mind. Could it be possible that Mr. Barker had a suspicion of the real truth, and that a motive governed him in asking these questions?

"The fact is," said Mr. Barker, as if coming to a sudden resolution, "I will give one of the directors, who is a personal and intimate friend, the benefit of my suspicions. He can act afterwards as he sees best. Something is undoubtedly wrong, and the quicker it is set right the better."

"There's trouble ahead!" was the anxiously uttered ejaculation of Emerson, as soon as he was alone. "What can be in the man's mind? Baldwin does dash too much. I've told him so a good many times. But he's insane on this subject; and doesn't seem to imagine that he attracts invidious attention."

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he received the following note from Baldwin:

"MY DEAR SIR:—Enclosed are four checks for the sum of two thousand dollars. Turn them into money during the day if you please. I will call after the bank closes for a thousand. The balance you can, no doubt, use to good advantage. B."

"This has gone far enough," thus spoke Emerson to himself,

as he replaced the checks in the envelope from which he had removed them, and put the whole, including Baldwin's note, under seal. "Suspicion will soon be aroused against him, and then the hunting down will prove quick work. How far am I safe? That is the all important question! Are any of his letters to me yet undestroyed?"

Emerson commenced a hurried search in pigeon holes, and among files of letters.—Two notes from Baldwin were discovered and promptly destroyed.

"No evidence among my papers can be found," said he, after finishing this work. "The credits in my ledger are for money loaned. It is no business of mine where he got the money from."

Still Emerson was far from feeling at ease in his mind—very far. His intercourse with Baldwin had shown him some things in his character that a good deal marred his confidence. He was by no means certain that the young man would not, in case his peculations were discovered, refer to him as his accomplice. Anxiously did he await his promised appearance after the closing of the bank.

"Did you draw those checks?" was the smiling and rather eager inquiry of Baldwin, on calling in to see Emerson about four o'clock.

"No," was the gravely uttered answer.

"Why not? I'm sorry," returned Baldwin, looking dis-

appointed. "I wanted a thousand dollars particularly this afternoon. Indeed, I must have that sum."

"For what purpose?" asked Emerson.

"To buy a horse."

"A horse!"

"Yes. The most splendid trotter you ever saw. I rode out behind him, yesterday, and he went past every thing on the road. His price is a thousand dollars; but I have made up my mind to own him. In fact, have bought him, and am to pay down the cash by five o'clock, to-day."

"You mustn't do it," said Emerson, in a firm voice, and with an expression of face that rather sobered the feelings of young Baldwin.

"Why not?" asked the latter.

"Only that act of folly is needed to complete your ruin," said Emerson.

"What do you mean?" Baldwin looked frightened.

"This dashing folly, against which I have so often warned you, has awakened suspicion."

"How do you know?"

"I have heard it from various quarters. To-day Mr. Barker referred to it, and did not hesitate to give it as his opinion, that the money you spent so freely came out of the bank."

"He did?"

"It is too true—but how can you wonder that such is the case? I do not. Moreover—and this is the worst of it—he said he should call the attention of

one of your directors to the fact this very day, and suggest an inspection of your accounts."

"Let them inspect!" exclaimed Baldwin, with assumed indifference. Yet, even while he spoke, his cheeks blanched. "Confound the meddlesome old rascal!" he added, with much bitterness. "I wonder what business he has to trouble himself with my affairs. Let him mind his own."

"Suppose they examine your books," said Emerson. "What will be the result?"

"That will depend entirely upon how they examine them. If cursorily, they'll find nothing unless by accident. And even a careful examination will reveal nothing, unless they happen to discover the trick."

"If you had only been prudent in your way of living," said Emerson, "suspicion might have been entirely avoided. In a few years you could have resigned your clerkship, and lived at ease for the remainder of your life. Suppose the thing is found out now. What will be the consequence?"

"Dear knows! But I won't think of that. I don't believe it will be found out."

"My fears lead me to a different conclusion. I anticipate the worst; and with good reason."

"You need be under no apprehension. You are safe," said Baldwin.

"I'm not so certain of that!" sighed Emerson.

"You certainly are. No one will suspect you in the matter."

"I don't know."

"I do, then. The secret is yours and mine; and there are too many weighty reasons why I should not betray you. The first and strongest is, that you are stake-holder. In case of difficulty, I can fall back upon the funds in your hands; and money is all potent, you know."

Even while Baldwin talked in this way, his cheek was pale and his lips quivered. He knew the character of Barker very well, and did not at all like his interference in the matter. The approach of danger, too, had opened his eyes; and he now saw, with a clearness that startled him, the madness of the course he had been pursuing. That he had escaped suspicion so long, was a cause of wonder.

"You had better take these checks and cancel them," said Emerson, returning the last note he had received from the young man. "In case the worst comes to the worst, don't forget that every thing depends on concealing my agency in the business. I am stake-holder, as you say; and if you get into difficulty, will be your secret, interested, and efficient friend. Your family will need a resource, and have it in me. Yes, money is all potent; and we may, with that in reserve, defy judges and juries, if the law takes hold of the matter. Moreover—you are aware that in a few days, I am to be married to the daughter of

old Mr. Barker. This will give me a new position and influence."

Assuring Emerson, over and over again that he had nothing to fear, Baldwin took back the checks, with a promise to cancel them, and then went away. His face wore a look of trouble, and there was trouble in his heart. But a deeper anxiety and alarm than he felt, was in the heart of his unprincipled accomplice.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE nearer the hour approached when Caroline Barker was to become the wife of Philip Emerson, the more troubled and anxious became Mary Lynn, and the more in doubt as to what was her real duty. Certainty in regard to the letter written to Mrs. Barker would have determined her course of action. But her mind was not clear on that subject. Who else could have written it? To that question no answer came to her mind.

Daily affectionate intercourse with Caroline enabled Mary to see deeper into her heart; and the more that was laid open before her, the more fully satisfied did she become that her marriage with Emerson would prove an unhappy one.

"You do look so sad, Mary," said Caroline, to her, one day, with tender concern in her voice. "I am really afraid you

are not happy here. I'm sure we all like you very much, and I think you ought to like us."

"And so I do," quickly replied Mary, tears filling her eyes as she looked into the face of Caroline. "None could be kinder to me nor more considerate than all in this house."

"I wish you would try to be more cheerful, then," said the good-hearted girl, smiling as she spoke. "I'm as happy as I can be; and I can't bear to see a cloud on the face of any."

"Are you very happy?" asked Mary, in a serious voice.

"Indeed I am! And why not? A few days more, and I will be a bride. Is not that enough to make the heart glad?"

At this point Caroline suddenly checked herself. A short time before, a person who knew Mary's early history, had told her something about a lover to whom she had been deeply attached in her better days; but who, from some cause, she had discarded. The name of this lover was not mentioned. The reason why Caroline checked herself, was in consequence of the thought that an utterance of the joy she felt at her approaching marriage, might throw the mind of Mary too painfully upon the past. She paused for a few moments, and then obeying an impulse to speak, said, in a changed voice, laying her hand upon Mary as she spoke, in a familiar, affectionate way—

"Perhaps I ought not to talk so freely of my own happiness. At least, not to you?"

Caroline had not intended to say just this. But these were the words that came first into utterance.

"Why not to me?" asked Mary, with a surprise that was felt and manifested.

"Because," said Caroline, her mind a little confused, "it may throw your mind unpleasantly backward; and, Heaven knows! I would not utter a word calculated to give you a moment's pain."

"Did you think, for an instant, that I retained a single spark of regard for Phil—"

This much had fallen from the lips of Mary, ere a thought of what she was saying came to check further utterance. She was speaking with a quick energy and a flashing of the eyes that startled her auditor.

"Forgive me for having unwittingly pained you," said Caroline, in a voice which showed Mary that she was not understood, and that in her momentary forgetfulness she had not betrayed the secret that rested so heavily upon her heart. Her feelings, however, were so much disturbed, that she lost the mastery over them; and was borne away by their pressure. With many words of kindness and affection did Caroline seek to soothe the heart in which she had awakened a tempest of emotion; and in this she was at last successful. When calm-

ness was restored, Mary sought her own room, to ponder over the one all-absorbing theme—her duty to the loving-hearted girl, who was about being sacrificed to a man in every way unworthy to lead her to the altar; and which sacrifice, a word from her could prevent. It was while seeking to know her duty on this occasion, that she resolved to see Emerson, and interrogate him on the subject of the letter, and if, in the interview, she were made entirely certain that he wrote it, to let that decide her course of action. As has been seen, he denied the authorship, and in a way that left her mind still in doubt; and in doubt it remained, day after day, until the one came that was to see the marriage of Caroline and Philip Emerson.

Mary was alone with Caroline a good many times during the day, and each time she was so much overcome by her feelings as to shed tears. Kindly and tenderly would Caroline seek to speak comforting words. Alas! how little power did they contain. To all the family Mary's greater distress of mind was apparent, and the members spoke together on the subject.

"Oh, that I knew my duty!" murmured the unhappy girl, as she sat alone, or thought that she was alone, a few hours before evening.

"If we all knew and performed our duty as well as you do," replied Mrs. Barker, who happened to enter the room at

the moment, "it would be far better for us."

Mary started, and a crimson flush overspread her pale face. She was on the eve of opening her whole heart to Mrs. Barker; but something held her back.

The lady paused a few moments, as if waiting for her to speak, and then passed on through the room.

"Oh! what shall I do?" sobbed the distressed girl, wringing her hands, and weeping again, bitterly.

Time moved on, and evening came.

But let us go back a little in the day, and see how it is with Emerson.

On the day previous, Baldwin had been suspended from his place in the bank, on suspicion that all was not right. The hints of Mr. Barker had been acted upon by the director, who called the attention of the board to the subject. By them a secret investigation of the deposit ledger was made, under the direction of the Cashier and the Receiving and Paying Tellers, while Baldwin was enjoying a ride on one of his fast-going horses. The result was, a discovery of various discrepancies, and strange entries, that made them decide upon suspending the young man until a more thorough examination into the books could be made; and this was accordingly done—greatly to his mortification and terror; and greatly to the alarm of Emerson.

"A nice business, that, of young Baldwin's," said William Barker to Emerson, as he called in at the store of the latter about mid-day.

"A bad business, certainly, for him," replied Emerson, as calmly as he could speak, "for, whether proved innocent or guilty, he is a ruined man. The stain of a suspicion like the one attached to him, is never fully wiped out."

"It certainly never will be wiped out in his case," said Barker, "for suspicion has given place to certainty. He has confessed his crime."

"What!" The color faded momentarily from the face of Emerson.

"It is true. He confesses to having abstracted over thirty thousand dollars from the bank, though he has, so far, concealed the means. But he speaks of an accomplice outside."

"He does!"

"Yes; but refuses to give his name. As that accomplice probably has the bulk of the money, strong efforts will be made to induce Baldwin to give him up. These efforts, backed by the interference of Baldwin's friends, will, no doubt, bring the scoundrel to light."

The knees of Emerson trembled as he stood leaning on his counter. But for this support, he could hardly have borne the weight of his body.

"Bad business, certainly," he murmured. "Very bad business."

"Indeed it is a bad business," said William Barker. "Somebody will go to the Penitentiary."

From that time until evening, Emerson's mind was in a state of bewildering anxiety and fear. He could not hold back from meeting Caroline at the marriage altar, for he had no reason that he dared give for such an act; and he shrunk from wedding any one with the prospect of being arrested in an hour afterwards as an accomplice in a crime that might send him to the State's Prison. What the wretched man suffered during the few hours that elapsed before repairing to the house of Mr. Barker, is beyond description.

Return we now to Mary Lynn. Evening had come, and in an hour more Caroline would be a bride. The conflict in Mary's mind had been so severe as to make her really ill, and she had retired to her own room, where, depressed in mind and body, she had thrown herself across the bed. All the earnest persuasions of Caroline, and other members of the family, that she would be present at the wedding, had been resisted; and now, she had obtained a release from importunity by pleading illness—and the plea was no subterfuge.

Often, and with tearful earnestness, did Mary lift her heart to Heaven, during that last hour, and pray for direction. At length she fell asleep;

but her dreaming thoughts moved on in the same current—not now guided by reason but phantasy. She was amid the company assembled below, to witness the holy rite of marriage. Emerson was there. He stood in the centre of the room, to her a giant in form—his eyes red with an evil light, and lines deeply furrowed by cruel purposes on his forehead. By his side, shrunk, trembling, the pure-hearted Caroline, awaiting her sacrifice. Close around were the company—and, as Mary glanced from face to face, she saw in none a pitying emotion. Then the ceremony began, and was proceeding, when, in the anguish of her feelings, the sleeper cried out,

"Will no one save her?"

"Save who, Mary?" came to her ears in a tone of affectionate concern, at the same time that she felt a kiss upon her cheek.

"Oh, Caroline!" exclaimed the waking girl, flinging her arms around the neck of Caroline Barker, who, all dressed in her bridal robes, had come to see her for a moment before joining the company who were waiting for the ceremony to begin.

For almost a minute Mary clung to the neck of Caroline, sobbing with unrestrained emotion. Then the latter sought to lift herself up, but Mary only clung to her the tighter, saying as she did so, in a low whisper,

"I cannot let you go."

"But they are waiting for me, dear," returned Caroline. "All is ready, and I have come to see you for a moment."

Still Mary did not withdraw her arms.

Caroline kissed her once more, wondering, all the while, at the girl's strange conduct, and again sought to get away from her.

"Don't go. Stay here with me. They won't find you," said Mary, in a wandering manner.

With a sudden effort Caroline disengaged herself from the arms of Mary.

"Why do you say this?" she exclaimed. But seeing the flushed face and bright eyes of Mary, she comprehended, in a moment, that her mind was, from sickness or some other cause, partially unbalanced.

"There, there, dear," she said, in a soothing voice, laying her hand upon the hot forehead of the young girl. "Don't talk so."

Mary, regaining in a moment the lost equilibrium of her mind, murmured,

"Forgive me. I hardly knew what I was saying."

Kissing her once more, Caroline turned from the bed whereon she was lying, and glided from the room. As she did so, Mary started up with a wild, distressed look, and bent her ear, hearkening to the sound of Caroline's retreating footsteps. Then banding her temples with

her hands, she commenced moving about the room, the very picture of anguish and irresolution.

Meanwhile the ceremony had commenced below. Those who observed Emerson closely marked an unusual pallor of countenance, accompanied with a restless wandering, or rather, darting of the eyes from point to point. It was plain that he was ill at ease, yet struggling hard to appear self-possessed.

Mr. Barker was standing near one of the doors that opened into the hall, looking first upon the face of the young man and then upon the pure, sweet face of his child, while his heart felt troubled and oppressed. He had never liked the idea of this union, and he liked it less than ever now. In his mind was an overpowering perception that his daughter was about entering upon a life of misery. But it was too late now to recede. No good reason for interdicting the marriage had heretofore been presented to his mind, and none were presented now. So he stood a passive witness of the ceremony as it proceeded.

A moment or two remained ere Caroline was to give utterance to the brief words that made her the wife of Emerson, when Mr. Barker felt his arm suddenly grasped from behind. Turning quickly, he met the agitated, and almost colorless face of Mary Lynn, who said to him in an eager whisper,

"Oh, Mr. Barker! save her

from this fate! If you love your child, save her!"

The father required no further prompting now. Instantly his voice filled the apartments with a peremptory command to stop the ceremony! A wild scene of confusion ensued, in which Caroline was borne fainting from the room. When this abated, and one and another looked around for Emerson, he was not to be found. In the first moment of excitement he had left the house.

Scarcely had quiet been restored, ere a gentleman came rushing in, asking in a loud voice for Mr. Barker.

"Is your daughter married yet?" he inquired, so soon as he found the person he sought.

"No, thank God!" replied Mr. Barker.

"You may well thank God," said the stranger, "for it has just been discovered that Philip Emerson is the accomplice of young Baldwin in robbing the Traders' Bank!"

"What an escape!" murmured the agitated father, as he clasped his hands together. "Yes," he added in a fervent voice, "thank God! thank God! For He has wrought for us this great deliverance."

A few months have glided by, since the troubled scenes just described, and there is another bridal assemblage in the house of Mr. Barker. But under what different circumstances and with what different

prospects for happiness do the parties now about to be united approach the marriage altar. Over them bends the cloudless sky, and beautiful vistas open far down into the future. Who is the bride? There she stands beside William Barker, pure and beautiful as Spring's earliest flowers. Her name is Mary Lynn. She has passed through her long night of trial, and this is the glad hour of virtue's triumph.

There is but one pale cheek and sad eye in that pleasant company. Caroline is there; and even while she feels a weight like a hand pressing on her bosom, she is thankful that it is with her as it is—and that she is not the wife of a man just proven guilty of crime, and sentenced to the expiation thereof in the solitary and gloomy walls of a prison. No one looks with a tender and more loving eye upon the gentle bride than herself; nor rejoices with a deeper joy at the happiness that is in store for her.

Mrs. Lynn is there of course, and her worldly heart is swelling with a proud delight at this unlooked-for elevation of her daughter and prospective change for herself. There is no one now who more loudly execrates the "villain Emerson," than she.

And here let us draw the curtain over the scenes we have introduced, with the simple remark that in all cases where a maiden discovers an overweening selfishness and want of honest

principle in a lover, her plain duty to herself is to discard him. To marry such a man is a greater risk than any woman is justified in taking. Her vir-

tues may win him from his evil cupidities; but the chances are all against such a result; and we repeat, the risk is too great, and should not be taken.

THE GIFT OF BEAUTY.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"Is she not loveliness itself?" said a young man named Atwood, to a friend who stood by his side. "My eyes follow her as if there were a spell in her beauty."

"I have often said," was replied to this remark, "that Florence d'Almaigne was the handsomest woman I had ever seen."

"You said the truth. I never saw her equal."

"As your hand is still free, why don't you seek to gain favor in the eyes of this queen of beauty?" said the friend.

"There would be little chance for me," replied Atwood, "while so many, with pretensions far more imposing than mine, are eagerly seeking her favor. I may worship at a distance, but dare not approach and lay my hand upon the goddess."

"You know the old adage, Atwood," said the friend, smiling. "'Faint heart never won fair lady.' You are as good as any of the aspirants for her favor, and far better than most of them. Press up boldly, then. It is the boldest that wins the most beautiful. And she is worth the winning, if I am

rightly informed, for she is as good as beautiful."

"Her face is the image of her mind. No one can be long in her company without half forgetting her pure, bright countenance in love for her purer spirit. But, as I said before, she is not to be mine; I must worship at a distance. Look at her now! See how unconsciously she leans toward Courtney while he speaks to her, as if she were striving to comprehend in every word he utters, some deeper meaning. Her heart is already his."

"I trust not. He is not worthy to possess her heart."

"He is utterly unworthy!" replied Atwood, "for he has an impure mind, and is wanting in sound principles. He is attracted only by the surpassing beauty of her face. The unfading beauty of her mind he does not see; and even if he could see it, he would deem it an inferior attraction."

Florence d'Almaigne, the young lady about whom the two friends were conversing, possessed, in a high degree, the dangerous gift of beauty.—Wherever she went, she be-

came the centre around which gathered a crowd of admirers—the boldest forcing themselves at once upon her attention, while the more modest and more excellent looked on from a greater distance. Among the most ardent of her admirers was Atwood, just introduced, and a young man named Courtney. Atwood lacked confidence in himself, while Courtney was always ready to press forward to an advanced position. The one drew back from the place which his merit entitled him to assume, while the other assumed the place for which he was really unworthy. From this it will be seen how unequal were the chances of the young men for gaining favor in the eyes of Florence. The remark of Atwood, as to the unworthiness of Courtney, caused this reply.

"What you say, my friend, is perfectly true, and, therefore, the stronger reason exists why you should press forward and secure the hand of Florence. You love her for the beauty of her mind as well as the beauty of her face, and therefore, you are more worthy of her, and more justly entitled to her hand. Claim it boldly, and it is yours!"

But Atwood shook his head. "It's no use. Already her heart is more than half in the possession of Courtney."

"I don't believe it." "Look for yourself. If she did not love him, could she be so lost to all around her as she

now seems to be? I have been looking at her for ten minutes, and I am sure her eyes have seen nothing but his face, and her ear heard nothing but the tones of his voice, during all that time."

"Give her eyes a chance to see your face, and her ears an opportunity to hear the sound of your voice," replied the friend, "and I doubt not that she will like the expression of the one and the tones of the other far better. You are too diffident, Atwood—you think too humbly of yourself. Lay this weakness, I had almost said folly, aside, and for the sake of Florence d'Almaigne, if for nothing else, step forward like a man and win her for your bride. You can do it—I know you can. See! They are about forming a cotillion in the next room. Go at once, and ask the hand of Florence for the first set."

"Courtney has secured that, of course."

"Don't be so certain of that. It is more than probable that he has not even noticed the movement for a dance. But, even if he has, claim her hand for the second set; and if engaged for that, secure it for the third."

Thus urged, Atwood passed across the room to where Florence sat by the side of Courtney, and asked her if he might claim the favor of her hand for the cotillion that was forming.

"Cotillion!" said Courtney,

in surprise, looking around. "Bless me! Are we to have a dance? I didn't notice what was going on."

With a graceful inclination of her head, and a smile that went direct to the heart of Atwood, Florence accepted the invitation, and, rising up, drew her hand within the offered arm of the young man. As they were moving away, Courtney, who had recovered himself, said—

"Shall I have the pleasure of your hand for the next set, Miss d'Almaigne?"

"Certainly," she replied, and then advanced to the next room with Atwood.

On their leaving the floor, after having danced through the cotillon, Courtney met them, and attempted to take Florence from the arm of Atwood, by stepping forward with a manner perfectly polite, yet coolly impudent, which said, "you have danced with the lady, which is all the claim you have to her." But Atwood retained the lady's hand within his arm, conducted her to a seat, and sat down beside her. Courtney took a chair on the other side, and attempted to engage her in conversation, but Atwood, who felt annoyed at the manner of his rival, determined not to be thrown into the shade quite so easily. He, therefore, exerted himself in order to keep the attention of Florence, and succeeded in leading the conversation, and

enchaining her interest in spite of all the attempts that were made by Courtney to divert her mind from the topics that were introduced.

Florence had always highly esteemed Atwood. The excellent qualities of his mind and heart, were well understood by her, and justly appreciated. But she had never looked upon him as a lover, because, so far as she could understand him, he had never approached her as a lover. Here she was mistaken, and her mistake arose from this cause. In consequence of her great beauty she was surrounded by admirers from the time she first entered society. Lovers pressed forward, and sought, with the utmost eagerness, to gain her favor. Admired, courted, flattered, she learned to expect something more than a quiet, somewhat retiring, and deferential manner in any one who approached her as a lover. If there was not some ardor manifested—some more than ordinary delight at being in her company, expressed, she could not imagine that any deeper feeling than one of mere friendship could exist. From the cause here assigned, she had remained in entire ignorance of the deep and true affection with which she was loved by Atwood. Had she known the nature of his feelings, others might have approached her in vain.

On the particular occasion now referred to, the evident

pleasure that Atwood seemed to have in her company, and the more than usual efforts that were made by him to interest her, were particularly gratifying. She had been pleased, and more than pleased, with Courtney; but she could not help seeing and feeling how greatly Atwood was his superior in all the qualities that a woman could truly love. Instinctively her heart warmed toward Atwood, and she felt that in loving one like him, and being blessed with his manly love in return, she could indeed be happy. But this was a feeling that only existed for a little while, for she was engaged to Courtney for the next cotillion, and was then separated from Atwood, who, not being of an ardent temperament, could not again press forward and force himself upon her attention as he had done under the instigation of his friend. To him it seemed a lowering of himself to come into rivalry with a man like Courtney.

"If she can love him, she can't love me," he said to himself, with some bitterness and a slight feeling of contempt, as he stood aloof during the rest of the evening, and saw her monopolized almost entirely by Courtney.

From that time, instead of visiting Miss d'Almaigne more frequently, and showing by more palpable signs that he loved her, Atwood, with a strange inconsistency, went to

see her less frequently, thus leaving a fairer field to Courtney, who, in consequence, of the interest the other had manifested for Florence, at the party, pressed his suit with increasing ardor. A result such as might naturally be expected, followed. "The boldest won the most beautiful."

It soon became known that Florence was the affianced bride of Charles Courtney. This intelligence had a more serious effect upon Atwood than he had anticipated. When the fact came indisputably to his knowledge, which it did just as he was making up his mind to lay aside his diffidence and reserve, and boldly present himself as a suitor for the hand and heart of one whose love would be, he felt, the greatest blessing of his life, it stunned, confused, and almost maddened him.

"Fool—fool—fool—that I am!" he mentally ejaculated. "I might have won her; but now it is too late!"

From that time the young man was changed. He went no more into company. He became thoughtful, silent, and melancholy. This change was observed, and formed the subject of remarks which failed not to reach the ears of Florence.

"I expected to hear of some broken heart when your engagement was announced," said a young friend to her, a few days after the event.

"Did you, indeed?" returned Florence, smiling. "How many

catastrophes of this kind have occurred, to your certain knowledge?"

"I have only heard of one case yet," replied the friend.

"There is one, then?"

"Oh, yes. One decided case of a broken heart."

"Indeed! Pray who is the unfortunate sufferer?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Oh, no! I have not the least idea."

"I don't believe you have. I never thought that he aspired to the distinction of one of your lovers; although I knew him as a warm friend and admirer."

"So much the more wonderful! Who is he?"

"Henry Atwood."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Florence, her face becoming at once serious.

"It is true. They say he is very much changed, and has not gone into company since the fact of your engagement to Mr. Courtney became known. I am sure I haven't met him anywhere for over two months. Have you?"

"No. But there is doubtless some other cause for this than the one you have assigned."

"It is said not," Mr. S— told me yesterday, that to his certain knowledge, Atwood has long been deeply in love with you, but, seeing you surrounded by such a crowd of admirers, thought it hopeless to press his suit."

"Not a word of it true," returned Florence.

But her friend persisted in declaring that it was just as she had said.

Although Miss d'Almaigne asserted her entire disbelief in what had been alleged, yet the impression that it might be true could not be wholly resisted. When alone, and she pondered more seriously upon what she had heard, and remembered that she had not received a visit from Atwood, nor met him anywhere in company, for at least two months, this impression gained strength. As it thus gained strength from many more evidences that were presented to her, it produced a feeling of tenderness whenever she thought of Atwood, and caused something so much like regret that she had not known his real sentiments sooner, that she was startled and alarmed at her own state of mind, and endeavored to thrust aside every thought on the subject that presented itself. But this she found by no means an easy task. For a time she could think of nothing else, which so distressed her that the change in her feelings was noticed by her friends, and even by her intended husband.

Having gained the object of his pursuit, as far as her consent to marry him was concerned, the ardent manners of Courtney gave place to a more quiet exterior and the repose

of self-satisfaction. Little by little his true character began to show itself, and there were not unfrequently exhibited, to the eyes of Florence, traits she could not admire, nor even approve. Involuntarily contrasts would be made between him and Atwood as to some particular thing that would show itself. This was often done without her taking any notice of the mental process, although it impressed itself, with all its effects, upon her mind; when she became at any time conscious of such a train of thoughts, she condemned it as wrong, and sought to fix her attention upon some other subjects.

The nearer the wedding day of Florence approached, the more disturbed became her mind, and the more did her heart shrink from the anticipated union. She had met Atwood but once since the time of her engagement. It was at the house of a very intimate friend of the young man's where he happened to call, not dreaming that she was there. He met Florence with an embarrassed air. When he addressed her, it was with a polite formality altogether different from his former manner. Atwood only staid about half an hour, and then went away.

"He is very much changed," remarked the friend, after the young man had retired. "It grieves me to see him. I'm afraid his business hasn't turned out well, for he told me, the

last time he was here, that he had sold out his store, and was going to leave the city."

"Indeed!" Florence spoke with a quickness of tone, and an expression of surprise so strong, that her friend looked at her earnestly for a moment or two, and then said—

"Yes. He leaves next week, I believe."

"Where is he going?"

"I did not enquire, particularly; but somewhere South or West, I believe. It is singular what could have come over him all at once. I tried to jest with him about being disappointed in love, but he did not appear to relish it very much, and so I said no more. I am half inclined to believe, though, that it is something of this kind. But who could have jilted him?"

"You said, just now, that you thought it was some business matter that troubled him," said Florence, wishing to effect a change in the tenor of her friend's remarks.

"So I did. But sometimes I think one thing and sometimes another. I am more inclined, however, to the opinion that he has been disappointed in love. If so, who could have jilted him? as I just said. That is what puzzles me. I never knew that he addressed any one seriously. In fact, the only lady I ever heard him admire was yourself. Don't blush so! It's the truth. But it wasn't you, of course. Well! Poor

fellow! I'm sorry for him from my heart, for he is one of the best of young men. If any one has trifled with his affections, she'll regret it before she dies, or I'm mistaken. She will be lucky, indeed, if she gets a husband half as worthy as he is."

This conversation took place about a month previous to the time appointed for the wedding of Florence. It tended in no way to increase the pleasure with which she looked forward to that period, for since a question as to the entire worthiness of Courtney had been created by little acts, words, and omissions that forced themselves upon her attention shortly after her engagement with him, she had observed him more closely, and read many leaves in the book of his character before unturned. The consequence was that she shrunk more and more from him every day.

About two weeks before the time arrived at which Florence was to be married, she was attending a large party. During the evening, while sitting near to one side of the folding doors that communicated between the two parlors, she found herself so close to a couple of young men in the adjoining parlor, who were partly concealed from view, as to learn all that they said. She did not give any particular heed to their words until their mention of her intended husband's name caused a sudden throbb of her heart.

"There's Courtney," said one of them.

"He's to be married to Miss d'Almaigne soon, I believe," remarked the other.

"So it is said. Well! There's no accounting for tastes. How Miss d'Almaigne ever came to fancy him—a fellow with more impudence than brains, and more pretension than principle—is what I can't understand. I know half a dozen young men, between whom and Courtney there is no kind of comparison, who would have jumped at her; but they were too modest to put in their claims for such a queen of beauty. Ah me! I feel sorry for her. She is a lovely girl, and it is said as good as she is beautiful. As to her ever being happy with Courtney, that is out of the question, and she will discover it to her sorrow before she is a year married. It is a dangerous thing to possess beauty like hers. It is almost sure to bring unhappiness in the married life."

"It will certainly bring it, in her case," was replied. "Courtney has been attracted alone by her beauty. Her goodness he has no ability to appreciate; for his heart is too depraved. I know him well, and know him to be a bad man. If I thought she would believe me, I would tell her some things that would open her eyes, and brave all the consequences he might visit upon me. But to do so would be useless; she no doubt thinks

him perfection. I wish it may always be so."

"So do I, but that is impossible."

Here the subject of conversation was changed, and Florence moved to another part of the room as quickly as possible. The young men remained perfectly ignorant of the fact that she had overheard their words. About ten minutes afterword Florence left the rooms, under the plea of not feeling well, and returned home. It was not a mere plea. The unhappy girl was sick at heart.

Florence d'Almaigne had no mother to counsel her in an emergency like this. That best friend had been dead for many years. Her father was a stern-tempered man, one to whom she feared to mention what she had heard, lest it should lead to serious consequences. All night she lay in anxious thought as to the best course for her to pursue. Before morning she had made up her mind firmly, not to consummate the marriage contract, predicated her resolution upon the agreement of some things she had overheard in regard to Courtney, with her own observation of his character. She also made up her mind to inform him by letter, immediately, of her resolution.

At the breakfast table her father noticed that she looked pale and unhappy. He enquired in regard to her health; but she answered him evasive-

ly, saying something about not being able to sleep, and having a violent headache.

Immediately after breakfast, Florence retired to her room, and wrote, as follows, to Courtney:

"DEAR SIR—The nearer the time fixed for our marriage approaches, the more unhappy do I become. When I consented to be your wife I did not fully know my own heart. I now see that the proposed union, if it should take place, will make me, of all persons, the most miserable. This being so, would it be right either for your sake or mine, for me to take upon myself vows that cannot come from the heart? If your wife is wretched, can you be happy? No, you cannot be. Release me, then, I beg of you, from the promise I made to become your wife. Do not seek to change my present feelings, for you cannot succeed. A more intimate intercourse with you, which I have had since our engagement, has made me more intimately acquainted than I possibly could have been before that engagement took place, with peculiarities in your disposition and traits in your character, which, instead of drawing my heart closer to, have estranged it from you. I cannot help this. It is a fact in the nature of things, and one which neither you nor I should lightly disregard."

Yours, &c. FLORENCE."

Mr. d'Almaigne was sitting in his office about twelve o'clock on that day, when young Courtney entered. He had a strange agitated look. Without a word of preface, he placed the letter of Florence in his hand.

"In the name of goodness! what does all this mean?" exclaimed the father, after running his eye hurriedly over the letter.

"That's what I wish you to explain, sir," said Courtney, compressing his lips, and eyeing Mr. d'Almaigne with a steady look.

There was something in the expression of the eye, face and tone of the young man that Mr. d'Almaigne did not like. Before replying to his words, he read the letter of Florence over again slowly, and as thoughtfully as he could.

"I presume you can explain it better than I can," he said, looking up from the letter, and speaking in a firm, yet mild voice. "This is the first I have heard of this matter. Pray, what has led to it?"

"That is just what I desire to know from you. It is not to be presumed that your daughter would take a step like this without consulting her father."

"I have told you, young man, that this is the first I have heard of the matter," replied Mr. d'Almaigne, sternly.

"Do you intend sustaining your daughter in the step she has taken?" asked Courtney.

"She is of age. If she adheres to what she intimates in this letter, I shall not attempt to control her."

"Then, sir, I warn you, that this is not the last you will hear of the matter!" returned Courtney, in a passionate manner, taking the open letter from Mr. d'Almaigne's hand, and turning away as he thrust it into his pocket.

The father hurried home.

"Florence, dear," he said, tenderly, on meeting his daughter, "I wish to know from you all that has prompted the strange letter you sent to-day to Mr. Courtney. Speak freely. If you can show me that you are right, I will sustain you."

This was so different from what she had expected from her father, that it melted her to tears, and it was sometime before she could control her feelings sufficiently to give him a full history of all she had thought, felt, and observed for some months, and the startling confirmation of her fears that had accidentally occurred on the previous evening.

"Who were the young men who spoke so freely of Mr. Courtney?" asked the father.

Florence hesitated.

"Speak freely, my child. I must know all."

Florence mentioned their names, and the remarks which each had made.

"If Robert M—— said that, there is truth in it. Thank

heaven, my child! for saving you from a union that must have made you wretched."

On the next day, Mr. d'Almaigne received a notice from an attorney, that he had been instructed by Charles Courtney to institute a suit against his daughter, for breach of a marriage contract, and that damages were to be laid at ten thousand dollars. Mr. d'Almaigne immediately called upon the two young men alluded to as having conversed quite freely about Courtney. To them he related what his daughter had overheard them say, and what had been the result, and finished by asking if they had any facts to which they would be willing to testify in court, that would be received as sufficient proof of the unfitness of Courtney to become the husband of his daughter. One of them declined having anything to do with the matter, but the other was made of different material. He not only related to Mr. d'Almaigne many unprincipled and immoral acts of Courtney, but avowed his willingness to give clear testimony on the subject in court, if necessary.

"Are you willing to meet Courtney, in the presence of his own lawyer, and repeat what you have repeated to me?" asked Mr. d'Almaigne.

"Without hesitation. It is a duty I owe to innocence, to truth, to justice."

"Are you not afraid of con-

sequences, personal to yourself?"

"No, sir; I never think of anything personal where right is concerned," was the manly reply.

In a day or two Courtney was confronted with the young man, and became, for the first time, aware of the notoriety of some of his acts. He blustered and threatened a good deal to conceal his chagrin, but there it all rested. No more was ever heard of the suit. Some months afterward certain transactions of a disreputable character in which he had been engaged, coming to light, he deemed it most prudent to leave the city, to which he did not soon return.

The effect of all this upon Florence was very unhappy. Her spirits sunk, and her health suffered. She withdrew from society, almost entirely, when she did appear, every one noticed that the brilliancy of her cheeks had faded, and that her eyes no longer sparkled with their former lustre. Her voice too had lost the witchery of its tones. She was still beautiful, but her beauty did not arrest the attention as quickly as before. In course of time this depression of spirits wore off, and Florence went into company more frequently. The flush of health came back to her cheeks, the light to her eyes, and the heart-refreshing melody to the tones of her voice. But her whole manner was more quiet,

and, she rather shunned than courted the attentions that were everywhere paid to her. Suitors as before sought her hand, but she gave encouragement to none, and if any, more bold than the rest, pressed forward and told the story of their love, she gently declined the generous tender of their hearts. Years passed away, and though not unwooed, Florence d'Almaigne was still unwedded.

Business called Mr. d'Almaigne to the West about five years after the occurrence of the principal event of our story. He had only been absent a few weeks when intelligence reached Florence that, from the upsetting of a stage, he had been seriously injured, and was then lying at a hotel in Cincinnati. Without a moment's delay, Florence made preparations for going to her father. She started on the next morning. When she arrived at Cincinnati, she found that he had received several severe fractures, and was otherwise badly hurt; but that he was out of all danger, and recovering as rapidly as the nature of his injuries would permit.

During the long conversation that Florence held with her father about the accident, the pain he had suffered, and the circumstances attending his removal to Cincinnati, and the care and attention he had received there, he mentioned the fact that a young man who had left their native city some years ago, by

the name of Atwood, and who was boarding in the hotel, had shown him the greatest kindness, visiting him many times each day, and sometimes remaining up with him, when his pain was worse, nearly all night long.

The cause of the deepening color on Florence's cheeks was altogether unknown to her father. He had scarcely done speaking, when a tap on the door was followed by the entrance of the very person who had been mentioned. He looked surprised, and was evidently confused at seeing Florence, and it required a very strong effort on her part not to betray too palpably the deep agitation of her bosom.

"Mrs. Courtney! I am happy to see you," said Atwood, advancing and taking her hand, "though grieved at the sad accident that has caused your hurried visit to our Western country."

"Stop—stop, my young friend!" said Mr. d'Almaigne, "not quite so fast. Not Mrs. Courtney, thank heaven! but Florence d'Almaigne."

Atwood let the hand of Florence, that he still held, fall quickly, and stepped back one or two paces, with a look of bewilderment.

"I thought you were married years ago," he said.

"She was to have been," replied her father, "but we discovered the unworthiness of her suitor before it was too late."

We need hardly say that Atwood remained quite as attentive to Mr. d'Almaigne as before the arrival of his daughter; nor will the reader be at all surprised to hear that before the old gentleman was able to leave the city, he had seen enough to satisfy him that the young man and Florence were on the very best terms imaginable. Shortly after his return home, he received proposals from Atwood for the hand of his daughter, which, on reference to her, were accepted, provided he would move back again to the East. As may be supposed, this was not considered a hard proviso.

"Mine at last," said Atwood,

as he sat gazing into the face of his wife, some days after their marriage. "For this happiness I never dared even to hope. If you had been less beautiful you would have been mine years ago."

"The gift of beauty had liked to have proved a fatal gift to me," replied Florence, a thoughtful shade passing over her face.

"As it proves to hundreds every year. But the danger is past now."

"For which my heart is overflowing with thankfulness," returned Florence, as her eyes filled with tears, and she leaned forward and rested her lovely face upon the breast of her husband.

THE YOUNG MUSIC TEACHER.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

MR. WELLS was a widower with two daughters—Jane and Mary. The former twenty, and the latter eighteen. He had been accounted a man in easy circumstances, from the fact that he lived in a very comfortable style, and gave his children the best education that money could procure. But, in doing this, he lived fully up to his income. Death suddenly removed him, and left his two daughters without fortune or home. An uncle, Mr. Hendee, was the only relative they had. He was what is called well off in the world; possessing a very handsome property. But, as he had a young and expensive family, his regular income was never much beyond his wants. As soon as Mr. Hendee, who administered on Mr. Wells's estate, ascertained that nothing would be left after paying off the debts, he informed Jane and Mary of the fact, and, at the same time, offered them a home.

For some weeks after their father's death, the two young ladies remained in the house where they had been living, all the domestic arrangements con-

tinuing the same as during his lifetime. They had no suspicion of the real state of their father's affairs, and were only affected with almost insupportable grief at his loss. When their uncle unfolded to them the true position in which they stood, they were at first overwhelmed with alarm. His prompt and kind offer of a home, soothed their anxious feelings, and left their minds in a calmer frame.

"How kind and generous our uncle is," Jane remarked on the day after he had proposed to the sisters to consider his house their future dwelling place.

"Truly so," Mary replied with warmth, while a glow of genuine gratitude lit up her sober face.

"We shall feel almost as much at home with uncle Hendee, as we did in our own father's house."

"Do you think it right for us to go there?" asked Mary, looking at her sister with a serious expression of countenance.

"Right! What can you mean, sister?"

"We have no claims upon him."

"He is our father's brother."

"But not our father, Jane."

Mary's sister looked at her for some moments, utterly at a loss to comprehend the drift of her remarks.

"He is our uncle, and has offered us a home," she at length said. "It would be a strange act in us to refuse to accept of it because we have no claims upon him; especially, when there is no other threshold over which we can pass."

"But he has a large family of his own to support."

"And is able enough to support them and us."

"Perhaps so. But that does not alter our position in the least. While our father lived, his house was our home by natural right. Now that he is taken from us, will it be right for us to lean upon any other arm?"

"We must lean upon some arm, now that we have his no longer."

"Yes,—but should not each of us lean upon her own arm? Is not a mere state of dependence upon a relation a wrong position for a young lady to hold?"

"Lean upon our own arms! How are we to do that, Mary?"

"There are many young women who support themselves genteelly. Why may not we? The truth is, I have been thinking about this ever since Uncle

Hendee was here yesterday, and the more I turn it over in my mind the more reluctant am I to accept of his generous offer. I do not feel as if it would be just for me to do so. I have a good education, and could readily support myself as a French teacher; or by giving lessons in music."

"A French teacher! Lessons in music! Mary, you cannot be in earnest."

"Indeed, sister, I am sure that I can never go into Uncle Hendee's house, and accept the home he has so kindly offered, without feeling self-condemned, and losing my self-respect. A state of mere dependence, would be deeply galling to me. As a music or French teacher, I should be far happier."

"Mary, you must not think of it. Do not, on any account, breathe such a thing to Uncle Hendee. It would wound severely the generous feelings he has so nobly expressed."

Thus opposed, Mary said no more. But she thought over the matter constantly; and the more she thought about it, the more dissatisfied was she at the idea of becoming a dependent upon her Uncle's bounty.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Hendee informed his two nieces, that he must give up the house in which they lived, and sell off their father's furniture. Their aunt came in her carriage, and, with many kind assurances of her love for them, took them to her own home,

and bade them, henceforth, consider it as theirs. Tears of natural regret at leaving the place where they had spent so many pleasant seasons, mingled with heart-drops of sorrow, as they remembered the kind father they should see no more in this world. For the first few days after they had entered the hospitable mansion of their uncle and aunt, the sisters felt much depressed in spirits. After that, Jane gradually became more cheerful. But Mary continued thoughtful, and, evidently, troubled in mind.

"Try, my dear child," said her aunt to her, a few weeks after she had come into her house, "to feel more cheerful. Do not look back with grief, but forward with hope. Let us be to you all that you have lost. We love you and Jane, and desire to think of you, and feel towards you, as if you were our own children."

Mary was affected to tears. She drew her arms around the neck of her aunt; kissed her cheek, and wept upon her bosom.

"Your generous kindness I shall never forget," she said, as soon as her emotion would permit her to speak. "But, my good aunt, it is my position here that troubles me more than any thing else."

"My dear child! what do you mean?" asked Mrs. Hendee, in surprise.

"I have no right to burden you."

"Mary!" Her aunt seemed hurt by the tone of her voice.

"Do not misunderstand me, aunt," Mary quickly said. "I mean not to insinuate, that I feel that you think I am a burden to you. Oh, no. Your noble conduct towards us fills my bosom with a glow of grateful emotions. It is not that. But, now that my father is dead, up to whom I had a natural right to look, I do not feel that I can, with justice, become dependent upon any one but myself. Do you understand me, aunt?"

"I believe I do, Mary. But dismiss such thoughts. If your father's brother is willing to take your father's place, you have no need to make any nice distinctions between his relation and that of your father. He is both able and willing to do all we have proposed."

"I have thought all that over very carefully, aunt," Mary said. "But it does not unburden my mind. Every day, it becomes with me more and more a matter of conscience not to remain dependent. I have the ability to maintain myself, and I believe I ought to do it."

Mrs. Hendee was silent with surprise and admiration of the noble minded girl, whose true feelings she began to perceive clearly.

"You seem to be really in earnest," was her smiling reply, after the lapse of nearly a minute.

The changed manner of Mrs. Hendee made the heart of Mary bound.

"Indeed I am, aunt," she said, her countenance lighting up, yet still retaining its serious look. "I do not mean to wound you, by declining your generous offer; for I know that it is made in good faith, and my heart blesses you for it. But, to accept of your bounty, would be to do violence to what I think right principles."

"What do you propose to do?" asked Mrs. Hendee, gravely, her manner having again changed.

"I think, as a French teacher in some seminary, I might easily support myself; or, I could give lessons in music."

"True. But, think, Mary, how your doing so would affect your station. As a teacher you could not expect to occupy in all respects your present position in society."

"I should be as worthy of confidence and regard, aunt."

"True. But something more than mere personal excellence is required. It is not worth alone that gives either a man or woman a place in good society. As a member of our family, you will occupy the same position you have ever held; but, as a mere teacher of French or music, you will not be able to maintain your present place."

"Ought that consideration to govern me?"

"I think it should have its due weight."

"So do I. But a consideration of what is right, should have the first influence upon my actions. Now, I do not think it would be right for me to become a dependent upon my uncle's generosity. I believe that I am in duty bound to support myself. Ought I for a moment to weigh this clear consciousness against any fears of losing social standing?"

Mrs. Hendee did not reply for some moments. She felt a glow of admiration for the honest, independent spirit of her niece, and yet, could not bring her mind to think for an instant of letting the high minded girl act as she proposed.

"You must talk with your uncle," she said, after puzzling with her own thoughts for a time. "I am sure, however, that he will never hear to your doing what you suggest."

"I wish you would speak to him about it, aunt. I cannot."

"Oh! certainly. But you must not be surprised at his decided opposition."

"I am sure Uncle Hendee will not oppose me in an act that he must see to be clearly right."

"But I am not so sure that he will be able to see it exactly as you do," replied her aunt.

This conversation took place without the knowledge of Jane Wells, who was quietly enjoying the pleasant home that had

been offered them. She did not appreciate either her sister's motives or feelings, and, therefore, since the first conversation Mary had held with her upon the subject, she had not made to it any allusion.

When Mrs. Hendee mentioned to her husband what had taken place between her and Mary, he was too much surprised to see at once, clearly, the spirit that actuated his niece. But this soon became apparent to his mind.

"Noble girl!" he could not help exclaiming. "She has her father's independent spirit, and I honor it in her."

"But you will not, I am sure, humor her strange desire to become a teacher instead of an inmate of our family."

"We must not do violence to such high and true principles of action as she evinces. It was our duty to offer to both her and her sister a home. This we have done cheerfully. But, if Mary feels that it would be right for her to depend upon herself, we ought not to oppose her too strongly."

As early as possible, Mr. Hendee sought an interview with his niece. He found that her ideas were clear, and based upon abstract principles of right.

"There is a view of the subject," he said, while conversing with her, "that I hardly think you have taken, Mary, and one that you should weigh well."

"What is that, Uncle?" she asked.

"It is this. By education, habits, and association, your mind has been formed for a social sphere above what you will be able to occupy, if you become a teacher of music or anything else. By remaining where you are as one of my family, all that is congenial to your taste and character will be secured to you. You will marry, of course, when of a proper age, should one you can approve, claim your hand. But if you place yourself out of the circle of those who are of like tastes and feelings with yourself, you cannot hope to form such an alliance as will most fully secure your happiness in after life. Forgive the seeming indelicacy of an allusion like this, my dear niece. I have to make it, in order to let you see all the consequences of the fact you propose. Remain where you are—keep your present position in the circle in which you are worthy to move, and in a few years, as the wife of a man of wealth and standing, you will be placed far above the feeling of dependence that now seems so galling to you."

Mary did not reply to her uncle immediately. She sat in deep thought, with her eyes upon the floor. At length, breathing heavily, she looked up, and replied in a voice that was at first tremulous, but soon became firm.

"I have carefully weighed

all this. But it does not change my views. It is for me to *act right in the present*, and leave all else to be arranged for my good by Him who suffers not, unnoted, a sparrow to fall to the ground. I cannot, with a clear conscience, sit down here, in mere dependence. It would be wrong."

"But, my dear child, I have enough and to spare. I do not feel your support a burden. To provide a home for my brother's children I look upon as a sacred privilege. Do not deprive me of the sweet delight it affords me."

This appeal touched the heart of Mary, and brought from her eyes pure drops of feeling.

"I know, my dear uncle," she said, "that it will give you pleasure to have me stay with you, and pain to depart. But can I secure a good conscience, life's best blessing, if I do not follow the clear dictates of right?"

"You cannot, certainly."

"Then I must leave my present position of dependence, and provide, by my own labor, the means of support. It is, I can plainly see, the duty of every one to engage in some useful employment. While our father lived, my sister and I kept his house, and made up for him a home circle. We were necessary to his happiness; and he was our natural provider and protector. Our sphere of action was at home—our duties lay there. But it is different now.

Upon you we have no natural claim. Your home circle is formed. We are not necessary to your happiness, and only remain here as partakers of your bounty. This is the plain light in which I view it, and you must acknowledge it to be the true light."

Mr. Hendee used various arguments to convince Mary that she was wrong to throw herself as she proposed, upon her own resources; but his arguments were weak when opposed to her common sense conviction, and clear perceptions of what was right. Jane, when she found that Mary had been declaring to her uncle and aunt the views she had previously expressed to her; and not only that, but was bent on acting them out, was much incensed, and strove hard to divert her from what seemed to her mind a most insane act. But, as might well be supposed, her opposition had no effect. Mary was not governed by any impulse, or whim, but by deeply fixed principles. When Mr. and Mrs. Hendee found that neither argument nor persuasion could move the honest-hearted girl from her purpose, they begged that she would, at least, make their house her home, if she did not solely depend upon them.

"I will, on one consideration," was her half smiling, yet earnest reply.

"Name it," said Mr. Hendee.

"That I be allowed to become my cousins' instructor in

music, so long as you think me competent to give them lessons."

"It shall be as you desire."

The prompt acceptance of this proposition brought the tears to Mary's eyes.

"From my heart, I thank you," she said, with emotion. "I do not want to go from under your protection. Here I will be happier than anywhere else, for I shall be with those I love most and prize highest in the world."

Just about this time an advertisement appeared in the newspapers for a lady to take the situation of music teacher in a well known seminary. At Mary's earnest request, Mr. Hendee made application for, and was successful in obtaining the place for her. She entered cheerfully upon the duties of this new position, and discharged them with energy and ability. It required the devotion of four hours each day in order to do justice to the classes placed under her care. At home, she gave two or three hours every day to the music of her cousins, and with marked evidences of success. Besides this, many hours were spent in practice and study, in order to increase her ability for the duties she had voluntarily assumed.

Mary's choice did not fail to have the effect which her uncle and aunt had predicted. It quickly became known that she was only a teacher in Madame

Lacroix' seminary. The young ladies, who had before been on terms of intimacy with her, finding that she was the instructor of their younger sisters, began to grow cold towards her, and numbers failed to recognize her in the street. This was a severe trial to her young spirit: but conscious rectitude of purpose sustained her. She had put her hands to the plough, and could not look back. What grieved her most, was the unkindness of Jane. Mary's conduct affected her sister in two ways. In the first place, it detracted from her standing in the eyes of many, and, in the second place, it was a daily rebuke of her want of the same honest independence. In her aunt and uncle, however, the heroic girl found unchanging friends. They not only admired her for her excellence of character, but loved her for the sweetness of her disposition. Not without pain did they perceive that all their fears in regard to the consequences of her independent course, were becoming daily realized. Gradually, even the most intimate of Mary's young friends were ceasing to visit her, and when she ventured with the family into company, she was neglected except by a very few. The consequence was, that before six months had elapsed, Mary Wells was rarely seen beyond the walls of the seminary in which she taught, and the sweet seclusion of home. Her sister rarely asked her to

accompany her when she went out, and never spoke of her to any one, unless she were specially asked for. By the end of a year, none would have thought that the gay girl who daily went forth to make fashionable calls upon fashionable friends, and the quiet, thoughtful maiden modestly attired, who regularly left the house of Mr. Hendee and came back at stated hours, were sisters.

Things went on in this way for about two years, by which time Mary was pretty well forgotten in her old circle of friends. Within that time the members of that circle had changed materially. New faces were to be seen, and many old faces were missing. Among the new-comers was a young man who had returned from college a year before, and who had immediately entered into business with his father, a merchant of wealth and standing. His name was Cleveland. Young Cleveland had been educated with great care by his father, who was a man of independent feelings, and sound views of life. As his son grew up, he carefully instilled into his mind a love of truth for its own sake, and taught him to estimate all things by intrinsic worth, rather than fictitious appearances. As Hartly Cleveland emerged from youth into early manhood, that most critical period in life, his father had the gratification of seeing in him a realization of his most ardent wishes. The

principles taught him had been deeply planted, and they had sprung up, and produced good fruits.

This young man met Jane Wells frequently in company, and found himself becoming more and more prepossessed in her favor the oftener he saw her. Almost involuntarily he paid her more than ordinary attentions, which were far from being displeasing to her. After some months, he would occasionally call in at Mr. Hendee's and spend an evening with her. Whenever he did so, if Mary happened to be in the parlor, she would immediately retire; always without being introduced, for it had never occurred that her uncle or aunt was present when Mr. Cleveland first came in, and Jane would have thought it an egregious folly to introduce her sister to any of her fashionable friends.

The attentions of Hartly Cleveland soon stirred into inquietude the bosom of Jane Wells. There was everything about him to interest the heart of a maiden. He was handsome in person, his taste highly cultivated, his mind richly stored, his principles firmly based, and with all, he belonged to a respectable and wealthy family. No wonder that Jane could not withstand such attractions.

It was not long, before the young man became more marked in his attentions. He called at Mr. Hendee's at least

once every week, and regularly accompanied Jane to all the concerts and fashionable amusements of the season. One evening he came in and found no one in the parlor but Mary. Jane was dressing to go out with him to a concert. Mary's first impulse was to retire, but she felt that this it would not be polite to do. She therefore remained; but did not feel free to make any remarks. This she had no need to do, for Mr. Cleveland readily introduced subjects of conversation, and drew her forth to speak. At first she did so with a reluctant timidity; but what she said inspired the young man with a wish to penetrate deeper into her mind. Unconsciously to herself, he led her out, and induced her to give her views on many subjects, which she did with a beauty of expression, and a clearness of thought that charmed him. In the midst of this Jane came in, all ready to walk, and Mary glided from the room, with a strange warmth and tremulousness in her bosom. It was nearly two years since she had spent ten minutes in conversation with a young man of intelligence and winning manners. The sensation was to her new and pleasing. A new chord was awakened in her heart, that was not inclined to sleep again.

She retired to her room, and took up a favorite volume. But she could not comprehend the words of the author. Her

thoughts returned to the parlor, and to the interesting young stranger with whom she had passed a quarter of an hour of most delightful conversation. At length she became conscious of the folly she was committing in thus allowing this little incident to make so deep an impression upon her. She strove to shut out from her mind the image of Mr. Cleveland, but in vain. She still saw his fine, animated face; his voice still sounded in her ears, and the sentiments he had uttered still lived in her recollection.

"What young lady is that with whom I was conversing, when you came down?" young Cleveland asked of Jane, as soon as they had left the house.

"She gives lessons in music to my cousins," was answered, after a moment's hesitation.

"Ah!" was Cleveland's only reply; there was disappointment in the tone of his voice.

Three weeks elapsed, during which both the young man and Mary found it very difficult to keep from thinking about each other. He had called several times to see Jane, with the secret hope in his mind of again meeting the interesting young music teacher. But she did not happen to be present. At last, however, he could not conceal from himself the pleasure he felt, on being shown into the parlor, and finding no one there but Mary. Instinctively, she arose, and made a movement to leave the room. Jane had spo-

ken rather sharply to her for her former indiscreet act, as she called it.

"You will not leave me here alone," Cleveland said, in a respectful, half-familiar voice.

Mary paused, and resumed her seat, her heart beating with a quick irregular motion. The conversation which the young man had previously held with her, gave him some idea of the character of her mind, and guided him at once into the selection of suitable themes. He soon succeeded in again drawing her out into an expression of her opinions upon the topics under review, which she did with a soundness of thought and a beauty of expression that again charmed him. "Can this be only a music teacher?" he could not help asking himself. It so happened, that the servant who admitted Mr. Cleveland, mistook Mary, who was in the parlor, for Jane, and therefore did not go up to the room of the latter to notify her that there was a visitor below. On this account, Cleveland and Mary spent full half an hour together, when the latter, recollecting herself, said,

"The servant must have omitted to inform Jane that you were here."

As she spoke, she arose quickly and left the room. In a few moments Jane entered the parlor, and apologised for having kept him waiting; on the ground that she had not been informed of his presence.

"As some compensation," he replied, "I have been quite agreeably entertained by this young music teacher you have in the family. She seems as shy as a fawn, and I had almost to compel her to remain in the parlor. But, when she had forgotten herself, she proved to be a most interesting companion. She cannot, certainly, be moving in that sphere, for which education and taste have fitted her."

To this Jane made some evasive reply. Her manner of doing so was noticed by Cleveland, who did not altogether like it. It implied contempt for the interesting girl, who, as he supposed, held, in the family, the subordinate position of an instructor in music. From that moment, the charm that had been thrown around Jane Wells, gradually passed away. As it did so, the image of the quiet, intelligent, refined, and delicate stranger he had met at Mr. Hendee's, took a more distinct and permanent place in his mind. "Who is she?" "What is she?" were questions often asked. Though he called, nearly as often as before, upon Jane, it was really with the hope of again falling in with the music teacher. But this fortunate occurrence did not again happen.

One evening he met Mr. Hendee in the parlor, alone. The ardent desire he felt to learn something certain about the individual who had inte-

rested him, caused him to say, during a pause in the conversation,—

"Pardon me, Mr. Hendee, for the seeming intrusiveness of the question I am about to ask. You have a young lady in your family, employed as music teacher—?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Cleveland," Mr. Hendee said, interrupting him,— "but you are under some mistake. There is no such person in my family as you allude to."

Cleveland looked confounded.

"I certainly must be under some mistake, then," he replied. "But I have twice met in the parlor a very interesting young lady who is, as I have understood, an instructor of music to your children."

"Oh! you mean my niece," Mr. Hendee said, with a smile.

"Your niece?"

"Yes. Mary Wells, the sister of Jane. I thought you knew her."

"No, sir," was the grave reply. "I have twice fallen in with her by accident. Then as soon as any one entered the parlor, she glided away. No one introduced her to me."

"Not even her sister?"

"No."

Mr. Hendee looked upon the floor thoughtfully.

"Why does she keep herself so secluded?" at length asked young Cleveland. "She is certainly fitted to shine in any circle."

"That she is. A lovelier

girl I have never seen. But it is her real worth that excludes her. Society, as it is now constituted, is not worthy of so noble minded a creature."

"Your words puzzle me," the young man said.

"I will then give you fully her history, and let you judge her by the best and truest standard—her own life as it stands forth in Doric beauty."

Mr. Hendee then related, with the warmth his deep admiration of her virtues, gave to his words and manner, the noble conduct of Mary Wells. Mr. Cleveland listened, with intense admiration.

"Noble girl!" he exclaimed, as soon as the narrative had been finished.

"Yes, she is nobleness itself," was the earnest response of the uncle.

"May I beg to be introduced to one for whom I now feel a respect amounting almost to reverence?" asked the young man.

The bell was rung, and a servant entered.

"Tell Mary that I wish to see her in the parlor."

The servant left the room, and in a few moments Mary entered, dressed in a simple but neat attire.

"Come, my dear, let me introduce you to my excellent young friend Mr. Cleveland," Mr. Hendee said, taking Mary's hand, and leading her forward.

The color deepened on Ma-

ry's cheek when she met the steady, admiring gaze of the young man, but her self-possession remained.

"My niece excludes herself far too much. She is 'o'er modest, worth's peculiar fault,' as Goldsmith, I believe, has it," Mr. Hendee added, as Mary took a seat on the sofa.

At that moment Jane entered and came forward. Mr. Cleveland met her with a manner much more formal than usual. She was no longer beautiful or interesting in his eyes. The superior loveliness of Mary had altogether eclipsed her. The surprise and displeasure she felt at seeing Mary in the parlor, and in conversation with Mr. Cleveland, tended in no way to give additional charms to those already surrounding her. He saw clearly her state of mind; and it took away all the admiration, and even warmer feelings, he had ever felt for her.

Encouraged by her uncle, and led on to converse by the admiring young man, Mary shone through the evening with a lustre that surprised, while it delighted Mr. Hendee.

From that time, Cleveland became a lover. He would not listen to Mary's remaining any longer in seclusion, and much against her will, almost compelled her to accompany him to a large ball, gotten up by the exclusives. She dressed herself in pure white, and presented a sweet contrast with

the gaudily attired belles who flaunted about, and sought the admiration she unconsciously won.

"What lovely creature is that on the arm of Cleveland?" asked a young man, coming up to his sister, who was among a bevy of half a dozen young girls.

"Where? Who?"

"Look! Don't you see—near that pillar."

"Oh! yes. That? Why, as I live, that is Mary Wells, my old music teacher! What in the world is she doing here, and with Hartly Cleveland? He cannot know the company he is keeping."

This little bit of news quickly spread through the company, and Cleveland soon found both himself and Mary the subject of observation and remark. And not only so; but actually proscribed—for, in endeavoring to make up a cotillion in which he proposed to dance with Mary, the attempt failed, only two or three couples consenting to take the floor.

Deeply incensed at this, he withdrew from the room with Mary Wells, and left the house. Jane was also at the ball, and saw all this—not without a feeling of pleasure, for now she hoped to regain the attentions she had lost. But she was in error. On the way home, Cleveland offered Mary his hand; which, after reflection and consultation with her uncle and aunt, she accepted.

The wedding party was the largest and most brilliant that had been given for two or three years. The young ladies who had refused to dance a cotillion with the music teacher, some how or other, forgot the circumstance, and caressed the bride most affectionately. Even Jane could begin to see her real worth, now that it was perceived and acknowledged by others.

The true history of Mary became a subject of general conversation, and those who had looked down upon her as an humble music teacher, now that her real character was seen, lauded her conduct to the skies. We can admire and love virtuous self-denial in others, though we have not the moral courage to go through the trying ordeal ourselves.

THE UNHAPPY WIFE.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"You don't seem happy, Margaret," said Mr. Jones to his wife, in a kind voice, seating himself, as he spoke, beside his dejected-looking partner, whom he found upon the sofa in the parlor. He had just returned from his store, in the evening, after a day of more than usual business anxiety.

Tears came into the eyes of Mrs. Jones. But she made no reply.

"Has any thing happened to give you pain?" asked the husband, in the same kind voice.

But there was no answer. The fact was, Mrs. Jones could not answer the question, for although she felt very unhappy, she did not know from whence her unhappiness proceeded. Her silence, while it convinced Mr. Jones that nothing more than usual had occurred to distress his wife, had the effect to oppress his own feelings with a heavy weight. He understood that she had fallen into one of her melancholy states, the cause of which he had yet been unable to determine, and for which he had not, of course, found any remedy.

A shadow fell gloomily over the feelings of Mr. Jones. He, in turn, became silent and depressed. During the whole day his mind had been more than usually anxious in regard to his business. Heavy payments were maturing fast, while the funds for meeting his obligations came in with unusual tardiness. This had disturbed his thoughts a good deal. But when he left his store in the evening, like a wise man, he left his cares behind him, and looked toward home with the pleasing expectation of there finding that sweet repose of mind which he so much needed. As has been seen, in this he was doomed to be disappointed. Mrs. Jones had fallen into one of her periodical fits of melancholy, for which no cause was apparent to his mind, and which, for this very reason, distressed him the more. Ten years' experience had satisfied him that, when in this unhappy state, it was useless to make any effort to lift her out of it. Heretofore, every such effort had been perfectly futile. Like an attack of measles, it had its incipient stage, its climax, and

its decline. Medicines seemed rather to exacerbate than palliate the symptoms, and, therefore, like a wise physician, he chose rather to keep away, as far as possible, all exciting causes, and let the disease run its course.

The evening meal was passed in perfect silence. After it was over, Mr. Jones thought of asking his wife to go with him to hear a celebrated singer, who gave a concert that night. But, satisfied, from former experience, that "no" would be answered to his proposition, he wisely forebore doing so.

On the next morning, as Mr. Jones had expected, his wife did not rise. He asked, as in duty bound, how she felt?—if she were sick?—what he should get for her? etc., but received, as usual in such cases, no reply. He sat down to breakfast with his children; poured out the coffee for them, and attended to their wants at the table. He ate but a few mouthfuls himself. After giving directions to the cook about dinner, he went to his store with a heavy heart. Mr. Jones loved his wife. To see her unhappy, always oppressed his feelings. But, to see her unhappy without any knowledge of the cause, made him wretched.

Throughout that day it seemed as if every event was of a nature calculated to disturb the mind of Mr. Jones. At dinner time his wife, in accordance with his expectations,

was in bed. He spoke to her kindly, but received no answer. This did not surprise him. He had looked for nothing else. The evening brought no change. Mrs. Jones was still in bed. The small portion of her face that could be seen above the pillow in which it was buried, did not make the husband very desirous of seeing more. That sample was enough to give him a very fair idea of the character of her whole countenance. After tea, everything being so still and gloomy at home, Mr. Jones went to a public house, where he drank a glass of ale, smoked a cigar, and talked politics for a couple of hours. He then came home and retired for the night.

Not until the afternoon of the next day, did Mrs. Jones leave her bed. When her husband came home to tea, he found her, much to his satisfaction, in the dining-room. But he said nothing. The disease had reached its highest point and was now on the decline. He was content to let it go off in due course, because he knew very well, that any attempt on his part to hasten its departure, would only retard that anxiously looked for event.

A day or two more, and all was again sunshine in Mr. Jones' dwelling. His wife went singing about as gaily as a bird.

"If it were only always so," sighed Mr. Jones to himself, "I would be the happiest man in existence. But where can

lie the cause of these unhappy periods? Something is wrong. What can it be?"

To determine this question was, however, beyond the power of Mr. Jones. He could imagine no adequate cause.

"I think, dear," said his wife to him, one day, "that we should be a great deal happier in the country. I know it would be better for the children. Poor little things! They are so confined here. There we should have pure air and freedom. Instead of hot brick walls and filthy streets, we should have open fields, with trees, and flowers, and the sweet breath of Heaven. Oh, it would be delightful! I am sure I should be the happiest creature in the world."

The idea of making his wife happy was sufficient to give almost any proposition a favorable aspect in the eyes of Mr. Jones. He was not himself fond of the country. Raised in a city from boyhood, his habits were formed for city life. His business, too, required him to be every day in town. Still, if it would make Margaret happy, that was sufficient to gain his approval. A pleasant house, with a garden and several acres of good land surrounding it, was rented, and his family removed to the country.

"Oh, this is delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones, on alighting from the carriage that had conveyed her husband, herself

and children to their new home, to which all the furniture had been removed and arranged by a competent person, while Mrs. Jones and her little ones remained for a couple of days at the house of a friend in the city. "I shall be as happy here as the day is long. How sweet the odor of that new hay! How rich these beds of flowers! How spirit-stirring the song of birds! How soothing the low hum of bees! This is indeed life! Who would be content to live in a pent up city?"

"It's pleasant, certainly," returned Mr. Jones, in a more quiet way. And it was pleasant to him. He perceived and enjoyed all the things to which his wife had alluded. They soothed his care-worn spirit, and refreshed his senses.

For a few days, Mrs. Jones was really happy. But she was the same woman as before. The causes of disquiet were internal and not external. In leaving the city, she could not get away from herself. Change of scene did not change the causes of unrest that lay hidden in her own bosom. After awhile she ceased to perceive the sweet odors that were borne upon the air. The warblings of merry songsters were unheard. The flowers, Spring's lovely children, were unseen. She grew lonely, and sighed for companionship.

With a sad heart, the husband soon saw that a country life was not the specific for his

wife's malady. All doubts on this head were removed at the end of a month, when she had an attack of melancholy, and kept her bed for a week. Her wish to return to the city in the fall was not opposed by Mr. Jones. He preferred a town to a country life, although he had not said so.

As before, every few weeks Mrs. Jones would sink into a gloomy state, and remain so for several days; and, as before, the cause was altogether hidden from her husband. He was careful that she should be burdened as little as possible. He employed a waiter about the house; and permitted her to keep a nurse, a chambermaid, a seamstress and a cook. Every want she expressed was gratified, and much anticipated. But, instead of improving, Mrs. Jones grew worse and worse. It seemed as if the more of external good she possessed the less she enjoyed.

In the hope of diverting her mind, Mr. Jones took her during the winter to many places of fashionable resort and amusement: such as assemblies, concerts, the theatre, etc. He also encouraged her to give a large party, which laid her under a kind of obligation to attend such as were given by any who had been her own guests. In this way the season passed amid a gay round of festivity and amusement, into which Mrs. Jones entered with a keen zest. Her husband had never seen

her so full of life before. Two months had passed, and not once during that time had she felt depressed in spirits. Mr. Jones was much encouraged. It was evident, to his mind, that it was plenty of society that his wife wanted: and this he meant to see was provided for her.

Towards spring, as fashionable assemblies became less and less frequent, Mr. Jones could see that old states were returning upon his wife. He would often find her, on returning home, sitting by herself, with a dreamy, absent look in her eyes. How to meet such states in their incipency and throw them off, he did not certainly know. Sometimes he would propose going out to see a friend, or a visit to the theatre. But these propositions were rarely accepted. Occasionally he could get her interested in the future prospects of their children; especially of Helen, their oldest girl, now between eight and nine years of age. But his resources were small, and even they not skillfully brought into action.

The fact was, Mr. Jones was a merchant in feeling as well as by profession. In other words, Mr. Jones took but little interest in any thing that did not pertain to business. A poor boy, with few opportunities for the improvement of his mind, he was placed at an early age in a store. Intelligent and industrious, and, withal, ambi-

tious to rise, he soon made himself of value to his employers. Little beyond the sphere of trade approached his mind near enough to affect it with any permanent interest. Books were resorted to but rarely. His reading was confined mainly to the newspapers, and the topics that took hold upon his mind were those connected with politics, and the passing events of the day. For a year or two after having attained his majority, he remained in the store where he had served his time. Then he commenced business in connexion with a young man who had a good cash capital, and credit to a large amount whenever it was needed. This young man was the son of a wealthy merchant who had become such by his own vigorous exertions. But, like too many similarly situated, he was content to have his children educated entirely at schools, seminaries, and colleges. He did not bring them occasionally in contact with real life, early, and let them feel its peculiar strong tendencies, standing beside them as he did so, and guarding and guiding their young minds into the truth made indelible by feeling experience. The consequence was, that, when they did enter upon life, at the age of moral responsibility, the whole world was new to them. When they did take the rudder into their own hands, they knew nothing of the stream down

which they were gliding. All was yet to be learned.

The partner of Mr. Jones had a sister named Margaret, a girl of fine taste, and good education. She had remained at school until her eighteenth year. During the last year of her school-girl days, she contracted an intimate friendship with a young lady of her own age, with whom nearly all her time not occupied in study was spent. Both were fond of reading, and, as might be expected, works of imagination. They not only read these together, but talked together of their contents, and of their own bright future, made brighter by their fond fancies. To them, the world into which they were entering was full of all their hearts could wish. In the most perfect sympathy with each other, did that last year of girlhood pass. Purely and fervently did they love each other, and their love made them happy.

Margaret left school and returned home about the period at which her brother entered into business with Mr. Jones. The first time she met that individual, she thought him the dullest creature she had ever seen, and did not hesitate to laugh outright as soon as he had departed. Her brother mildly chid her, but this only provoked greater merriment, and caused her to launch against him sundry keen shafts of ridicule. Her estimation of Mr.

Jones did not change much during the first year. In that time she met him occasionally, and as she knew him better, could perceive his good qualities. Still, her beau ideal of a young man was so different from Thomas Jones, that the mental contrast always produced a merry peal of laughter.

For Mr. Jones to meet Margaret frequently was to love her. Before a year rolled round, he felt that his happiness depended upon his being able to secure both heart and hand of the lovely girl. He had observed enough to satisfy him that Margaret did not look upon him with a very favorable eye, and that, sometimes, it was hard work for her to treat him with civility. But, "faint heart never won fair lady," was his motto. He determined to lay a siege, trusting to patient perseverance for the accomplishment of his end.

He was successful—but the siege was a long one, and vigorously prosecuted. When the fair one at length yielded, it was not with a joyous impulse, but was, rather, a compromise with her objections. She would not have chosen Mr. Jones, but she did not see how she could longer refuse him. And so they were married. He made her a kind, devoted husband, for he loved her fervently. But there was little in his mind that she could love, and hers became not, therefore, a mirror in which his thoughts were reflected.

There did not take place that interior conjunction of mind and heart, from which, and from which alone, comes happiness in marriage. As far as he was concerned, the lack of this was made up by the abstraction of his thoughts in business. He had a defined pursuit in life, and this absorbed the larger portion of his time. Not so his wife. She had nothing upon which to fix steadily her mind. In her household she had little care; everything was delegated to others. There was a domestic to fill every department. She had, therefore, plenty of leisure, in which thought, instead of going out in pursuit of the means for the attainment of ends, could turn back, and corrode like a canker her own bosom. The daily return of her husband was not looked for with the interest that return would have excited, had he been a man of cultivated taste, and with habits of mind at all congenial with her own. The genuine warmth of his manner always made, however, his return pleasant—always awakened a glow of pleasure in her heart.

From this brief history, the reader will be able, for himself, to determine, to some extent, the cause of Mrs. Jones' periodical fits of despondency. They showed themselves, at first, only in states of pensive abstraction of mind, that remained for a few days, and then passed off. Gradually, they became more

and more defined, until they arrived at the stage already described.

And now we will resume the broken thread of our narrative. As spring advanced, Mrs. Jones relapsed into her old states of melancholy. Her husband became really discouraged. It seemed to him that his wife could have no real love for either himself or her children. If so, why indulge such wretched feelings while she had them to minister to and make happy? Five years before, he had dissolved his connexion with her brother, and was now acting alone. Her father had been dead three years. He left her a fortune of forty thousand dollars. Most of this was in her husband's business. This business, in spite of Mr. Jones' most devoted efforts, had been falling into embarrassment for some time, in consequence of over-trading and heavy losses. He had, therefore, anxious care through the day, and often the most wretched feelings when he came home at night, and found his wife in one of her gloomy conditions.

Spring passed away, and summer came.

"Mr. and Mrs. Lorman are going to make the tour of the Lakes this summer," Mrs. Jones said to her husband one evening. "I should dearly love to be of the party, if you could leave your business."

Mr. Jones could not well be absent. But nothing of this

was intimated. He was so much concerned on his wife's account, that he was willing to submit to any sacrifice to meet an expressed desire. Making hasty, and consequently, imperfect arrangements, to leave his business, Mr. Jones declared himself ready to accompany his wife in the proposed tour. They started, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Lorman, taking with them their oldest child. After spending a week at Saratoga, the party went to the Falls of Niagara. From Buffalo, after another week, they embarked for Chicago. Thence they passed over to St. Louis, and down the river to the mouth of the Ohio. Louisville, Cincinnati, Wheeling and Pittsburg, came next in their route, as they turned their faces homeward. Three days' journey in stage, rail-road and steamboat, brought them to the place from which they had started, all glad to get back, but none more so than Mrs. Jones. She had felt miserable for a week. For three days she had not spoken to any one, not even so much as replying to her husband's oft-repeated question, if there was nothing that he could get or do for her. At Saratoga, Mrs. Jones had enjoyed herself wonderfully. The visit to Niagara was also delightful. But the first day's sail on the lake made her sick, and she was not able to hold up her head until their arrival at Chicago. The journey from thence to St. Louis had no at-

tractions. For the first day, on leaving St. Louis, the river scenery interested her, but she tired of its sameness after that. From the mouth of the Ohio to Pittsburg, but little had a charm for her eye, that, for a greater portion of the time, although it looked abroad, took intelligent observation of nothing. The retina was impressed, but the mind perceived it not. From the time of leaving Pittsburg till their arrival at home, her spirits were down to the lowest ebb.

Poor Mr. Jones was in despair. If this state of things continued he did not know how soon his wife's malady would take a permanent form in a confirmed mental derangement. But an inspection of his business on arriving at home, gave him other and more absorbing causes of concern. His paper had been dishonored, and his credit, in consequence, so severely shocked, that he found himself in imminent danger of ruin. Business had been suspended until his return, which would have taken place weeks before, had not his letters failed to reach him. A few days of anxious investigation, revealed to the trembling merchant the dreaded truth, that he was a ruined man. A meeting of creditors was called, and an assignment made of all his effects.

During the progress of these distressing events, Mr. Jones had not been able to summon

sufficient courage to disclose the truth to his wife. For days after their return, she had been too much depressed in feeling—too really wretched—to notice the dark shadow that rested upon her husband's face. Her attention was first directed to him by noticing one night that he walked the floor of their chamber in evident agitation of mind, for more than an hour after his usual time for retiring. Her thoughts once fixed upon an object out of herself, and that object her husband in apparent distress, her own undefined and undefinable state of dreamy wretchedness began to subside.

In the morning, her first thoughts were of her husband. He had already arisen, when she awoke, and left the chamber. For three days she had not met the family at table. The thought of this, connected with the remembrance of her husband's agitation, too plainly exhibited on the night before, quickened her conscience as by a painful sting. She had never before seen him so moved; for he had always carefully striven to conceal from her whatever trouble and anxiety he might feel.

Arising quickly and dressing herself, Mrs. Jones went to the nursery to look at the children, her first visit to them for three days. The little things crowded around her, climbing up into her lap, twining their arms around her neck, and kissing,

with childish fondness, her cheeks, lips, and forehead. Her bosom throbbed with a warm impulse of delight. She remained with them until the breakfast bell was rung, and then joined her husband at the table. He lifted his eyes to her face as she entered, and smiled faintly. Her heart bounded with a quick throb the moment she saw the expression of his countenance. To her a dreadful change had passed over it. His brow, ever so smooth and calm, was heavy and corrugated, as by intense, anxious thought;—his lips were compressed to half their ordinary volume—and his eyes had a strange, fixed, troubled expression. He ate only a few mouthfuls, and then left the table and retired from the house, seeming to be altogether unconscious of the presence of any one.

"Mercy! what can have happened?" ejaculated Mrs. Jones, rising involuntarily and leaving the breakfast room with two of the children seated at the table. Until dinner time, she had no thought but for her husband. He was evidently in deep trouble, and that awakened all her sympathies. He was nothing changed in appearance when he came home at dinner time. She spoke to him in a kind voice, and he looked up in evident surprise.

"What is the matter, husband?" she asked, laying her hand tenderly upon his arm,

and looking him with anxious interest in the face.

There was something so affectionate and earnest in his wife's manner, that Mr. Jones was taken by surprise. He replied, without time for reflection:

"I am a ruined man, Margaret! But, were it not for you and the children, I would not care."

"Ruined! Ruined!" murmured Mrs. Jones, in a bewildered manner. "How? What?"

"During our Northern and Western tour, my business became embarrassed, and some of my paper was dishonored. It was too late, when I returned, to repair the injury. There was nothing left me but to call a meeting of my creditors, and assign all my effects into the hands of trustees. This latter is now about being done. I shall come out a ruined man; but still, with a fair character, unbroken spirits, and a knowledge of business that will, I trust, put me on my feet again in a few years."

"Then why despond?" asked Mrs. Jones, in a tone of confidence.

Her husband started, and looked her in the face for a moment, doubting if he had heard aright.

"I only despond for your sake," he replied, after a short pause.

"And why for my sake?"

"You will not be able to

bear the change. All this elegance, and luxury, and ease, will pass away, Margaret." His voice trembled. "Ah! my poor wife! I fear that you will not be able to bear it."

"All we have possessed has, at least, not made me happy," the wife returned. Her voice trembled likewise, and was low and somewhat plaintive. Her feelings shrunk instinctively at the change her husband had predicted. But she felt a new love for, and a new confidence in him, blended with something of that heroic spirit which sustains a wife amid the severest trials.

"Margaret!" said the husband at length, in a firm voice, "can you stand up bravely by my side in this trial? Will your love for me keep you up? Can you forsake all for the sake of your husband and children?"

"Try me!" was the firm reply.

"I will!"

"And you shall not be disappointed," she returned, leaning her head against his bosom.

From that moment Mr. Jones had a cheerful, confident spirit. He passed through the trying ordeal of giving everything into the hands of his creditors, without once flinching. He had feared for his wife, when she should be called upon to abandon the luxury and elegance to which she had always been used. But he did not know what was in her. Ease had suffered the rust to accumulate

upon her real internal character. But the stroke of misfortune's hammer had shivered off the dimming scales, and now she stood forth in the brightness of a woman's true nature.

They had three children, the youngest but two years old at the time the event occurred.

"We shall have to give up our waiter," Mr. Jones said, when they were prepared to move into a small house, far away from the fashionable neighborhood in which they had for years lived.

"Of course," was promptly replied. "And the nurse also. I must now take the entire charge of my children."

"But, I am afraid it will be too much for you."

"Do you think we can afford to keep three servants?"

"I do not," Mr. Jones said. "I shall enter again into my business. But it will be in a small way, and without capital. Our income will be limited."

"That settles the matter at once. I must be my own nurse. I have been thinking seriously over this matter for some time, and it seems to me clearly wrong for any woman to delegate her duties so fully as I have done. Perhaps," and her voice faltered, "all this trouble has been sent upon us, that I might be made to see and do my duty as a woman and mother. You are called upon to suffer for my supineness."

In a few weeks they were settled down quietly in their

new home. Mrs. Jones found enough to do for her husband and children, to keep head and hands both in constant occupation. She had no time for lowness of spirits—and, in fact, no cause. Her malady had arisen from a want of active interest in others. This she now had. Her body was often wearied, but duties well done left behind them a cheerful spirit. Mr. Jones found that it was as

much as he could do to meet the expense of his family. His children were growing up, and it cost no small sum to educate them. His wife was, in consequence, not suffered to relax in her efforts. And this was well for her. Constant occupation, and her portion of this world's cares and anxieties, were the medicaments her case required. When freely administered, they proved fully efficacious.

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