

THE FIRST AND THE SECOND MARRIAGES;

OR, THE

COURTESIES OF WEDDED LIFE.

BY

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THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
TO MY BELOVED HUSBAND,
ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF OUR MARRIAGE.

PREFACE.

THE object of this volume is indicated by its title. It is to exhibit "The courtesies of wedded life." It treats of courtship and marriage, of the relation of husband and wife, of their responsibilities and privileges, and of their trials and rewards. It aims to assist them in their reciprocal duties, and in the attainment of the pure and blissful ends of wedlock. It shows how piety enables them to bear with each others' infirmities, how it smoothes asperities of temper, assimilates dispositions and tastes, conforms character to the noblest standard, and adorns them with graces surpassing those of the muses.

These subjects have often been treated in a didactic style with distinguished ability. Many of them have found a place in the representations of the stage, and in the numbers of the poet. The author, deeply impressed with their grave importance, lying as they do at the foundation of society, has attempted to present them in a series of life-like pictures drawn from personal observa-

tion. Imagination has furnished the drapery of these scenes, but their "*proprie personae*" are living characters. If any readers should see their own likeness in the picture, and should find their own history in the incidents, their silence may prevent others from recognizing them and from discovering their failings, while their own reflection may assist them to overcome the same, and to obey more perfectly the precepts, "Wives, *reverence* your husbands," and "Husbands, *love* your wives and be not bitter against them."

The original design of this work embraced several collateral topics, here treated with brevity, and in some instances entirely omitted, lest the volume should increase beyond the prescribed limits. For all its omissions and defects we invoke the charity of a candid public to whom we now send it on its mission of love. If it shall produce a more just appreciation of the marriage institution, multiply the cordialities and amenities of wedded companions, and increase the happiness of home, the labor of its preparation will be abundantly rewarded.

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THE FIRST AND THE SECOND MARRIAGES.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILIES OF THE MINISTER AND LAWYER.

Not far from the year eighteen hundred and ten, two gentlemen fixed upon the quiet village of C—— as a desirable residence. One was Thomas Warren, a clergyman, the other, Cyrus Wells, a lawyer. These gentlemen had, for many years, been on terms of the closest intimacy, having formed an acquaintance at an academy, where they were fitting for college, and having continued together until the present time, studying their different professions in the same town. Learning that there was a favorable opening for an attorney in the village of C——, Mr. Wells reluctantly left his friend and proceeded thither. But on his arrival at the place, he found they were destitute of a pastor as well as of an attorney, and he earnestly recommended the young licentiate.

In two months from this time, Mr. Warren became his pastor, and though his friend was now elevated from the seat on which, for so many years they used to sit together in college, ranged in alphabetical order, yet he was the more happy to hear the gospel from his lips, on account of their long-trying friendship.

Soon after their settlement in C——, Mr. Wells, or Squire Wells as he was now called, bought a fine house and thirty acres of land, and then returned to his native place for its mistress. As the parsonage was not in readiness, Mr. Warren boarded with his friend until the spring, when he also found a mate, and commenced housekeeping on his own account.

Years passed by, and though the world in general never heard of the distinguished Mr. Warren, who was advertised to preach in the city, nor of the celebrated advocate, Mr. Wells, who would plead in this or that difficult case, yet they were perhaps none the less useful and happy. Reverend Mr. Warren was a zealous, faithful, affectionate shepherd over a united, happy flock, and Squire Wells had that peculiar and crowning excellence of his profession, the art of keeping his fellow-citizens out of the law, and settling their difficulties for them in a most peaceful and happy manner. In this way the village of C—— acquired an enviable reputation, and though the good Squire lost many a case because he thought it unlawful, and would not run the risk of the injury to his conscience by undertaking it, yet he often remarked that he had enough of worldly treasure, and was happy in the thought that no one was made poorer by his means.

Upon his marriage, his father, who was a gentleman of large property, advanced the sum necessary to purchase his farm. Upon the decease of Mr. Wells, senior, his son inherited the whole of his property, with the exception of twenty thousand dollars, left to his grandson, who bore his name, to be devoted to his education and settlement in life.

Beside this son, Squire Wells had a daughter Eleanor, of seven years of age, and a son George, two years younger. Two infant children had been translated to their heavenly home.

The pastor had four children; a son named for his father, one year younger than Henry Wells, a daughter Susan Hammond, named for his only sister, of the same age as Eleanor, a second daughter Bessie, of five, and a son Edward of three.

Through the interest of his friend, the salary of the good clergyman had been increased from time to time, as his family multiplied, and no one could have convinced Mr. Warren that a minister ever had a more attentive and affectionate people, or a more happy home.

When Henry had completed his preparation for college, under the careful instruction of his pastor, Squire Wells proposed to bear Thomas's expenses, if he would go with him, but Thomas was not yet prepared, and his father preferred to keep him at home during the first year, and have him enter Sophomore. About this time Mr. Hammond died, and Mrs. Hammond sent for her niece to visit her for one year, and to attend school. Susan was a great favorite with her aunt, who would have been glad to adopt the young girl, and as she was left in independent circumstances, and had no children of her own, Mr. and Mrs. Warren were sometimes tempted to yield to her proposition, especially as the lady was an eminent Christian, and every way qualified to be a true mother to their daughter.

Susan was a frank, enthusiastic girl, with very strong preferences and aversions, one who under the parental

roof had been in the habit of speaking just what she thought, sometimes where silence would have been more discreet. She had a fair open countenance, upon which it was very easy to read her thoughts, and if addressed suddenly, even by the members of her own family, her cheek would mantle with roses, and her eyes be cast down, like those of a timid fawn.

Possessed of great buoyancy of spirits, she was yet very even in her temperament, for the sudden bursts of tears which were sometimes caused by a reproof from her parents, or by sympathy with the distressed, were transient as an April shower.

She had a sweet voice both in speech and in song, and when about her work made the parsonage ring with her cheerful notes.

When Susan returned from M——, after being absent one year, and was informed that her aunt had renewed her proposal to adopt her, she begged permission to answer the letter herself.

Observing a meaning smile about her mouth, her father readily consented, with the condition that the letter should be subject to their revision.

The following day she presented her father with a neatly written letter, which was as follows:

"Very dear aunt Susan:—

"I reached home in time to see brother Thomas before he left for college. He went off in good spirits, and thinks he shall not be home-sick, because he shall see so much of Henry Wells. Squire Wells told his son to engage a place for brother at Mrs. Holmes's,

where he has always boarded, and insists that he shall be allowed the privilege of paying the bills incurred for board and tuition, for father will find it costs something in these days to keep college boys in clothes and spending money. When Thomas and I walked over the last evening to bid the family good bye, the kind man as he shook hands, managed to leave with brother a fifty dollar bill. I do not know what we should do if we had not such kind friends. Henry walked over here the next morning to start with Thomas, and to tell father that he would look after him. Henry is now a senior.

"I found Gracie had grown much during my absence. She is just learning to walk, and is a precious darling. I received a joyful welcome not only from Thomas and my parents, but from Bessie and Edward.

"Yesterday, mother read me your very kind letter about adopting me to be your child. Dear aunt, I could not love you better if you were my own mother, for you have been like a mother to me ever since I can remember, and dear uncle Hammond used to take me on his knee and call me his own little Susy. But at present I feel it to be my duty to remain at home, and do all I can to assist my mother in her care of the family. I am now in my seventeenth year, and ought to be learning to be of use. Certainly I can be with regard to Gracey. I can see my parents miss Thomas very much, and yesterday I heard father say to mother, 'I don't know but we ought to comply with sister's kind proposition to adopt Susan, but now Thomas has gone, I fear you would sink without her cheerful company.' So, dear aunt, I made up my mind at once to stay at home, and asked leave to

write the reply to you. I did not tell them what I should write, but shall show them my letter and obtain their approval before I send it.

"With many thanks for all your kindness,
your loving niece,

SUSAN H. WARREN."

Mr. Warren read the letter aloud to his wife, and though he said nothing of it, yet Susan knew that it met his approval, for he kissed her tenderly, and called her his dutiful daughter. Her mother, too, took pains to show her that they were much pleased with her conduct.

Thus it was that the question, which in the course of a few years had been often agitated, was settled, for a time at least, by the conscientious desire of Susan to be an assistance to her parents.

As Mr. Warren was far from thinking because his daughter had graduated with honor from an academy, that she had therefore finished her education, he was anxious to have her pursue her studies at home. He laid out for her a course of reading, and proposed that she should keep a diary of daily events, for the sake of ease in her style of writing.

In addition to this, her mother allowed her to take much of the care of her little sister, of whom she had become very fond, and also of certain parts of the family work, so that the young girl was not likely to be troubled with that worst of complaints, ennui, for want of enough to occupy her time and attention.

Eleanor Wells, the companion of Susan, had been absent from home nearly two years, when the latter re-

turned from M——; but had since come home, in her own opinion an accomplished young lady. Both her father and mother regretted many traits in their daughter's character, of which they had not been aware while she remained under the parental roof, but they trusted that home influences would do much toward removing them, and render her a blessing to them, as they gladly acknowledged Susan Warren was to her parents.

Such was the situation of the families, when the heroine of our simple story commenced her diary.

CHAPTER II.

THE NUPTIALS AT THE FARM HOUSE.

Two days since a man called upon father to request him to go to a house about three miles distant, and marry a couple. As the afternoon was pleasant he permitted me to accompany him. The wedding was appointed at three o'clock, and it wanted but five minutes to the hour when we drove up to the door. As no one appeared ready to take the horse, father told me to sit in the buggy and hold the reins, while he ascertained if we were at the right place. There were no signs of life about the premises, but he walked through the gate and knocked at the door with the end of his whip. A young girl soon appeared in a loose dress and curl-papers in her hair. When she saw who it was, the color flew into her face, and she appeared almost ready to cry; but father asked, "is there to be a wedding here this afternoon?"

"I believe there is," she answered in great confusion.

"I thought this must be the house," said father; "is there any one here to take my horse?"

"No, sir, there's no one at home. They've all gone into the field to get in a load of hay, 'cause they thought there'd be a shower. But I expect them home every minute," and she looked anxiously up the road. "If you could drive the horse round to the shed, they'll take care of him."

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The girl disappeared as I put my head out to see what detained father, and he came, assisted me from the buggy, showed me into a room where by the number of chairs placed in order against the wall, he supposed the service was to be performed, and then drove the horse round to the shed which the girl had pointed out.

I have been to a great many weddings with father, as mother is feeble, and it is considered a token of respect for some of the family to accompany him; but this was so different a reception from any I ever received, that I began to feel very much like laughing, and was right glad that brother Thomas did not accompany us, for one glance into his mischief-loving eyes would have completely upset my dignity.

Father soon joined me, and taking a paper from his hat, made himself very comfortable in its perusal. I glanced around the room hoping to find something in the form of a book; but no, a small solar lamp on the table, and two high candlesticks on the mantel completed the survey. I was not left long, however, without employment, for a loud whispering commenced in a room opening from the one in which we were seated, and my attention was soon wholly absorbed in listening. From what I could learn, the bride was making her toilet, some part of which appeared to be of a particularly disagreeable nature, for she uttered several short screams, saying, "oh, dear, you will kill me; I wish Sarah Maria had kept her old tongs at home."

"Never mind," said another voice, "it will look beautiful when it's done; I dare say, even better than Sarah Maria's."

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"I hope so, but do be careful or you'll pull every spear of hair out of my head."

"I guess I'd better heat the tongs again, and you can be putting on your stockings. Strange the folks don't come home. Seth has got to wash and dress. It's a dreadful pity the parson was so punctual. Like as not he'll charge extra pay."

I glanced at father, and saw a quiet smile playing about his mouth, which convinced me he was not so absorbed in his paper that he had not heard what was passing.

All was still for a few moments in the bedroom, but in the kitchen I heard some one at work upon the fire in the stove. At length it ceased, and I heard the same voice saying, "here, be quick, they're nice and hot now. Let me do the front ones, and then you can slip on your dress, for I thought I saw the wagon coming over the hill."

In one moment a shrill shriek was heard, followed by a voice in distress, saying, "you ugly, mean thing, you've taken the whole curl right off, and burned me awfully," and she began to cry.

"Oh! I'm dreadful sorry," replied the hair dresser. "I didn't know 'twas so hot; but I declare if I was to die, I couldn't help laughing, it does look so queer to see that short hair sticking out."

"I guess you wouldn't laugh if 'twas your own head," retorted the other angrily. "I'm as good a mind as ever I had to eat, to say I won't be married."

"Well," said the first, "Seth won't care, 'twas your own choice having it to-day. You know he said of the

two, he'd rather put it off till after haying and harvesting."

This reply seemed to bring the bride to terms, and she reluctantly consented to submit to the remaining operation, during which my attention was called off by a loud "geeing and hawing" in the yard. Before the farmers reached the barn, a woman ran out, and spoke to them in a low but earnest tone, telling them I suppose that the minister had come. I was looking through the blind, and I saw a young man (very red and sun-burnt) reluctantly leave the load of hay, and approach the house.

"I'd no kind o' idear 'twas so late," said he as they came near, "but 'taint no use to drive me, I can't do nothing when I'm driv'."

"Only think," said the woman, "Esther was a curling her hair with the curling tongs Sarah Maria lent her, and she burned the whole front one off, paper and all, close to her head."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the young man, "It'll bring down her pride some, I reckon. She was a lotting so on cutting a dash with them are curls."

"Don't let her know I told you," said the woman, "she's awful angry with me, now."

After what seemed a very long time, but which father said was only half an hour, the woman I had seen talking with the young man, entered courtesying and took a seat. It was now four o'clock, and father asked her if the young people would soon be ready.

"They'll be right in," she answered, "they got to work out in the field, and forgot how time was passing."

While she was speaking, there was a whispering in the entry, "You go in first."

"I wont; you go."

The door opened, and a man entered, the same who came for father, and said frankly, "how de do Parson? I guess you've had to wait a spell. If I had known you was so prompt, I'd 'a said four o'clock in the room of three; but I'd an idear that ministers were forgetful, and as 'twas a busy time, I thought I'd say three, and then you would be here in season."

In the mean time the groom and bride had slipped into the room, and seated themselves on the first chairs they came to, near the door.

Father smiled, and said, "if you are ready, I will proceed at once to the ceremony, as it is a busy time with me, too."

I had to press my handkerchief to my mouth to keep from laughing aloud. There sat the bride with showers of pipe stem curls falling down the sides of her face; and there true enough was the front one burned off within half an inch of her head, leaving a large red place on her forehead. She looked not only crest fallen, but rather sulky, as she turned her back partly to her future lord and master.

Father, after waiting a moment for them to take their places, had to request them to do so, pointing to two chairs placed together as a convenient place for them to occupy. The farmer and his wife as they proved to be, then took their places on either side of them. During the first prayer they all remained seated, when father requested them to rise and join hands. Both the young

man and the girl turned very red as they obeyed and listened with open mouths for what was to follow. When the short ceremony was concluded, the groom sighed so it could be heard all over the room; I suppose from a sense of relief that it was over. Father had hardly concluded the benediction, when the young man stepped forward with his hand thrust into the pocket of his pantaloons, exclaiming, "How much is the damage, Parson?"

"I can hardly say at present," replied father, evidently making quite an effort to retain his gravity. "If you mean what is the fee, the groom generally gives me what he can afford."

A loud whispering now commenced between him and the man by his side; the bride standing in profound indifference, as if she would not deign to attend to such matters.

"I gin two dollars," said the farmer, and accordingly a two dollar bill was extracted from the pocket-book, and passed to father, after which, wishing them great happiness in their married life, and bidding them good afternoon, we took our departure, I accompanying father to the shed, without having had one word addressed to me by any member of the family.

As we rode home, father remarked that probably neither the groom nor the bride had ever attended a wedding, or they could scarcely have been so ignorant of the form of the service, and then he asked me if I noticed anything particular in the appearance of the company. I told him what struck me as different from anything I ever had seen, was the want of a proper affection between the husband and wife; and I repeated to him the remark

of the woman, that the young man wished her to postpone the marriage, and also what he had said about bringing down her pride.

"Yes, my daughter," replied father, "and you will always observe that even among the poorest class, and those who would naturally be considered the most ignorant of the rules of etiquette, true religion renders them polite, and attentive to all the civilities of every day life, such little courtesies as render the relations of husband and wife, of parents and children, just what God intended them to be when he established the family constitution.

"Among the rich and the learned, as well as the poor and ignorant, the want of these civilities, of that deference to each other's wishes, and desire to promote each other's happiness which is inculcated by the word of God, will make any family wretched."

I never had a heartier laugh than when I related my afternoon adventures to brother Thomas, and Henry Wells, who are passing their vacation at home. Henry said he would not have valued ten dollars to have been present. I know father thought it was a strange affair, for I overheard him saying as much to mother.

CHAPTER III.

THE YOUNG SOPHOMORE.

For the first time in his life, poor Thomas failed to receive a cordial welcome on coming home. I was standing by the gate bidding Eleanor Wells, good by; (she had passed the afternoon with me,) when I heard the stage coach drive up to the tavern. As I was very busy talking, I thought no more of it, until Eleanor started and said, "why, Susan, there's your brother Thomas," and so it was. The College term had only been in session three weeks, and I could not imagine what had brought him home. After he had kissed me, he shook hands with Eleanor, and then asked, "Susan, where's mother?"

"In her chamber," I replied, and he instantly turned into the little path leading to the south door, and ran up there. I don't know what he told mother, but when she came down to prayers, her eyes were red and swollen, while the poor fellow looked as solemn as a church. When father began to read in the Bible, his voice trembled so much that Bessie asked me in a whisper, what was the matter with all of us, for seeing the rest sad, and fearing some trouble, I had unconsciously a very gloomy face. I did not wish her to know that I was ignorant of Thomas's affairs, and so I only shook my head. Poor father could hardly get through his prayer.

If brother had not been before us bodily, I should have supposed news had arrived of his death. As it was, I could not help weeping. I am sure I heard Thomas sob two or three times. Just as soon as he could, he slipped from the room, and I heard him run up to his chamber and lock the door. I sat down, hoping father or mother would explain what had occurred, but mother only said, "Susan and Bessie, you had better retire," and she spoke so sadly I had not courage to ask a single question.

Early this morning I heard Thomas go out of the front door, and he did not come in until we had eaten breakfast, and were just going to attend prayers. Mother seemed grieved, but said, "I am sorry you were not here in season, my son."

"I don't wish any breakfast," he answered, and father commenced reading.

In the course of the forenoon, mother and brother remained in the study, and then father assisted him to carry a table and bookcase into his chamber. After all was arranged he came to me, and asked me to walk with him, which I was glad enough to do, as I had not yet the least idea what all this could mean.

We walked along together until we reached a retired grove, and though I was exceedingly impatient to hear why Thomas came home so unexpectedly, yet after one glance into his sober face, so unlike his usually merry one, I could not articulate one word. We stepped over the low wall, and soon were out of sight of the road. There was a clump of trees together and a pleasant green mound at the foot of them. Thomas sat down and motioned me to sit by his side. It seemed to me a

long, long time before he spoke, but at length he burst out, "Susy, do you know I am disgraced and ruined forever?"

I sobbed aloud, "Oh! what have you done?" I asked when I could speak.

The poor fellow put his handkerchief to his eyes and cried so violently that he shook all over.

"Dear, dear Tommy," I said, "no matter what you have done, I will always love you just as much as ever," and I put my arms around his neck and drew him up where he could lay his head upon my shoulder. It was *my* blessed privilege now to be the comforter; for oh! how many, *many* times has he soothed me and sympathized in my childish griefs. Dear brother held my hand tightly, and at last he grew calmer, and told me all his troubles; and I don't think he has been at all to blame; I would have done just as he did. The facts are these. Last term some of the fellows used to meet late at night and have oyster suppers; and often they procured wine, and became very boisterous. Thomas's chum carried dishes and wine glasses in his trunk to college, and one night he insisted that brother should be present. He said so much that at length he prevailed, and, as Thomas expressed it, they had a high time. About midnight they became so noisy that they awoke the tutor, who slept in the same building, and he suddenly appeared among them. Brother had taken two glasses of wine, and he confessed that he felt pretty lively, so he stepped up to tutor Brown, whom the class had nicknamed on account of the extreme length of his nose, and with a glass of wine in his hand invited him to drink, saying, "I assure you, Profes-

sor Longnose, you will find it both palatable and refreshing." The tutor was very indignant, and Thomas says he had just sense enough to know he had said something very silly, and was glad to sneak off to bed. The next morning he was summoned to the President's study, and was there admonished for his conduct. The President treated him with the tenderness of a child; and at length brother told him it was the first time he had accepted an invitation to a midnight supper, and it should be the last. President —— said it gave him great pleasure to hear him make such a pledge, and in consideration of it he should not inform his parents of what had passed, as he knew how anxious they were that he should make a good use of his time in the improvement of the talents God had given him."

"Thank you, sir," replied brother, "but I could not sleep until I had told my mother."

I remember well when that letter came, and I remember too that a day or two after came a letter from President ——, and he spoke in terms of unqualified praise of brother's conduct, and also of his standing in his class. In the vacation Henry Wells told me that brother was a universal favorite; that he was such good company, and always so full of fun, and yet at the same time such a fine scholar, that the fellows couldn't say enough in his praise.

When Thomas went back to ——, three weeks ago, father cautioned him about associating so much with John Hawes, and so brother changed his chum, and roomed this term with a very steady young man, by the name of Henry Stanwood. It so happened that one

afternoon he stepped for a moment into Hawes's room, on his way from recitation, and saw that preparations were being made for a great spree. When he went in, after a slight knock, Hawes kicked a pan under the bed, but not so quickly but that Thomas saw that it contained a goose already to spit, which they roast by driving a nail into the mantle-piece and suspending it by a string, having a pan underneath to catch the gravy—a piece of cord is tied to one of the legs, and by pulling that and tying it to the round of a chair, they turn it until every side is browned alike.

Supposing he suspected something was going on, Hawes invited him to be present, and said, "we are going to have a glorious time, and no fear of Longnose either, for he's going off to L——, courting to-night."

Thomas immediately rose to go, and decidedly declined, saying, "I have pledged my word to President ——."

Hawes then hinted something, in which brother caught the word "blab," which so enraged him that he flew at Hawes, and said he could have knocked him down with one blow, he felt so strong; but all at once he thought he heard mother's soft voice whispering "my son," and he turned quickly around almost expecting to see her standing behind him. He went directly to his room, and after a short time forgot all about what had passed, but on returning from one of the literary societies in the evening, he heard such a noise in Hawes's room, which was directly under his own, he presumed that they were already engaged in the discussion of their goose.

He took off his clothes and went to bed, but the noise

below constantly increased, and he concluded to get up, as he could not sleep, and prepare for the morning recitation. An hour later he heard a great crash, as if a table had tipped over, followed by a scream of distress, and being dressed he rushed down and burst into the room. The sight was awful. They had all been drinking freely, and one of them had thrown a tumbler at Hawes, which struck him in the cheek and made a great gash from which the blood was streaming profusely. The dishes lay in broken pieces all over the floor, and one fellow, the craziest of all, was just aiming a bottle at the looking-glass. Thomas sprang forward to snatch it from him, when the drunken fellow eluded his grasp, and threw it with all his force right into the face and eyes of the tutor, who had just then entered the door. The blow made the good man furious, and he flew at brother, supposing it was he, and began to abuse him most unmercifully, calling him all manner of mean names, and saying that he would have him dismissed from college the very next morning. Finding he could do nothing to appease him, Thomas retired to his own room, but he could not sleep, so he spent the night in writing a letter to the President. But after a dozen efforts to exculpate himself without exposing his classmates, he gave it up, and determined to allow matters to take their course. The next morning as they were going out from College prayers, the President said, very gravely, "Thomas Warren is requested to call at my study at eight o'clock."

At the appointed time he knocked at the study door, and though conscious he had done nothing wrong, yet his knees trembled so that he could hardly stand.

"Walk in," said the President, merely glancing up from a letter he was writing, and motioning that Thomas was to be seated. He then went on with his writing, but with a heavy frown upon his forehead. A cough from the back part of the room made Thomas start, and there sat tutor Brown with his nose increased to the size of two, and a handkerchief tied around one eye. Thomas sprang from his chair to ask him how he was, for he always liked the man, but remembering himself, sank back into his seat. The movement did not escape the notice of the President, who looked still more stern than before.

"Warren," he said, holding out a letter he had folded and directed, "You are dismissed from college for six months. I regret this on your own account, but much more on account of the grief it will cause your worthy parents. I regret also that my confidence in your integrity should have been misplaced." He still held out the letter, but poor Thomas said he grew so faint, all this was so sudden, that he staggered back into his seat. He expected, confidently, that questions would have been asked, and somehow that he could explain everything.

President ——— hemmed and coughed, and Thomas is sure he saw a tear drop from his eye. He waited a moment for brother to recover himself, and then said, "I am deeply grieved that this should have occurred," with a glance at the disfigured face of the poor tutor. "But a young man who so far forgets himself as to violate the rules of decency had better remain under the parental roof," and he held out the letter again.

"Excuse me, sir," said Thomas respectfully, "but I

cannot carry that letter home to my parents. It would kill my mother," and he says if all the world had been there, he could not have helped it; he began to cry. He had been awake all night, and had grown very nervous, and the idea of mother weeping over that letter, wholly unnerved him.

"I am glad to see," said the President, "that you are not entirely lost, at least to your duty as a child. But I regret the love you manifest for your mother, did not restrain you last evening."

"Will you permit me to read that letter, sir?" asked Thomas, starting to his feet.

"That is rather a strange request; but I will comply with it."

Brother tore it open, and after glancing down the first page, deliberately folded it, and returned it to him, saying, "I cannot take it, sir. It accuses me of crimes I never committed."

Tutor Brown started forward angrily, but the President waved him back, and without another word, motioned Thomas to the door. He walked out back of the colleges, until the hour when his chum would be gone to recitation, then he locked himself in his room, packed everything into his trunk and bag, went to the tavern and sent a man for them, and took the stage-coach home, without seeing one of the students.

Poor Thomas! It was nearly an hour before he had finished relating his sad adventure; but all the time he had been growing in my estimation, until I began to regard him in the light of a martyr to his own goodness. I said everything comforting, I could think of. I told

him it would all come out right; such things always did; that I loved him a thousand times better than ever. But though he kissed me, and called me his darling sister; yet he still looked very sad.

"Susy," said he, "I can't bear it. It's hard enough to be disgraced before the President and the whole faculty, setting aside your own class, but seeing father and mother take it so to heart, kills me; and when I was trying to do my very best," and the poor fellow broke down again.

"They don't, they can't believe you did it," I exclaimed eagerly.

"No," he answered sadly, "I don't think they doubt my word; but they looked so grieved and sorry, it cuts me to the heart. If it had not been for mother, instead of coming home, I should have gone off on a whaling voyage, and I don't know but I shall now. As for staying here to be pointed at as a warning to all bad boys, I can't do it. Then what will Squire Wells think of me."

"Oh, Thomas!" I said, putting my arms around his neck, "You wouldn't be so wicked. That would show that you felt you had done wrong. That would be the very worst way in the world. I am sure you won't do that." In my warmth, I grew very indignant against the good President, and even wished a dreadful wish about tutor Brown's nose, and I said that Hawes and all his company were a mean set, if they didn't confess to the President, and send for Thomas to come right back, and that I didn't care if the President did feel

badly when he found out he had been in the wrong, for he ought not to have been in such a hurry to blame him without any evidence. But Thomas stopped me and said that he had not a better friend in College, than the President, and that he acquitted him of all blame, and if he ever did find out the truth, no one would more regret the course he had pursued. We walked slowly home, and I secretly determined to talk with mother, and beg her to try to look cheerful for poor Tommy's sake. But as soon as we entered the house, father came forward and shook hands with brother so cordially, that I expected without doubt, President —— had sent for him to return. Thomas thought so too, and the color flashed to his face."

"I have had a letter, my son," said father.

"And has he restored me to my place?" asked Thomas eagerly.

"No, he has sent me the letter he wrote to send by you, but with a postscript, which I will show you at some future day."

In vain Thomas plead to see it now; father smiled and said "no." But I can see that they are much more cheerful since receiving it. When brother had left the room, I begged mother to let me see the letter, but she said, "not at present." She however told me the substance, which was that the President had been much affected by the love Thomas had exhibited for his parents, especially the veneration in which he held his mother, and he comforted father with the hope that the temporary absence from his class, together with the mor-

tification he would experience, might be the means of entirely breaking up the habit of drinking, which so unfitted Thomas for usefulness.

This morning I was returning from the village where I had been on an errand for mother, when our little pet Gracie came running out to meet me. I caught her in my arms, and went dancing into the parlor, singing,

"Rock a bye baby upon the tree top,"

when my song was brought to a sudden termination by seeing a very serious looking gentleman sitting there in grave consultation with my father. I presume I was rosy enough, for it seemed as if all the blood in my body flew into my cheeks, but I had only time to notice that the gentleman had a pair of extremely large, sharp eyes, and a very grave mouth, before father said, "my daughter, sir," and I hastened from the room. I ran to relate my adventure to Thomas, but was hardly able to bring a smile to his face. Dear brother! He takes his disgrace sadly to heart. I never could have believed anything would change him so much. I sat down by him to cheer him if possible by a more hopeful view of his case. Gracie lay quietly in my arms with her favorite finger in her mouth. Thomas laid his head on my shoulder, a liberty he often craved, but was seldom indulged in, unless when in trouble. "Susy," he said, "sing me a tune."

I struck at once the tune set to the words;

"I had a hobby horse: —"

"No, Susy," he exclaimed, putting his hand to my mouth, "not that, something more serious."

I immediately commenced the beautiful lines:—

"How sweet to be allowed to pray,
To God the holy One;
With filial heart and lips to say,
O God, thy will be done!"

This was a favorite hymn of mother's, and while I sang it, poor Thomas seemed soothed and comforted. "Sister," he said, when I had finished, "I must do something different from what I am doing. I find it impossible to fix my mind on my studies, and then I am sure father cannot sustain the additional care of hearing me recite."

"Indeed, brother," I answered, "he said it was a pleasure to him, because your recitations were thoroughly prepared."

Thomas smiled a sad smile. I leaned my head against his, to keep him from seeing how much I was affected, when the moving of a shadow started me, and I saw father and the gentleman right before us. It was too, too bad; I could have cried from sheer vexation. There he stood with his great eyes fixed right upon us, as intently as if he were sitting for his daguerreotype. Father had on one of his roguish smiles when he saw my embarrassment, while Gracie sucked her finger as if nothing in the world had happened. The gentleman never moved a muscle of his face. He is the most disagreeable person I ever met.

"Mr. Gordon, this is Thomas, my son," said father,

introducing them. "My daughter I believe you saw below."

Mr. Gordon and Thomas shook hands, while I sat as awkwardly holding Gracie, as if I had not power to move, until father added, "This is the room, sir. It has a fine view from the front windows."

When they turned back to the room, they found they had lost one view, and that was of a great girl with her hair dishevelled, holding a sleepy babe, for I had quietly slipped from the room.

After I had put Gracie into bed, for her morning nap, I ran to the kitchen, where I assisted mother until dinner. She told me that Mr. Gordon had applied to father to take him as a student in theology, (father had for several years been in the habit of teaching young men who are preparing for the ministry,) that he wished to board here, and father had proposed to him to teach Thomas, to pay for his own tuition.

"Oh! I hope he won't board here," I exclaimed.

"Why? my child."

"I dislike him so much, I never could do anything but his great eyes would be right before me."

"His letters of recommendation which your father showed me, spoke very highly of him, both as a gentleman and a scholar, replied mother.

As Mr. Gordon was to take dinner with us, I was obliged to run to my room, after setting the table, and to make my toilet for the day, which was soon done, and I returned to call the gentleman from the study. Thomas was with them, and really appeared something like himself.

I can't say but he is sensible enough, but certainly Mr. Gordon is my aversion. I don't believe he has any soul. I never saw a man with such a fixed expression, no matter whether the conversation is grave or gay, he never lights up. Once or twice at dinner he said very witty things, and while the rest laughed heartily, he looked as solemn and unmoved as a deacon. I believe before he left, he saw that I regarded him as a curiosity, for whenever he spoke, his eyes turned upon me. I do not remember that I ever conducted myself with so much decorum, as during the hour and a half that he stopped after dinner.

Having assisted Nancy to clear the table, I sat down to my sewing, and hardly raised my eyes from my work, until he rose to go, when I gave such a joyful start that if he had a thought about such an insignificant being, he must have seen I was glad that he went.

It is decided that he is to return next week. I told father I was going to sing all the time until then, for after that my voice must be mute.

"If that is to be the case," said father, patting my head, "I shall regret having consented to his very earnest wish to board here. He did not say much about it at first, but after he had seen the room, he said it would be much more convenient to be in the same house on account of his own recitations, and those of Thomas."

Yesterday morning I was seated by the front window in my pleasant room, Gracie was in her little chair by my side, playing quietly with her doll, and I was reading until the first bell for church service, when my attention

was drawn from my book by a very unusual sound in our quiet village. A wagon came rattling down the hill, and to my great amazement seated in it was aunt John, wife of good old Mister Clark, one of the best deacons, and the meekest men that ever lived. As she drew nearer, I saw she had a large tin boiler in the back of the open wagon, and as she drove with speed, it rattled back and forth like a great drum. Aunt John, as she is universally called, from the fact of there being so many by the name of Clark, drove straight to the shop of the tinman, and seemed surprised to find it closed. After sundry loud knocks for admittance, which, however, proved of no effect, she proceeded to the house adjoining, where the owner of the shop lives. After one minute I saw her raise her hands in profound astonishment, then climb into the wagon, and whip her horse almost into a run, as she started for home. I was not a little curious to know the meaning of this unusual movement on the part of aunt John, and my curiosity was soon gratified, for in the afternoon about ten minutes before the last bell rang, the same horse and wagon drove slowly up to our door. Deacon Clark got out, his long white hair streaming in the wind, tied his horse, and then demurely assisted aunt John into the house. I ran to open the door, when he inquired for father. I waited upon them into the study, and commenced dusting father's coat as an excuse for staying in the room. After they had all shaken hands, the good deacon said, "my wife wished to see you before she went to church," and he nodded to her to commence.

The poor woman seemed on the point of crying, and

could hardly speak, but at length said that she and her husband had "somehow missed a day in their reckoning," and thought yesterday was the Sabbath. "Mr. Clark and I," she added, "concluded not to come down to church, as it rained so hard, and we had no covered wagon, and we staid in the house all day, and read the Bible. Before the shower came up in the morning, Mr. Clark said he wished he had had time the day before to finish a few chores, for his wood was all out, and he could have got it under cover with the men's help in an hour; but it was the Sabbath, and he never calculated to cheat his Maker by taking his day to work in. So never a stick was carried in, but we sat and read as I told you. This morning, Monday, as I took it to be, I got up early, and went to my washing, but when I put the clothes into the biler, I found it leaked so I couldn't do nothing with it. After Mr. Clark had tried to bung up the hole, I found I must carry it to be mended, so I started off as fast as I could go, for the village, with all my washing duds on, just as I left the tub. I was surprised to find the shop shut, and then I remembered I had not met a single soul all the three miles I'd come. But I went to the house to see if Mr. Sanger was sick. "No," said he, "We're all well."

I want you then, "says I," to come right away as quick as ever you can, and sodder my biler, for I've got a great washing to do to-day."

"Miss Clark," says he, "it's never been my custom to sodder on the Sabbath."

"Sabbath!" Says I, "it's Monday, Mr. Sanger."

"I rather think," says he, "If you wait a few minutes you'll hear the bell ring for meeting."

"Goodness' sake!" says I, "and here I am with my tin biler; oh dear! I must go home and stop the men; they are going out in the piece to cut wood. I drove home as fast as I could make the old mare go; and true enough the men had gone, so I had to drive half a mile arter 'em and tell 'em 'twas Sunday."

Good Deacon Clark gazed into father's face as eagerly as if his fate had been written there.

"Yes," said he, heaving a heavy sigh. "It's a dreadful disappointment to us, and I don't see how we could have lost our reckoning. We've broken the Sabby day, no mistake about that, and I'm afeard we've brought a disgrace upon our profession. We couldn't either on us feel to go into the sanctuary till we'd laid our sins, as it were, before you, and we're ready to do what's right about it."

"Yes," added aunt John, wiping her eye with her glove, "but I'd rather have gin our best colt than to have had it happen."

"My good friends," responded father, taking the aged deacon by the hand, (aunt John is his third wife, and his junior by about thirty years,) "I respect your feelings of sorrow that you have unconsciously violated the Sabbath, but your character for godliness is too well known for this to affect you, or to need explanation. Before this time, I have no doubt, your mistake is known throughout the parish, and your appearance at church this afternoon will serve to convince them that you yourself regret it more than any one."

"Then you don't think it is necessary to bring the matter before the church?" said the meek man, his face brightening, as he rose suddenly from his chair.

"By no means," replied father, taking from my hands the well brushed coat. "There is no occasion for it whatever. If more agreeable to you, you can leave your horse tied to my gate, and walk over to church with us."

"Yes," said aunt John eagerly, to her husband, "It'll look respectabler," and so I waited upon the conscientious pair to church, and took great pains to show them marked attention, of which the good lady, at least, showed a proper appreciation by inviting me, in a low voice, to come soon and spend a sociable afternoon with her, "and be sure to stop to tea."

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEOLOGICAL STUDENT.

Mr. Gordon has been here a week, but I am no more acquainted with him than on the first day of his arrival. In his presence I always have the feeling that he knows just what I'm thinking of, and considers me a very silly girl. I am often vexed at myself for entertaining any solicitude about him or his thoughts; but whenever (which to be sure is seldom) I forget for a moment that he is near, and speak in my natural way, or hum a tune, his eyes are fixed so seriously upon me that they actually oppress me, and when I turn away, as if unconscious, he only stares the more. Two or three times I have had to hurry from the room to hide my tears, for his eyes said as plainly as eyes could speak, "you foolish girl, why cannot you spend your time more profitably; and if you speak, why cannot you utter sense?" He is so very good and very precise, that he seems to have no sympathy with common humanity. I despise such people; they seem to be saying, "look at me, see how exactly my conduct conforms to the rules of right; look, and imitate my example."

But I cannot wholly despise him while he makes such prayers. Praying seems to be his element. He lifts me above myself, and I think I have had more realizing views of life as a state of probation, and of the vanity of my

own course, while hearing him pray, than ever before. Two or three times I have observed that Thomas was also much affected. He is delighted with his tutor, and is more cheerful, though scarcely more hopeful that his innocence will be proved. I heard him telling father yesterday that he never wished to return to —, he should prefer to graduate at some other college; but father said he must go back and live down this false report.

One thing I dislike in this new arrangement, I have so much more to do. I take the whole care of setting the table, and then wash the silver and glass after each meal. Bessie goes to school, and has no time except for out-door exercise. Mother says this greatly relieves her. Then I am learning to cook, and to-day made a batch of bread. First I made the yeast, then mixed it, and attended to the baking. Father, mother and Thomas declared they never ate better bread; but Mr. Gordon spoke not one word, though I am sure he ate enough. I do not believe he knows what he is eating. He is always discussing original sin, the fall of man, or the divine decrees. I mean to ask father to leave such dry subjects in the study. I really wonder what father, mother, and even brother find to like so much in Mr. Gordon; but I must leave my writing and read an hour to old Dame Streeter, and I will take Gracie with me.

‘Oh, dear! how frightened I was at breakfast. We had scarcely commenced eating, when Mr. Gordon asked father whether he considered free will —

“That subject is interdicted,” said father, interrupting him.

The gentleman looked aghast.

“My daughter Susy complains that we do not have at all as good times at table as formerly; that we are always discussing the catechism. Isn’t that it, Susy?” and father laughed.

My lip quivered, but I could not speak. It was too bad in father to say *I* said so; but after a moment of painful embarrassment to me, Mr. Gordon almost smiled as he remarked, “I really owe Miss Susan an apology. I understand and appreciate the propriety of the suggestion, sir,” he added, addressing father, as I did not raise my eyes, “I think it is very promotive of health to have cheerful conversation during our repasts.” To do him justice, while he continued at table he rendered himself very agreeable. I do believe, if I were blind, I should like him extremely, he has so melodious a voice, and he modulates it so well. He read one of the hymns for father, at an evening meeting, and I scarcely ever heard it read with more feeling, and all the time his face was cold as an icicle.

Yesterday afternoon I sat for a few moments talking with Dame Streeter, after I had finished the book I have been reading, when I was surprised to hear it rain. I started in alarm, as I was a quarter of a mile from home, and I feared Gracie would get wet. But I had scarcely put on my bonnet and shawl before Mr. Gordon knocked at the door, with two umbrellas. I really was glad to see him that time, and he insisted upon carrying Gracie and held the umbrella so that she did not get at all damp. If I had dared I would have asked him how he knew I was there; but he scarcely spoke after he had coaxed

Gracie from me. I suppose he was deep in total depravity, which, I believe, is one of his favorite doctrines. When we reached home I could not help thanking him, but he said, "I am abundantly paid," and kissed Gracie's little fat hand.

Yesterday I asked Thomas if he did not think Mr. Gordon's eyes were very disagreeable.

"How?" he asked.

"Why, they always look right into one so."

"I never noticed anything peculiar about his eye, except that it is very large," he replied.

But to-day he told me that he had watched him since I spoke, and he did stare, but, said he, with a little of his old look, "it is always at you."

"Yes," said I, "and I won't bear it any longer; I try to behave just as well as I can," and I burst out crying.

"Why, Susy," said brother, "what is the matter now?"

"I don't see what I've done," I answered sobbing, "that he should single me out for reproof. Bessie, or Edward have not received a single glance."

"Oh well," said he, "I wouldn't take it to heart, he'll get over it in a day or two." But my mind is made up, and I'll make Bessie change places with me, and then he can't see me at all. And I won't tell father the reason either, or he would be sure to tell him, as he did about the theological discussions at table.

Two days ago Eleanor Wells visited me again, and I invited her to stop to tea. She has been here very often since Thomas came home, and does not seem pleased

that he is so sober and takes so little notice of her. The family were all seated in the room, after supper, and I stood at the table washing the cups, when she exclaimed, "Oh, Susy, I forgot to give you a message from brother. He says you are greatly in his debt, about writing, and wants you to commence at once; at any rate to put in a postscript to my letter."

I don't think it was kind of Eleanor to speak so publicly about it, when she knows that I never wrote him more than a dozen lines, in a letter of hers, and that was to deny something she had told him which would have given him a wrong impression. I told her so, as soon as we were alone; but she only replied, "I am sure I meant no harm, and was sorry as soon as I saw how it made you blush."

"No wonder I blushed," I answered, "for father, mother, and Mr. Gordon, fixed their eyes upon me with astonishment, and I had to choke back my tears. I always liked Henry; but I shouldn't think of writing to him, and you may tell him so."

Thomas and Mr. Gordon took their customary walk after tea, and Eleanor suddenly took her leave. I accompanied her part of the way home.

"I should think it would be a real bore," she said, "to have that Mr. Gordon at your house. I never saw persons so much changed as you and your brother are, since he came."

"It isn't Mr. Gordon who has changed us; you know we all feel sad on account of poor Thomas's trouble; and then as Bessie is going away, I have a great deal to do."

We have lately received a letter from aunt Susan, in-

viting sister to come there for six months and attend the academy. Mother is much gratified, as the offer was wholly unexpected. I was there a year, but aunt had always promised to assist me on account of my name. Bessie goes next week, and the preparation keeps us busy enough. Yesterday was my regular time to go to Dame Streeter's to read to her; mother and I were sewing in the parlor, and Mr. Gordon was reading the review, by the window, when I told her I could hardly spare the time to go, and that I would get Edward to run down there and tell her that I would read two hours next week.

"I am afraid the old lady will be disappointed," replied mother, anxiously glancing at the pile of unfinished work before us.

"Will you allow me to take your place, for once, Miss Susan," inquired Mr. Gordon, without taking his eyes from the paper.

"Oh yes, sir, she would be delighted," I replied eagerly; "but I am afraid she would not be so well satisfied with me afterwards."

The gentleman gave me a quick glance of inquiry, and I thought he seemed pleased, but as usual I colored up to my ears, and indeed I was almost frightened at what I had said, so the subject dropped, and I do not even know whether he went. He was away from the house nearly two hours, but he volunteered no information on his return, and I certainly did not ask for any.

The very first opportunity I had, after what Thomas said about his staring at me, I took Bessie's seat and made her take mine, so that I sat on the same side of the table with Mr. Gordon, while James was between us. But

I soon found I had punished myself. Now that I have become accustomed to his precise manner, I do not notice it half as much, and it adds greatly to our pleasure to be able to see the one who talks with us. He is the oddest man I ever met. He takes the plates from father and passes them around the table without at all interrupting the conversation, and he seems to know just when every one is ready to be helped again. Though mother's plate is nearly hidden by the tray, he always sees that she is supplied with everything she needs and without making the least effort, but as a matter of course, and almost with mechanical precision. Yet he relates an anecdote much better than any person I ever knew, and if he would only allow the muscles of his mouth to play, as he does the tones of his voice, I think he would be almost handsome.

Bessie has gone. Poor girl! she cried bitterly at parting; but she will soon be reconciled to the change; aunt Susan is very kind, and will be a real mother to her. At dinner Mr. Gordon very deliberately took her seat, saying to mother, "Grace will be pleased to resume her place by her sister;" so he and Thomas sat one side, and James and I the other, with Gracie between us.

Mother seemed distressed and began to apologize, that he had not the seat which belonged to him, at father's right hand, but he merely bowed, "excuse me, Madame, I prefer this," and no more was said. When the blessing had been asked, father referred to the subject which they had been discussing before they left the study, namely the power of conscience.

"I remember," said Mr. Gordon, "a singular case in my native town, illustrating that truth. A young man long known as an idle, dissipated fellow, was one Sabbath morning strolling through the streets, seeking for amusement, when he passed a farm-house where the good dame had long strings of sausages hung out upon poles. Watching a favorable opportunity, John, whose perceptive faculties were not very acute, and who had long ago forgotten the distinctions between mine and thine, seized the string, and quickly taking from it a supply for his dinner, thrust them into his bosom, and continued his walk. Just as he reached the Main Street, the bells were ringing for morning service, and the poor fellow followed the multitude until they led him to the church door. Here he stopped and sat down upon the step, watching people as they passed in. Soon the organ sent forth its solemn notes, and as one strain after another fell on his ear, John, who was enthusiastically fond of music, sauntered into the porch, and with a half-muttered expression 'it's as good as muster,' found his way up the broad aisle, advancing two thirds of the distance to the pulpit, that he might have a full view of the performers, as he called them.

"Now John was not in the habit, as may well be supposed, of frequenting the house of God, and after the voluntary had ceased, he listened with open mouthed wonder to what was to follow. When the choir rose to sing, his appreciation of the correctness of their time was shown by sundry nods, as he swayed his body back and forth, causing not a few smiles among the younger part of the audience. At length the good pastor commenced

his sermon, which was from the words, 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.'

"After expatiating at some length upon the nature of secret sins, he remarked, 'but there is no form of iniquity so offensive to God as the bosom sin,' bringing his hand upon his breast. 'Our outward life may be moral and upright; in the eyes of our fellow citizens and the world we may be models of propriety and virtue, but we are never safe so long as we hug the bosom sin.' After much more upon the same point, he added, 'See to it, then, that while you conform outwardly to the law of God, by attendance upon the means of grace and the performance of active duties, you do not neglect the bosom sin. Get rid of it, cast it out, throw it away, or you will be forever lost.'

"Poor John! During the latter part of the discourse he had become extremely uneasy, and found it impossible to keep his seat. Once or twice he caught up his tattered hat as if to leave the house, and then concluded to remain; but when it came to the closing sentence, he could bear it no longer. How the parson found him out, he could not imagine; but to the amazement of the congregation, just as the minister was about to close the Bible, John sprang up, tore open his coat and shirt, pulled out the sausages and threw them into the aisle. 'There, parson,' he exclaimed indignantly, 'you do make the greatest fuss about a few sausages,' and before any one could stop him, he was out of the house."

This afternoon I resumed my reading at Dame Street-er's. She was loud in her praise of Mr. Gordon. The

old lady is a cripple from chronic rheumatism, and cannot rise from her chair, to save her life. She says that before he commenced reading, he remarked it was his custom to pray for a blessing to attend him in whatever he undertook, and if she were willing, he would unite with her in prayer. "'Twas a real feast to my soul," she added, a tear dropping upon her withered hand. I wiped it away, and asked what he read.

"Oh," she answered, "he read from the beautifulest book, 'Imitation of Christ,' there 'tis on the table, and he said if Miss Susan wouldn't consider him interfering, he'd be pleased to come in occasionally, and repeat his call. I said I knew you wouldn't mind, only if you didn't come together, and then I told him how many years you'd read to me, ever since you was a very little thing, and on Wednesday afternoon too, when that was your holiday. Oh! don't you think I ever forget it; and I showed him the tumbler with them tree lamplighters as I call 'em, and told him you made 'em when you was eight years old, and what a sight I set by 'em, and I'd kept 'em choice ever since."

"Oh, Dame," I exclaimed, "how could you! What did he say?"

"Never a word," she replied, "but he took the cracked tumbler and blowed out the dust, and looked as pleased as ever you see."

It is my birth day. I am seventeen years old. I am very happy, and yet at the same time I am sad to think I have lived so long to so little purpose. "I do wonder how old Mr. Gordon is," Eleanor asked me last night. I

had never thought of it before; but I told her about as old as father. She laughed heartily at me when she found I really thought so, and said she thought him about thirty. I mean to ask Thomas to find out.

This morning father called me into his study, and talked with me for a long time, or rather to me, for I was so much affected by his kind tone and earnest manner, that I could not help shedding tears. He says he wants me to begin the new year, by giving myself to the Saviour; that I cannot begin too soon to love and serve him who died for me; that God has given me talents, and every day during these long years, he has asked me to use them for him, and he inquired of me if I had complied with these oft repeated commands. I sobbed so much I could only shake my head in reply. Then he prayed for me so tenderly, and represented my whole case so exactly, that I longed to be a Christian. When we arose, he presented me with an elegant Bible, with neat silver clasps, just such an one as I always have wanted, to carry to Sabbath school, and wished me to read in it every morning and night, if it was only one verse, which I readily promised. He showed me places that he had marked; one of them, the fifty-first psalm, I have just read. It has made me feel very solemn, and I mean to try to be better than I have been. I wish I were prepared to die. It makes me shudder to think that what father said may be true, and this may be my last birth-day. Before the year expires, my body may be resting in the grave. Where would my soul be then? I wish I were as good as Dame Streeter. And I mean to pray to God to make me so.

CHAPTER V.

THOMAS AND HIS CLASSMATES.

OH how very happy I am! I never had so good a birth-day, as yesterday. As I was writing in the morning, mother came to my door with Gracie. She looked very smiling, and said she had brought me a birth-day present, and then she held up sister to give me seventeen kisses. After that, I placed the rocking chair for her, as she said she wished to have some talk with me; then she gave me permission to take Gracie, and have all the care of her clothes. I am to have her bureau moved into my room, and she is to sleep with me. Little darling! how I have longed for this time to come, how sweetly I slept last night with her in my arms. I lay a long time resolving to be very kind and gentle with her. But I have not yet told half my happiness. The mail comes in at eleven o'clock, and Thomas generally goes to the office just before dinner. We were all in the sitting-room, waiting for dinner, which Nancy was bringing upon the table, when I happened to look from the window and saw Thomas coming very rapidly toward the house. As soon as he perceived me, he held up two letters, and with one bound jumped over the gate into the yard, which was a favorite habit with him formerly, but which he has not done once since he returned. He sprang into the room, his eyes sparkling, and his whole

countenance flushed with pleasure, walked quickly up to father, put one of the letters into his hand, and said with great emotion, "There, Sir! It has turned out just as you said it would."

Father put on his glasses, and began to read, but some how he couldn't see after the first few lines, and putting it into mother's hands, he went quickly back to the study. I know he went there to tell God how thankful he was that his son's character for truth and soberness, had been brought to light. Mother was so much affected, that she sat down in the rocking-chair while she read, and the tears streamed down her cheeks. Dear Thomas put his arm around me, just as he used to, and let me read his letter, which was from his class. I was so glad that I put my arms around his neck, and kissed him ever so many times, and told him I was rejoiced it had happened on my birth-day. It was the very best celebration I could have. Soon father returned to the room, and Mr. Gordon caught his hand, and began to say something, but I couldn't hear what, his voice was so low, and I saw that his eyes were moist. Then he shook hands with mother and brother, and congratulated them on the happy termination of this sad affair. He even kissed Gracie, but he only *looked* at me.

"But," said father, "How was this found out. Did tutor Brown discover his mistake?"

"Poor Mr. Brown," repeated brother, "is tutor no longer! A piece of glass it is supposed went into his eye, and he has almost lost the use of it. He resigned his situation last week. I have a letter from my chum, written by request of the class, and signed not only by

them, but by a number of Juniors, and your friend, Henry Wells, Susy, among the Seniors. If you like, I will read it to you, while you are eating dinner, for my appetite has entirely gone."

As we all signified our desire to hear it, brother commenced reading, though he said, "Henry Stanwood would cashier me, if he knew it."

"To Thomas Warren, Esquire, Sophomore.

Dear chum.

"I am appointed by the class, a committee to communicate to you a statement made to the whole College at prayers assembled this twenty-eighth day of June, Anno Domini, 18—.

"If I am not mistaken, you will dance the last cotillon, when you read it, and make the old parsonage resound with three cheers for your alma mater. Well, old fellow, you'll not be alone with your cheers, for just as soon as we were out of prayers, we sent up as hearty three times three, three more, for "Thomas Warren, Soph., restored to life and liberty," as ever made the welkin ring.

"Hawes (who by the way has acted nobly,) says he stood near the President, and he can swear to it, that the good man joined in it, as he stood with his hat off, on the steps of the chapel.

"The course he has pursued, has rendered him a greater favorite with the students than ever. But I forget that you don't know any of the circumstances of your vindication, and I can assure you, there is not much else talked of, in College, at the present time. Well, to commence; you remember Stiles, that little fellow who stammers so.

It happened extremely well for you, that the day you made so unfortunate a call upon Hawes, he was "spitting the goose," and had only time to retreat with his booty under the bed, when you entered. He heard Hawes invite you, and he also distinctly heard you decline, saying, "you had pledged your word to the President, and you wouldn't break it, for your right hand." Ever since you left, the poor fellow has looked as puny as a whipped dog. At last he wanted to go home, and said he was sick, but on the third day, which was day before yesterday, he came posting back, and requested an audience with the President. I can't help laughing to think how the little fellow must have quaked in his shoes; but he went through it like a martyr; and he told the President what he heard you say. Just as soon as your name was mentioned, the good man started forward, and listened intently, and then asked, "will you repeat that remark?" Stiles did repeat it, when the good man heaved a great sigh, that Stiles says, would have filled the sails of a small schooner. Stiles also told him that he was present in the night, when you rushed into the room, and saw you try to get the bottle from Holmes, who was just drunk enough to want to fight, and that he heard tutor Brown call you a rascally drunken brute. Stiles said you started forward as if you were going to fight him, and then your arms dropped to your side, and you stood and heard all his abuse, and never spoke a word; but as soon as he had done, left the room. He told the President that the smell of wine always made him sick, and that he was the only one in the room who was not intoxicated, or the others would

never have been willing to have you suffer for their disgrace. The President turned very pale, and when he had done, told him he thanked him for the confession, and that he should wish to have some further conversation with him hereafter, for he entertained a high opinion of a young man who had courage to make such a statement, and then he requested him to say nothing to any one, for the present, but to tell Hawes to call on him directly.

"He asked Hawes if it were true, that Warren declined his invitation, and Hawes said it was, and repeated your very words. President dismissed him without another word, and in half an hour, was on his way to see tutor Brown, who resigned his place last week, and is staying with a physician, about three miles distant. (By the way the fellows have found out that the reason of his being so cross that night, or of his being at home at all, was because he'd got the mitten.) Poor Brown couldn't be convinced but what you threw the bottle, and so to-day the President took Stiles and went again, when some how between them, they managed to convince him, that he must have been mistaken; and tutor Brown even acknowledged that he had seen you rush down the stairs into the room, and that he *probably* had been too hasty. Stiles says the President did not blame him, but only said, "It will be a lesson to me," (which I think was the most cutting remark he could have made,) and after particular inquiries about his eye, which they fear has glass in it, left him, and this morning, as I told you, we had the result of said conference after prayers.

"Now, chum, don't be impatient, for I haven't told you

half. Our class got together to plan a reception for you. In the midst of our confab, Wells came in and told us that you were a townsman of his, (and I 'guess,' from what he didn't say, that he aspires to being nearer related) and that you was a favorite with the whole college, and that if we would get leave of the Faculty, that they would make up a purse to have you escorted into town in due style. The long and short of it was, that they appointed your humble servant to wait upon the venerable body and ask permission. If I do say it, I did the thing up handsomely, and spoke two words for you and one for myself. I told them what was the wish of the class, and of others out of the class, taking care to mention some prominent ones among the Seniors; 'but, gentlemen,' said I, 'Mr. Warren is a very orderly young man, and he would not enjoy any such parade unless informed that it met with your approbation. Neither,' added I modestly, 'should I wish to be engaged in it.' I touched the right chord then, you may be sure (and I've pretty much concluded since then to be a lawyer, I think that was so 'cute).

"The President said at once, 'I presume I represent your views, gentlemen, when I say that such an expression of feeling will not only be consistent with our wishes, but that we expected that some measures would be taken to show the young man that our confidence in him is entirely restored.'

"They all bowed. 'What is proposed?' asked Professor L——.

"'We have decided upon nothing definite,' I answered;

'the class are waiting for me to return. Wells suggested illuminating.'

"'Very good,' replied the President smiling, 'only let it be seen that it is done out of respect for a young man who is *orderly*,' he added pleasantly, as I retired from their august presence.

"But it is high time for me to conclude my lengthy epistle, if I wish to send it by to-day's mail. So I will merely add, that we wish you to drop us a line saying that you will be in town at the — Hotel, which is a mile from College, on Friday evening at six o'clock, and we'll arrange to have you escorted in triumph through the town. When we get opposite the President's, we're going to stop and give him three times three, a cheering in which, I have no doubt, you're longing to join. So good-bye till I see you, and don't be too proud when you are mounted in a six horse chariot, to bestow a smile and nod on your humble chum and servant,

HENRY STANWOOD."

"That's just like Stanwood," exclaimed Thomas, "he's a real good fellow;" and we had a hearty laugh at his "cuteness" with the Faculty, as he called it. Father spoke in the highest terms of President —, who was a classmate of his, and Thomas found it difficult to eat a mouthful of dinner, his heart was so full of happiness. After dinner he not only danced a cotillon by himself under the shade of the trees in the front yard, but he made me spin around until I begged for mercy, for I couldn't see, and then he ran up to mother's room to consult about his clothes. I followed him, and it was

decided, as the term is so soon to close, (for Commencement is in four weeks) that he should only take his bag, with clothes to last until then. He was ready for an early start this morning, when the bell rang for prayers. Father read, and then asked Mr. Gordon to lead the devotions. I never heard a more solemn prayer. He particularly remembered Thomas, and thanked God for bringing the truth to light, and prayed that it might be the means of making brother trust in the Lord for all future time; and then he prayed for me that I might begin this new year with a heart set apart to the service of my Maker. If he had known all my resolutions, and all my fears, he could not have expressed them more exactly. I was wholly overcome and sobbed aloud. I hope the impression may be a lasting one, but I'm afraid I shall soon forget it; for only yesterday morning I was so desirous to be sober and to do right, and then the surprise about Thomas drove all my serious thoughts away.

Dear brother! In what good spirits did he leave us after breakfast. But he did one thing this morning; no, two things, for which he deserved to be whipped. We were all standing on the piazza waiting for the stage coach, when he turned to me and asked, "well, Susy, what shall I say to Henry, from you?"

"Nothing," I answered impatiently. "I have no message to send."

Mother saw Mr. Gordon glance at me very gravely, and she said, "Don't tease your sister, Thomas."

"Oh, no," said brother, who has entirely recovered his old teasing ways, "not for the world. Mr. Gordon," he continued, addressing him with the utmost seriousness,

"it is a question of grave importance with a certain fair damsel, daughter of the house of Levi," glancing at me, "how many times the seasons have succeeded each other in their course, since your entrance into this wilderness world."

I snatched my hand from Thomas and tried to run away. I was really provoked. But he held me fast, while Mr. Gordon, with a very precise bow, answered, in something of the same tone, "I would reply to the fair damsel, that when a question of solemn import comes before me, it has been my habit to sleep over it, before I answer."

The gentleman had hardly concluded his speech, when the stage coach was seen coming over the hill, and soon reached the gate. "Write to-morrow," called out father, as brother got into the coach, "and give us all the particulars of your reception." Father and mother turned to go into the house and I was following them, when Mr. Gordon detained me. "Miss Susan," he remarked, taking my hand as if he were very much afraid of it, and making a formal bow, "I shall feel honored to answer any questions you may wish to ask, but may I beg of you to put them directly to me? My age is twenty-eight years."

Oh, how strongly tempted I was to tell an untruth, and say I was not the one who wished to know! But as I dared not do that, I was kept silent by mortification and chagrin, but his tone was so kind and yet respectful, that I could not be vexed with him. As soon as he released my hand I hastened into the house without once daring to raise my eyes to his face.

We have received a long letter from Thomas, which I shall transcribe.

"Rumford Hall, July 1st, Past midnight.

"To my dear father and mother, and the inmates of the parsonage generally:

"I cannot retire to rest until I have given you an account of the glorious reception I have met with, not only from my class, but from every member of the college, including even the Faculty with the noble President at their head.

"As I approached — Hotel, my heart began to beat very fast as I saw an open phaeton, (where on earth the fellows picked it up I can't divine,) with six cream colored horses attached to it, standing before the door. One of the passengers exclaimed, 'there's a turn-out worth having. See, there's something going on here. I guess it's the Governor. Yes, there are his aids!'

"I made no reply; indeed, I had no time, for I had been seen, and half a dozen fellows rode up to the door of the coach. Stanwood made a motion to those behind him, and three heartier cheers never rent the air than were then sent up to heaven. I was literally carried to the chariot, but immediately got out of it, and calling Stanwood, retreated into the hotel, where I endeavored, by brushing and washing, to render myself a little more fit to be the hero of the day.

"At ten minutes before six I was seated in the phaeton with Stanwood, who was the Chief Marshall, by my side, preceded by a large cavalcade extending a quarter of a mile, and succeeded by a long procession of men and boys from the town. In accordance with the usage of *distinguished* men on such occasions, I rode bare-headed, and as we approached the colleges my handker-

chief was in constant requisition to respond to the waving salutation from every window. When we entered the college yard we found the green literally covered with students from the upper classes; and here I was cheered by name until my ears fairly ached, I, standing in the carriage making my best bows, first on one side and then on the other. We then proceeded to the President's, where the good man, with his whole family, were standing upon the piazza, and when we approached waved their friendly salute. When opposite the door the phaeton stopped, and Stanwood called out, 'three times three for our glorious President,' and to this prolonged cheer I added the full power of my lungs, after which the procession passed around the common, and at length landed me safely at the door of Rumford Hall. In the midst of all my fatigue and excitement, I couldn't help being amused to see how the fellows pressed up to shake hands. One little freshman exclaimed, 'I have shaken hands with him twice,' in a tone as if the fact were worthy of being recorded on his tomb-stone.

I was right glad to be once more in my old study chair, but Stanwood and Stiles, who were present, said I mustn't think of resting yet. There was to be a supper, and then I was expected to make a speech on the green. I find that the President told Wells the circumstances of my last interview with him, and it has spread all over the college, and I am regarded by the students somewhat in the light dear Susy regarded me, as being a martyr to my sense of honor, in not betraying the guilty ones. There is nothing in college which calls forth such enthusiasm as this trait, though I am sure in my case I

have done nothing to merit such warm encomiums. About eight o'clock a dozen class-mates presented themselves to conduct me to supper, and when I went back from it, which I did as soon as I could get away, the front windows of the colleges were brilliantly illuminated. But what touched my feelings more than all else, was to see that the President's study had a light in every pane of glass. This delicate mode of expressing sympathy with the general feeling, called forth the loudest acclamations on the part of the students, to whom it was wholly unexpected. After a number of speeches directed to me, to which I responded, though I cannot now remember one word I said, but which appeared to give universal satisfaction, I at length retired to the front room in the third story, where I speedily divested myself of the character of a hero, and subsided into common humanity. To-morrow morning I shall carry your letter, dear father, to the President, after which I intend to devote myself to preparation for examination. Susy, I hope, will take a lesson in meekness from her dear brother, and not allow her heart to be puffed up with pride on account of the honors conferred upon him. By the way, why wouldn't Mr. Gordon take her for a pupil in my place? It would be a fine arrangement.

"But I must close this long epistle by subscribing myself your very affectionate son and brother,

THOMAS WARREN, JR."

CHAPTER VI.

SICKNESS AT THE PARSONAGE.

THIS morning Eleanor came with an invitation from her mother for me to go with them to ———, to Commencement, which is next week. They are to go in their own carryall, and as there will be a spare seat, they thought it might be pleasant for me to go with them. Mother could not decide at once, but thanked Eleanor for their kindness, and is to let them know to-morrow. Henry has an oration, at which his parents are much pleased. Mother mentioned the proposal to father at the dinner table.

"Well, Susy," said he, "do you wish very much to hear Henry's oration? or will you stay with your mother while I am absent?"

"Where are you going, sir?" I asked in surprise.

"It is the time for the meeting of our association, and I shall be obliged to be away from home two nights. You will accompany me, I suppose, Mr. Gordon," said father, addressing him.

"I cannot yet decide, sir," replied the gentleman, with uncommon seriousness.

"What do you say, my daughter?" repeated father.

"I say, as Mr. Gordon did, that I cannot yet decide. If you and he are both away from home, I should not, of course, leave mother; otherwise, I should have

enjoyed it very much, as I never have attended Commencement."

"And you would like to hear our youthful orator?" suggested he, smiling.

"Yes, sir," I answered, looking into my plate, "for Eleanor's sake I should like to hear him, and to have him succeed well."

"If my staying from the association will give you pleasure by enabling you to accompany your friend, I will do so," remarked Mr. Gordon, with a bow to me. I was actually startled as he said this, to observe an expression of pain passing over his countenance. What could have caused it?

It is nearly five months since I have written in my journal. How much has occurred during that time! I was writing about Commencement. Thomas wrote a letter to mother urging her to let me go, and she consented. On Monday afternoon father left for Cheswell, where the association met. I was to go on Tuesday morning, and my clothes were all packed in Eleanor's trunk, as we were to remain together. When I went to bed on Monday night, dear little Gracie seemed very restless. I called mother, who was really alarmed at the quickness of her pulse and the shortness of her breathing. I carried her to mother's bed, and in a few moments she vomited freely. This we thought would relieve her; but on the contrary she grew rapidly worse, and though I said nothing about it, I immediately gave up all thought of leaving home. It was nearly eleven, when at mother's request I reluctantly knocked at Mr.

Gordon's door, to ask him to go for the Doctor. He had not retired, and immediately answered my summons. When I told him Grace was sick, he instantly took his hat, saying, "and your mother wishes a physician?"

"Yes, sir," I answered, and he left the house.

Poor Gracie was delirious all night, and mother never smiled after the physician told her it was the scarlet fever. I can't imagine what we could have done without Mr. Gordon. More than half the day Tuesday he carried the dear little creature in his arms, as that seemed to soothe her more than anything else, and what was very strange to me, he tried to make me promise not to be over her, or take her breath.

"Why," I asked! "Mother and you do not hesitate to be near her."

Neither your mother nor myself are half as likely to take it as you are," he answered with emotion. "You are young and full of vigor."

"But I cannot be so selfish as to think of myself when my sweet little Gracie is suffering," and I could not help shedding tears as I realized that she might never be better.

"The sweet child shall not want for any attention that I can render," he answered impressively; and we soon found that he was invaluable in the sick room. I never thought then of his stiffness. Indeed it seemed to have wholly disappeared. Nothing could exceed the tenderness with which he soothed the little sufferer, wetting her mouth or washing out her throat as the Doctor had ordered, and then he held her so tenderly as he walked back and forth through the two large rooms

opened for her use, singing in a low voice the sweetest of lullaby's, that mother was relieved of all but the dreadful load of anxiety, which pressed so heavily upon her. Mr. Gordon took it upon himself to say that Edward must not enter the part of the house where Gracie was sick, and upon one pretext or another, he kept me from the room as much as possible.

Father came home on Wednesday noon, and by that time, there was little hope that our precious baby would ever be better, though at the time I little dreamed of this. Dear father was overcome with grief, at this sudden announcement, and was at first unable to take any share in the onerous duties Mr. Gordon had assumed. But when he saw mother, though pale and bowed down with anxious care, strive to keep up for the sake of her child, he roused himself to exertion. I remember well Mr. Gordon's prayer that night. "Spare the life of the child if in thine infinite wisdom thou seest it would be for her good, and for the spiritual benefit of this beloved family. Above all prepare them in whatever events may be before them, to say, 'thy will, not mine be done.'"

I recollect as if it were but yesterday, how his voice trembled, and how unwilling I was to repeat in my heart the language of his prayer. From her first attack, I had cried, "oh, God, spare her life! But I had no faith in my own prayers. I depended upon his and mother's; now it seemed to me, that he was giving her up, and I hastened from the room, and flew to the side of her bed, to see if she were indeed so very ill. I have had little experience in sickness, and to me as she lay quietly with her eyes partly closed, she seemed much better. My

tears however fell thick and fast, as I gazed upon her emaciated face, and heard mother's low sobs, as she sat holding the little feverish hand. The physician soon entered with father, and something in his serious, sympathizing expression, appeared to me to say there was cause for great alarm. I could bear the suspense no longer; but with a burst of tears, I ran from the room, caught my sun-bonnet from the rack, and fled from the house. I don't know where I wanted to go, I only wished to be alone, and to give vent to my grief. By request of father, Mr. Gordon followed me; but he did not let me perceive his approach, until I had exhausted myself with my violent weeping. I was sitting on the ground, and had thrown my arms upon the little mound, where on a former occasion, poor Thomas told me his trouble. My sobs had been so violent, that I began to feel very faint, when I heard a low voice close to my side, saying, "Miss Susan, you will make yourself sick, if you give way to your grief. Let me conduct you home; you ate no supper, and after losing your sleep for two nights, I fear—you—"

I glanced up into his face as he spoke, and the words seemed less and less distinct, until I entirely lost the sound. I had fainted.

The next I knew, I was lying upon the sofa in our parlor, and the Doctor was holding some ammonia to my nostrils, while Mr. Gordon bathed my hands.

I started in surprise, and for a moment could not think where I was; but then the whole truth burst upon me, and I asked eagerly, "Gracie! How is Gracie?"

"She is no worse," said the physician quickly, but I

sprang up, and insisted upon going to her. Mr. Gordon however would not allow it, until I had taken something to eat, and he went himself to the closet, and brought me some bread and butter.

"You cannot leave the sofa, Miss Susan," said he firmly, "until you have eaten all that I have brought you."

I complied; I dared not do otherwise. There was a look in his eye that said plainly that he was accustomed to be obeyed.

"Mr. Gordon," I said at length as I suddenly noticed how very pallid he was, "you too, ought to take something, you look sick."

"I will do so," he answered, and he went to the closet and took a tumbler of milk.

"Now, may I go?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied gravely, "you can be of no use there, and you will of course only remain a few moments. But if you will try to sleep, I will promise to send to you, if there is any change for the worse."

Without a word, I returned to the chamber, where I found the physician, who had consented to remain through the night. He too insisted that I should go to bed, and after one long, *long* look at my darling sister, I went softly down stairs, and threw myself upon the sofa. I must have fallen asleep very soon, for some one came in and threw a shawl over my shoulders without arousing me; and I did not awake, until the clock in the room was striking five. Then I sprang up, and was going to run to inquire for Gracie. The house was so still that I was struck with awe as the thought stole over me, "per-

haps she is not living," and I sat down again for one minute, to collect my strength. The door opened gently, and Mr. Gordon entered. I started to my feet and stood before him, but I could not utter a word. He took my hand tenderly, as he said, "compose yourself," that I had no longer any doubt, and finding my strength failing, I tried to resume my seat. He caught hold of my arm, and placed me on the sofa, and then sat down by my side.

"Gracie is quietly sleeping now," he said, in a low voice.

I leaned forward to gaze into his face. I was almost suffocated with emotion, as I understood him to mean, *in death*.

"No," he added with deep feeling, as he saw what I feared, "the crisis has passed, and she is now in a natural slumber."

The transition was so very sudden, that I was wholly unprepared for it, and sobbed aloud. He drew nearer to me, and, gently as a father, laid my head upon his shoulder, where he whispered a low prayer of thanksgiving for me. I soon became composed, and went to the sick room, where I found it was indeed as he had said. Mother had just gone to lie down, and Doctor L—— was leaving the chamber. I heard Mr. Gordon go out of his room, which he had just entered, and follow him down stairs. I asked father in a whisper to lie down upon the couch, while I seated myself by the bed, with a fan to keep off the flies from the little sufferer. She slept for half an hour, and father slept too, so that I had time to lift up my heart in gratitude to God, for sparing the

life of my sister. Yes, I had time, and I tried to do so; but I knew she had not been spared in answer to my prayers; and it seemed wicked for me to pray. I had a great many thoughts of death while I sat there; as what if I had been the sick one, how differently my parents would have felt, because they know I am not prepared to die. When Gracie awoke, her first sound aroused father, and he started to her side and gave her the medicine the Doctor ordered. I was almost beside myself with joy, to find that she recognized us, and tried to speak our names. After that, she very slowly gained for a few days, and then more rapidly.

Thomas arrived on Thursday, and was greatly affected at the change which had taken place in his favorite. But on the very night of his arrival the Doctor was again hastily summoned, and this time for Mr. Gordon. He had reluctantly confessed the day previous that he was not well, and added that he had taken the liberty to ask Nancy to make him a bowl of gruel for his dinner; but after he and brother had retired to rest, he was violently seized with pleurisy in his side, which soon became so severe, that every breath was a groan. Brother called father, and ran in haste for the physician, and by the application of a blister, before morning he was considerably relieved.

The poor man expressed great regret that he was depriving father and mother of the rest they so much needed, and begged to be left with Thomas. I was very sorry at the time, and wished to do something for his relief; but I should have felt worse had I known what I did afterwards, that his disease was brought on by

a strain he received, in bringing me from the grove. Mr. Gordon was greatly displeased that the Doctor should have told father of it, as he said it was nothing permanent. For nearly a week he kept his room, during which time I hardly saw him, indeed not at all except as I passed his door to sister's room; but I prepared all his meals, and arranged everything on a waiter, as nicely as possible, for Thomas to carry to him. Brother said he told him one day that it would be a favor to me, if he would ask for some kind of food, for that it took all my time to contrive something that he could relish. Mr. Gordon, he said, was very much pleased, and asked if I were the one who prepared so many dainty dishes. He sent me word that if I wished him to get well quickly, I must not tempt his appetite so much. So the next day, as Thomas said he had a bad headache, I only sent up two toasted crackers and a cup of tea, with the message that he could have no more. I was passing the door, and heard him say, "very wise, I shall strictly follow her directions."

And now I must write something very disagreeable, though I have been dreading to come to it. Gracie was gaining fast, and Thomas had carried her in his arms for two or three visits to her kind friend, when the Doctor gave him permission to leave his room. It was about ten o'clock in the morning. Henry Wells had only come home the previous night, and was sitting by me on the sofa in the parlor. I have always known Henry, and I love him very much, but some how that morning I thought him inclined to take too much for granted. He said, "Dear Susy, I shall soon study my profession, and

then we must have a home of our own." He had taken my hand, and I was just going to tell him that I was a great deal too young to think of such things, when I looked up and saw Mr. Gordon at the door. I never knew a man more changed by a week's sickness, and he actually staggered, as he tried to get into the sitting-room. I left Henry in the parlor, and followed him, and would not go back, until Mr. Gordon said, "I have over-rated my strength," and requested me to ask Thomas to assist him up stairs.

That night I cried myself to sleep because I couldn't tell whether I loved Henry or not, and the next morning I was sick with a headache, which proved to be the first symptom of the scarlet fever. For nearly a week I was delirious most of the time, though I did not have it half as severely as sister. Nurse Hall came to take care of me, as mother was quite exhausted. Thomas says every time he left my room, he had to give an exact account of my present state and symptoms to his chum, as he called Mr. Gordon, who was keeping a list of them and the prescriptions of the physician, for his future benefit.

But I hardly think he could have been very anxious about me, for just as soon as I recovered, he went away, and after being absent a month, he returned, but so altered that I could scarce believe he was the same man. During Gracie's sickness, my fear of him had wholly subsided, and I had learned to love him as a brother; but now he was so distant and reserved, that it required more courage than I possessed, to talk with him. And so it has gone on ever since; sometimes he appears like

himself for a day, and then he again throws around himself this dreadful reserve. To dear little Gracie, however, he is always gentle and kind. I am sometimes almost jealous of her affection for him. She goes to him as naturally as to father, when he takes her in his arms, and whispers little stories to her. Then if she is tired, he turns back his coat, and rests her little head against his satin vest, and while he reads, she sucks her finger, and looks as contented as heart could desire.

To-day father said something to Mr. Gordon about taking me for a pupil, when he virtually declined the honor of being my tutor. What could be the reason? If he had done so when he first came, I should not wonder, for then I was wild enough, but now he cannot complain of me, neither does he by word or look, for he scarcely deigns the least notice of me, and it has come to be the fashion for me to pass my plate to him, and for him to pass it back without one word. When I think that he brought me in his arms from the grove, and that I laid my head upon his shoulder, and wept during that night of sorrow, it almost takes away my breath; but those days have long past.

Bessie has come home, or the house would be really dull. She is very much improved, and is not at all afraid to converse. She sits down by Mr. Gordon and talks with him about her school, just as freely as she would with Thomas. It sometimes calls a smile to his face, to hear her descriptions of character. Now that she has come back, we have resumed our habit of singing at

prayers, which was broken up when we were all sick. Bessie sings a very good alto, while I sing treble. Father takes the bass, and Mr. Gordon tenor, so that we have quite a choir.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISDIRECTED LETTER, AND OTHER INCIDENTS.

POOR Thomas has made a mistake which I fear will affect his happiness more than his rustication from college — certainly for a longer period. When he was at home for a week at Thanksgiving, he had a great deal to say about Miss Allen, and since he returned, he has written me two or three letters containing descriptions of her loveliness of person and character; but I had no idea that he was serious in his intentions. Two days ago, Edward brought from the Post Office, two letters from him, one directed to father and the other to me. Father opened his as usual at the dinner table, and was just commencing to read it aloud, when with a sudden flush, he stopped, perused it silently to the end, then folded it, and deliberately put it in his pocket, with a look half roguish, half troubled.

"What is the news?" asked mother, "is Thomas well?"

"He is afflicted at present with a sudden malady," replied father, with a smile. "From the violence of the attack, however, I presume it will not be very lasting."

"Has he got the small pox?" asked Edward, in alarm. (He had been much excited by hearing that there had been cases in the town.)

Mr. Gordon really laughed aloud, and so did father.

"No, my son," he answered, "he has a complaint of much more common recurrence than the small pox; but I do not think him dangerously ill."

After dinner, when Bessie and Edward had left the room, father explained himself by saying that though the letter was superscribed to him, yet it was addressed to Miss Allen, and contained a most extravagant expression of his affection for her, with an offer of his hand. "I presume," said father, "that the crazy boy made a mistake in the direction, and while he sent mine to her, he sent hers to me."

Mother laughed until the tears run down her cheeks; and they all seemed to consider it a good joke. But I was grieved for poor Tommy, and knew it would be a dreadful mortification to him. But I did not realize *how* great, until I had read his letter to father, which came to-day, together with quite a packet of little notes he had sent Miss Allen while she was visiting in ———. The letter was as follows.

"Dear father and mother:

"Perhaps you remember when I was at home I mentioned a Miss Allen to you. I had met her at her sister's. Since my return I have been more frequently in her society, and am more and more pleased with her. But I had no idea of going farther, at present, knowing as I do your opinion concerning young men being engaged while in college; but from some remarks of her sister, while making a call there after she had left for home, I find that she considers the matter to have gone farther than it really has, and supposed that I had actu-

ally committed myself. I came to my room and passed a sleepless night in my conflict between my inclination and a sense of honor. I called to mind all I had ever heard you say, dear mother, and at length a remark which you made nearly a year ago, decided me that there was no honorable course for me to pursue, but to make her an offer of my hand.

"The remark was this: 'A gentleman has no right, my son, to show a lady particular attentions which may call out feelings of interest on her part, unless he means something serious by these attentions.' Therefore this morning I have written her a formal proposal.

"In haste, your affectionate son,

THOMAS WARREN."

At the bottom was written in a very fine hand, "Miss Allen declines the honor proposed by Mr. Warren, and requests the return of any of her writing he may have in his possession."

My letter from Thomas was upon the same subject, asking me to use my influence with father and mother to induce them to consent to this engagement. Father folded the packet of notes with the two letters, and sent them to Thomas, with merely the remark, that when he wrote letters upon *important subjects*, he ought always to be sure they were directed aright.

I took the matter so much to heart and plead for poor Thomas so earnestly, that father said he feared I had been afflicted with the same malady, which charge I indignantly repelled. He then appealed to Mr. Gordon whether he could advise any better course than to send

the letters to Thomas: but he declined any advice in matters of the heart, as out of his line. He appeared much more cheerful, however, and in the afternoon proposed a walk with me down to Dame Streeter's. Edward accompanied us, and drew Gracie on the sled.

It is again summer, and I am once more sitting in my pleasant room in my own dear home, never before half so dear. Now that I sit here I can scarcely realize that I have been so far away. Yet when I remember how many places I have visited, and what an entire change has taken place in my religious feelings, it appears hardly possible that it can be in so short a time as six months. Though when I left home I considered it a great trial to do so, yet I shall never regret it. Oh, no! neither in time nor eternity. I look out of my window and see the graceful elms; the beautiful carpet of green which covers the earth; the azure sky, and the many tinted flowers. But how different they seem now that I can say

"My father made them all.

Then I look beyond the church, whose lofty spire is ever reminding passers by that there is a God above them, and I see the sepulchres of the dead. There is no gloom about it now. Once I dreaded to pass that retired spot, and if my eye rested for one moment upon the monuments of the dead, I would turn my thoughts away. But now I remember that when my body lies there, my spirit will be with my Saviour. Yes, I hope that he has graciously pardoned all my sins and has commenced a good work

in my soul. Oh, what a blessed thought! What a glorious hope! How easy now to bear all the trials we may meet with, when we realize that it will be but a short time, at the longest, before we shall be at home. Yes, in our Father's house above. A mansion furnished and made ready for us by the self-sacrificing love of our elder brother. I long to have my dear brothers and sisters partakers with me of the peace and joy which fill my heart. Let me strive so to live that I may win them to Christ.

I had not time yesterday to commence writing about my journey. The last week in January aunt Susan sent for me to go and stay with her for a few months. As she was unwell, and requested my company as a favor to herself, neither of my parents thought it right to refuse, though it cost me quite an effort to consent. Soon after I arrived in M—— I was one evening sitting by aunt Susan, giving her an account of the sickness in our family, especially that of poor Gracie, when she very kindly led me on to speak of my own feelings at the time. I remarked that during that dreadful night when we had given up hope of her recovery, I would willingly have died to save her young life.

"Then, my child," said aunt, as she held my hand, "you felt that you were ready to die? This has long been a subject of my prayer."

Oh, how that question pierced my heart! It proved an arrow from God's quiver, which rankled and festered until the great Physician applied his healing balm.

For days I could scarcely eat or sleep; but at length

found peace in believing in Jesus. I immediately wrote to my parents, and from time to time received letters from them full of encouragement and instruction. It was a great comfort to me, that I was not forgotten in their prayers, but that morning and evening I was carried in the arms of faith to the family altar.

The first week in April I accompanied aunt to the West. Her health had much improved. We proceeded as far as Michigan and the valley of the Mississippi, where uncle Hammond's brother is residing, and after a delightful visit there, returned home, having seen either on our outward or homeward course most of the places of general interest. The falls of Niagara and Mammoth cave made the most vivid impression upon my mind. Aunt very kindly stopped several days in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York, that I might have an opportunity to examine the principal objects. Mother suggested to me the importance of writing a description of some of the public institutions—my visit to the Capitol and President's House, at Washington, and many other places. It helped me much to retain my recollection of them. But I wished to write them in another book that I might read them to my brothers and sisters.

I was surprised, on reaching home, to find Mr. Gordon still here, as he expected to have been licensed in the spring; but it seems he left soon after I did, to visit his brother in New Jersey, and has only returned and been licensed a few weeks. He has made an engagement to supply the pulpit in B——, for the summer, and as it is but three miles distant, he continues

to board here. He says the distance is of little importance as he has always been in the habit of walking, while the instruction he receives from father is invaluable. Father and mother seem to regard him like a dear brother, and indeed in every respect he makes himself one of the family. Bessie goes to him with her sums, and Edward with his childish joys and sorrows, as freely as to father or mother. But Gracie always has been and always will be his favorite. He has almost entirely cured her of sucking her finger. If she ever puts it in her mouth, one glance from him will cause her to snatch it away and cast down her eyes from shame. Next Sabbath father is going to exchange with him, and we shall have an opportunity to hear him preach.

Yesterday I was quite unwell with a sore throat, and really was hardly able to go out to church, but was so desirous to hear Mr. Gordon that I determined to make the effort; and I was well rewarded for it. The sermon was just what I expected, simple and chaste in style, earnest and fervent in spirit, and though the delivery was at first a little stiff and precise, yet it was natural. The speaker evidently forgot himself in his subject. In the afternoon I was putting on my bonnet to go again, when he came into the sitting room. I was there for the moment alone with Gracie, and he advanced quickly to me and said, "surely you will not go out again to-day?"

"Yes," I answered frankly, "I want to hear my brother. I was much interested, and I hope profited, this morning."

"If you will stay at home," he replied earnestly, "I will give you my sermon to read."

"But I want to hear the prayers too." I didn't mean to offend him, but he must have misunderstood me, or thought me indulging in some wrong feeling, for he had taken my hand, and when I made the last remark, he dropped it almost rudely, and turned to the window. Perhaps he thought I wished to flatter him, or considered it altogether wrong to speak upon such a subject. I must say, I was a little worried at his abrupt manner. When mother came into the room ready for church, I put on my cape and accompanied them. Father told her when he returned from B——, that they were so much pleased with Mr. Gordon's preaching, that they were determined to give him a call to settle among them.

On Tuesday, Eleanor Wells called, and wished to see me alone on business. I wondered a little what it could be, and my face burned, as I feared it was some message from Henry, whom I have not seen for several months. I arose, however, and followed her from the room. The subject of business was entirely different from what I had conjectured, though she did read me a note from her brother, who had just learned that I had returned, and wrote that he should be at home in a few weeks. But since hearing Mr. Gordon on the Sabbath, she has "made a beautiful plan," she says, to get up a class in intellectual and moral philosophy, and to invite him to be the teacher. I suggested several objections, such as want of time on his part, and my fear that she would soon be tired of the study, and abandon it. Beside, I could not

think of any others who would be likely to join such a class.

"Oh!" she answered, "you and I are enough, I do not want a great many." And finding her ready to answer all my objections, I at length confessed, that the plan, if properly arranged, would be agreeable to me. I, however, did not wish to tell her that the gentleman had once declined being my tutor; but I entirely refused to have anything to do with suggesting it to him, or even to sign my name to a letter she proposed to write. We then returned to the parlor, where she stopped for the remainder of the evening, and Mr. Gordon accompanied her home. Father inquired for her brother, and she repeated his message to me. He is studying law at Cambridge, and is very enthusiastic in his love of his profession. Father remarked, "Henry will distinguish himself at the bar," and I, foolish girl, must needs blush at that. Oh, dear! how hard it is to know what to do, or what one wishes to do. I have tried and tried to examine myself, and find out the exact nature of my affection for Henry. Certainly I like him better than any one else; but do I like him enough, to be united to him for life? Should I feel badly if I were to hear that he were attached to another? I think I should. And then the whole family consider it settled. Sometimes I determine not to worry at all about it, but to wait until I am called to decide. But would that be right? Henry is soon coming home. If I cannot return his affection, I ought not to subject him to the pain and mortification of an absolute refusal. I wonder if Mr. Gordon ever thinks of marriage. It is very probable that he is en-

gaged to some worthy lady, whom he considers suited for the wife of a clergyman. That he will make an excellent husband, I know from the care and tenderness he exhibited during our sickness. I have sometimes of late had the thought occur to me, that he liked Eleanor. Certainly her feelings toward him, have wonderfully changed. She no longer considers him a bore. She says if she could get any one to accompany her, she would go over next Sabbath, to B——, to hear him preach again.

This morning I have been engaged in writing a love-letter, and as it is my first effort, I intend to transcribe it as a curiosity.

"Dear Roland:

"I am well, and hope you are the same. I have made all the arrangements for our marriage, and now appoint the twenty-third of August, as the happy day. We are to be married at the parsonage, and Miss Susan has promised to make a loaf of wedding cake.

"Hoping to see you soon, I am yours till death.

MARYANNE SANDFORD."

Mrs. Sandford is a very smart, enterprising young woman, who was left a widow about three years since, but who by her untiring diligence and perseverance, has not only earned a comfortable subsistence for herself, and four children, but almost entirely supports her aged mother. She is, I should judge, about thirty-two or three years of age, and though she weighs somewhere

near two hundred pounds, has a very bright, good humored, and therefore pretty face.

She earns her living entirely by washing, and when I first came home, imparted to me in strict confidence, the fact that she was engaged to be married to a young man twenty-one years of age; but as she said, "a very likely lad." Though wondering a little, both at her choice and his, yet I comforted myself with the thought, that if they were suited, that was all that was necessary, and certainly she was old enough to choose for herself. The fact that "he never took a drop of liquor," seemed in her mind, to be a cloak large enough to cover all other deficiencies, whether of age or energy. At any rate, I kept her confidence strictly, until this morning, when with sundry blushes and hidings of her face behind her apron she asked me to write the above letter for her, saying "he left it all with me, and wanted me to let him know, when I was ready." After ascertaining from me, that she could be married here, and promising to do what I could to make the occasion a pleasant one, I carried my portfolio to the kitchen, and wrote according to her dictation. She stopped for a moment from the vigorous rubbing of her clothes, while I read it to her, when she "concluded between us, we've made out a pretty 'cute letter." Then with a smiling, blushing face, she returned with new zeal to her work, "guessing that Roland's ears were burning."

I was so much elated with my success, that I carried the precious epistle to the sitting-room, where father and mother were seated, and was just telling them about it, when Mr. Gordon came in. I made a motion to put it

away, but father said pleasantly, "no, child, go on; Mr. Gordon is one of us, and has been too much interested in our family, for us to conceal from him so important an event, as the marriage of one of its members."

The gentleman started and said, "ah, Thomas!"

"No," said father, mysteriously, "a female member."

"Oh! indeed! I was not aware," he answered quickly, and taking a seat by the window.

"Come, Susy," said father, "read your letter."

I saw that Mr. Gordon was laboring under a mistake, and I felt just roguish enough to puzzle him still farther, therefore I omitted the name at the commencement, and substituted "Dearest of friends." As I went on, substituting here and there a word, I am sure my looks were conscious enough to lead him to suppose I meant to appoint the time for my own nuptials. I glanced at him once, to see what he thought of my letter as a specimen of epistolary correspondence; but he was gazing at something in the street.

"Well done, Susy," said father, "That will do very well for a beginning."

"It certainly has one advantage," I replied, "I have left opportunity for an increase of warmth, as the acquaintance progresses. I consider it quite an achievement." I went around behind father's chair, and asked him in a low voice, if Mr. Gordon were not authorized to marry, as it would be a good opportunity for him to begin.

"I could not perform the ceremony until after my ordination," he replied, gravely, to my astonishment having

overheard me, "and beside that, I shall probably be absent from town."

Father thought the joke had been carried far enough, and he said, "then Mrs. Sandford will have to be satisfied with me." He then repeated the story I had been telling them when Mr. Gordon came into the room, while I ran to my chamber.

Eleanor came over again last evening, and I saw her give him the letter. Though I declined signing it, yet I thought she would show it to me, before she delivered it. He immediately left the room, and though Eleanor waited nearly an hour, he did not return. She whispered to me as I accompanied her a few steps, that she presumed he would answer it in writing. But she was mistaken, for I was standing on the piazza a moment before I went in, when he joined me, and taking her note in his hand, said, "Miss Susan, is this your wish as well as Miss Eleanor's?"

"Yes, sir;—no, sir," I replied, stammering in my confusion, as I remembered and feared a repetition of the former occasion. "I did not think you would have time to hear me any more than before; but—but she was very anxious that I should join her. I hope you will not think me"—

He waited patiently to give me time to finish my sentence; but I was too much confused to add another word.

"Do not fear to use your accustomed frankness," he said, at length, "you once honored me by calling me brother, and brothers are accustomed to be treated with great freedom. What do you hope I shall not think you?"

"Too forward," I answered, in a low voice.

"No," said he decidedly, "I shall never think that," and he put my hand in his arm, and began to walk up and down the piazza. "On the contrary, I have thought, shall I tell you what?" he added, stooping toward me.

"Yes, sir, I should be very grateful if you would point out my faults."

"Well, then, rather too reserved with your elder brother. I can never forget that you once allowed me to soothe your grief, and am pained at the restraint which has grown up between us."

I wanted to say, "It has not been my fault that our friendly intercourse has not continued;" but my lips refused to articulate, and after walking back and forth a few moments, he paused, and with a sigh said, "well, then, do I understand you that you would prefer not joining such a class?"

"Oh, no, sir! I should be much pleased, if you can conveniently attend to it."

"Then you may tell Miss Wells that I will comply with her request, and that I will arrange as to time of recitation and books to-morrow evening. As to the former occasion to which you referred," he added, speaking I thought with some embarrassment, "want of time was not my reason for declining."

"But want of inclination," I said, before I thought. I was frightened the moment I had spoken, and he stopped short, and gazed into my face, so earnestly in the moonlight, that I was glad to drop my eyes. "I cannot at present explain," he said, seriously, "perhaps never; but believe me, it was neither for want of time nor incli-

nation." There was something in the manner more than the words, that made me tremble, and I quickly drew my hand from his arm, and hurried to my own room.

The times for recitation are Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at three o'clock, P. M. We have recited two weeks. Eleanor will not allow that she is weary of the exercise; but I can see that her interest in it is much less than when we commenced. She says Mr. Gordon is so very serious that it takes away all her pleasure. And he is so. This afternoon we were all invited to Squire Wells's to tea. I hardly think I should have gone, if I had known Henry was coming; but his return was unexpected to them as well as to us. He seemed in high spirits to see us there, and as we walked home, told me how anxious he had been when I was sick, and how disappointed when last at home, on account of my absence. I tried to turn the conversation from such subjects, but only succeeded, when I spoke of his studies.

"How early may I come over?" he asked as we parted.

"Any time after dinner," I replied.

"Good bye till then, dear Susy," he said, drawing me back from the door, as he held my hand tightly in his.

I started from him, and passed into the house.

I hung up my bonnet, and went into the room where the family were sitting in the moonlight.

Mother sat in her usual place, and near her a gentleman who, I supposed, was father, while Mr. Gordon, as I thought, occupied his usual seat near the window. I went in softly with a very heavy heart, and sat down by

the one I thought was father, and laying my head upon his shoulder, whispered, "I wish you would tell me what to do, I am very unhappy." A sound almost like a sob was the only reply, and I sprang up, "oh, father! what is the matter?" In my anxiety for him, for the moment, I had forgotten my own sorrow.

"Why, my child, where did you come from?" asked father from the window.

I had mistaken them, and was confused enough when I thought what I had said, but I was determined to know what affected Mr. Gordon, and I went out for a light. When I returned, however, his face was shaded with his hand, and immediately after prayers he retired to his room. After half an hour I heard him speaking to Nancy in the kitchen, and fearing he was sick, I went down to see if he wished anything. Nancy was just giving him some saleratus; but I recommended soda, and mixed it for him. "I knew you were not well," I said.

"I confess that I have some pain in my head," he replied, stirring the spoon around in the water, "but"—and he glanced at the kitchen door to see if Nancy were within hearing, "you said you were unhappy. Can I be of any service?"

"Oh no, sir!" I answered quickly, and I sank upon the sofa and hid my face in my hands.

He placed the tumbler upon the table and sat down by me. "If I were indeed a brother, couldn't you?" he asked softly.

"Yes, sir."

"Then why not now? I am as truly anxious for your happiness as a brother could be."

All at once I thought I would tell him all my heart, and ask him what I ought to do. Even now I do not see how I dared; but when he is present, I can neither resist nor oppose what he wishes. "If I tell you," I asked, "will you advise me what to do?"

"Surely," and he arose and set the lamp on the entry table, leaving the door open.

I do not remember how I began, but I told him all, and he did not interrupt me by a word. "I feel," said I at the close, "that I could not be happy with Henry unless he sympathized with me in my religious feelings, and I do not know whether he is a Christian. If I find he is, I suppose I shall"—I stopped short—almost frightened at a quick gasp of my companion, and sprang up to go for the lamp; but he took my hand and motioned me to resume my seat.

"Go on," said he in a husky voice.

"I cannot go on," I exclaimed earnestly, "indeed, I should be an unkind sister if I were to talk to you of my own troubles, when you are so ill. I must call father or mother."

"It is not necessary," he replied.

"I have done," I said, "I have told you more than I ever told even my own brother, and when you are better, I shall claim your promise."

"Susan," for the first time calling me so, "I never had the happiness to have a sister; but you are"—and he suddenly took my hand, but let it go again immediately. "Excuse me, I cannot fulfil my promise, I cannot advise

you in such a case," and I could see that he trembled excessively. "But you must not think it is any want of interest, or of affection to you, or because I do not prize highly the confidence you have reposed in me."

After waiting a moment and finding he was not going to say any more, I brought the lamp and gave it to him, and without one word we separated for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWO SUITORS.

THIS has been a very important day to me, as well as a very long one, for I awoke when the church clock was striking twelve, and did not again close my eyes. I now fully understood all my reluctance to talk with Henry, and all my indecision with regard to him, for I had found out that with my whole heart I was attached to Mr. Gordon, while I could not recall one circumstance to convince myself that he had any other affection for me, than one might entertain for a sister.

I was almost frightened, as I dressed myself, to see how pale and haggard I looked, but hurried down hoping it would escape notice. I can hardly tell how I got through the morning. I was conscious of possessing a secret, and feared some one would discover it. Just before dinner Mr. Gordon came in, and Gracie ran to him to take her in his lap. "My little darling," he said tenderly, "I shall miss you very much." I was obliged to go into the entry and hold my hand to my heart, I had such a sudden pang at the thought of his going away; and when I returned I was so dizzy that I could scarcely finish setting the table.

"Susan," said he, addressing me, "you must go to your chamber and lie down. You are not well enough

to be about;" and he put Gracie from him and led me to the door.

I thought of nothing but complying. I had hardly taken off my dress before Nancy brought me a bowl of tea.

"Who sent it?" I asked.

"Mr. Gordon," was the reply, "and your mother said you were to take a long nap."

"Nancy," I said, "I will go to sleep if you will promise to call me when Mr. Wells comes."

"Yes, miss."

Being really much in need of rest, I slept soundly until awakened by a ring of the door bell. Nancy went and waited upon some one into the study, and after a few minutes came to call me.

"Mr. Wells is with your father," she said, upon seeing me awake, "and you told me to call you when he came." I arose slowly and dressed myself. I knew too well what Henry was asking father, from what his mother said to me last evening, and I knew too what I must answer him. But oh the pain it gave me to tell him I could not return his affection! Before I was dressed mother came up and told me Henry was waiting to see me in the parlor. I begged her to go with me, but she only smiled and said it would be embarrassing to all of us. So I went alone.

Henry came forward, led me to the sofa, and seemed very anxious, to see me looking so ill. But he soon forgot that, in his earnest pleading of his cause. I cannot relate all that was said. I cannot bear to think of poor Henry's disappointment. He promised every thing if

I would allow him to hope; that he would wait years if I thought myself too young, and alas, that if his not being a Christian were an objection, he would endeavor to become one. I could only weep and shake my head, until at last, when he urged for my reason, I told him with a burst of tears that my heart was not my own, and that it was only within a few hours that I had made the discovery.

He covered his face with his hands and said, "then my case is hopeless."

"Henry," I answered, trying to suppress my tears, "if I did not feel so true a friendship for you, I would consent to your wishes, for my love is not reciprocated;" and my cheeks burned with shame as I made the confession. "But you deserve a whole heart and a warm one, in return for your generous affection."

"No, Susy, I would not consent to your making such a sacrifice. You will be happy. It is impossible for any one to be insensible to your love," and he rose to go. "Dear Susy," he said, taking my hand, "I had fondly hoped for a different answer. Your father consented to my addressing you; but I acquit you of all blame, and believe me, dearest, you have my sincerest wishes for your happiness. Do not think it strange if I avoid seeing you, for, oh, how hard it is to realize that all my happy dreams are over!" and making a slight bow he left the room.

I sat where he left me and cried for hours. Twenty times I was on the point of calling him back, and I am sure yesterday I should have done so; but when I thought of another, I could not. At last mother passed

the door, and was surprised to find Henry gone. I laid my head on her lap and told her all; no, not all; there was one confession I had made to him my lips refused to utter. Mother was surprised, and I thought disappointed. "Are you sure, my child," she asked, "that you have not deceived yourself?"

"Oh yes, mother. But I could not bear to give him pain."

She advised me to go to my room, and said she would excuse me from tea; so I have been trying to compose myself by writing.

I must endeavor to calm myself, or I cannot direct my pen. I fear it is not right for me to be so happy when poor Henry is so sad.

This morning, at breakfast, I forced myself to go down. Just as soon as I entered the door Mr. Gordon gave me a piercing look as if to ask what I had decided, and whether I was happy, and then he came forward and led me to the table. "Dear Susan," he whispered, "I see you are not yet well." Edward came in late, and exclaimed, "oh, Susy! did you know Henry Wells has gone off again, and he will not come back for a great many years? George told me so. He is going to Europe."

Mother answered for me, and father gave a new turn to the conversation; but I was so faint that I could not swallow, and after the mere form of eating, I rose from the table; and after prayers returned to my room. There upon my knees, I prayed for strength to endure all that my heavenly Father thought fit to inflict, and I prayed,

too, for help to subdue the strong affection which had sprung up in my heart.

About half past ten o'clock mother came to my door and said father wanted to see me in the study. I went immediately, supposing he wished to see me with reference to Henry; but he called me to him, and when I was seated near him, he told me that he had been having some conversation, with reference to me, with Mr. Gordon, who desired to see me in the parlor. I hid my face, but father put his hand under my chin and lifted it up where he could see me. "Strange," he said, "that this never occurred to me. I had not thought of my little Susy for such a man as Mr. Gordon."

"And does he think of me?" was on my lips, but I had not courage to ask, and soon father led me to the parlor. "Here is my little girl," said he, as Mr. Gordon, who was impatiently walking the room, advanced to meet me, "but I believe she has lost the use of her tongue."

I cannot remember much that followed, only that I trembled excessively, and twisted the chain of my locket into every variety of shapes, and that one little word of three letters was all that I could force my lips to speak, in answer to the rapid and passionate pleading of half an hour. But my kind friend was very considerate, and seemed to be well satisfied with that; so well that he assured me he should devote his whole life to showing me how grateful he was. When the bell rang for dinner I started with surprise that it was noon, and when he led me out he whispered, "my own darling," so tenderly, that I was almost too happy. He conducted me

up to father and mother, and said with great emotion, "Susy allows me to hope that some time I may claim her hand."

They kissed me tenderly, but Gracie seemed to be surprised that she received no more attention. If I could only hear that Henry is happy, I should be so glad. I wonder what Eleanor will say!

After tea Mr. Gordon asked me to walk with him, and with mother's approbation I did so. We went to the little grove, and there, seated upon the mound, with my head resting upon his shoulder, he told me all the long story of his love, his struggles with himself; first, because he did not think it right for a clergyman to marry one who was not professedly a Christian, and then on account of Henry. This was the reason he declined teaching me. He really feared his own strength to resist the temptation of telling me his love, if placed so often in my society. This, too, was the reason that he could not advise me with reference to Henry. "You little knew," said he, "what a tumult your confession caused in my heart, or you would have pitied me too. But sometime you shall know all. There is not a thought of my heart, dear one, that I do not long to share with you. Oh, how earnestly I have prayed for this time!"

I drank in his words with the eagerness the parched earth does the pure springs from Heaven. I was too happy to reply, until he urged me to say how long since I first regarded him with interest.

"Always," I replied, in a whisper. "Only I did not understand my own feelings. It was not till last night that I knew why I could not love Henry."

I shall not tell even you, my dear journal, how he thanked me. How could I ever think he had no soul? He is *all* soul. Oh, he is a great deal too good for me! How safe I shall feel with such a friend to direct me! I told him I wished to have the engagement kept secret for a while, on Henry's account. He replied that he disapproved of any secrecy in such matters. He had seen much evil arising from it, and that now he knew what happiness was, he could not keep from showing it in my presence, though he said softly, "I have too much regard for your blushes, my Susy, to embarrass you by any public attention. However, as I still wished to avoid giving Squire Wells's family unnecessary pain," he said, if I would reward him in private, he would try not to tell too plainly how rich and happy he felt.

Poor Mrs. Sandford came to her washing to-day with a very sad face. The change was so great, from her usually good humored one, that I immediately perceived it, and asked her what was the trouble. She caught up the corner of her apron and sobbed out, "Oh, Miss Susan, widow Hill's been and told Roland that I'd got a family o' children, and he's gone off and left me."

"Why should he go off on that account?" I asked, in surprise, "of course he knew it before."

"I'd allus put 'em to bed afore he came," she answered with a fresh burst of grief.

I was so astonished at the idea of hiding so important a fact from a man whom she was going to marry, that I was dumb, and Mrs. Sandford finding that I had no words to comfort her, wiped her eyes and returned to her wash-

ing. From what mother ascertained afterwards, of a gentleman who called, she has only lost the privilege of maintaining one more by her arduous efforts, for Roland, though certainly temperate, was by no means industrious, and had revelled in the thought of a smart, active wife, who by her diligence would prevent the necessity of any labor on his part.

But the forsaken widow could not at once be brought to feel that she ought to be thankful instead of sad. Her youthful lover had twined himself closely around her affections, and she had fondly hoped that he would prove a kind husband to her, and after he had once got over the surprise of finding himself the father of four children, that he would be an indulgent parent to them.

This was the afternoon for Eleanor and I to recite. Though I found it almost impossible for me to fix my attention upon the lesson, on dreams in Abercrombie; yet I at length succeeded in mastering it; but Eleanor did not come, and when I went into the parlor and presented my book, Mr. Gordon very deliberately shut it up and said, "I cannot talk about other people's dreams, I have a dream of my own," he added, trying to make me give up the deportment of a scholar, for that of a friend. "It is so absorbing that I fear I shall not do much until it is realized. So, Susy, as you have your hand in appointing the 'happy day,' I wish you would be good enough to appoint mine."

"Well," said I, raising my eyes for just one glance into his beaming face, "in a little more than three years I shall be of age, then if you invite me to your wedding, and father and mother are willing, I will attend it."

"Susy," he exclaimed, "you would not condemn me to such a"——, he began to say, but then he stopped, and with a very roguish expression, added, "Susan, will you promise me that you will be married then?"

"When?"

"When you are of age."

"Yes," I answered, though somewhat surprised, at his manner.

"Well, then," he said, turning away to conceal a triumphant expression, "I will try to be satisfied with that. But remember, you are not to retract your promise. Come, my love, repeat it after me. "I solemnly promise, if my life is spared, and my parents consent, to be married to Charles Gordon, on the day I am of age, provided he still wishes it."

Though wondering much at his eagerness, and yet desire to postpone it so long, I repeated the form of promise as he wished.

"Oh, Susy!" said he, "you are a darling, innocent little girl, and I feel almost wicked at taking advantage of you, but the temptation is too strong. After tea, Mr. Gordon asked father if he had a copy of the revised statutes, and begged the use of it for a few moments. He is full as lively as Thomas now, and sprang up stairs to the study, two steps at a time, found the book and brought it down. I was washing the cups, when he turned to a passage, and brought it to me.

"There, Susy," he said, with a very arch look. "You must be in a hurry if you have any preparation to make; you have only a fortnight, and I must look out for the publishment at once. See, and he pointed with his fin-

ger to the passage, stating that a woman reached her majority at eighteen.

I dropped the spoon I held in my hand, and my heart actually stood still, as I tried to grasp the book.

"What is it, Susan?" inquired father, seeing my surprise.

Mr. Gordon answered for me, "I was convincing her by the laws of Massachusetts," he said, gayly, "that her wedding day was in a fortnight."

"Laws or no laws," exclaimed mother, "I shall have a word to say on that point."

"I should like to read the chapter and verse, rejoined father, approaching to take the book. It would require a pretty strong law to take my child from me, on so short notice."

"Oh, Susan!" whispered Mr. Gordon, "when they are both against me, you will not leave me to stand my ground alone!"

He had such a comic look of distress, that I burst into a hearty laugh, when he explained to father and mother the ground of his argument.

"But where do you intend to carry her then?" asked mother, "you have no home."

"They are only waiting my consent, in B——," Mr. Gordon replied, "to give me a call. They have already ascertained the wishes of the people, and are prepared to give me the use of the parsonage, and a comfortable support. In order to answer their call affirmatively, I have only been waiting to obtain Susy's. I have a few thousands laid by to furnish our house; so you see we have only to get into it as soon as possible."

"I acknowledge, my dear sir," responded father, "that your plans are laid with your accustomed prudence; but you forget how young Susy is, and that her mother and I, cannot spare her at present. Indeed I do not see how we can at all," and father's face grew very serious. "I only consented to Henry's wishes on the promise that he would not ask her to be married until he had studied his profession, and established himself."

"I will also promise that," said Mr. Gordon, more seriously. "I grant that I am asking a great favor, but would it be any less trying to part with her at some future day? I know she is young; but I should not wish her one day older. She will adapt herself far more readily to the people with whom she lives, and it shall be my care," he added, advancing to me, and standing by my side, "to relieve her as much as possible from trials."

Mother wiped her eyes, and said there would be time enough to decide upon these subjects hereafter; but Mr. Gordon insisted there was no time like the present, and after a long conversation, which lasted most of the evening, during which I was absent from the room, father and mother consented to part with me at Thanksgiving. Of this, I was duly informed by the gentleman, after prayers. So I must lay aside my pen, and go to work with my needle.

Next Sabbath was the time when Mr. Gordon was expecting to give an answer to his call from B——, but he received a letter from the committee of a church in the city, earnestly inviting him to preach as a candidate for settlement. He put the letter at once into my hand,

and asked me what he should do, but I would give no opinion. Father, however, advised him to go, and he has written that he will do so. Aunt Susan wrote me a very kind letter, congratulating me on my prospects, and saying that as mother would not, she supposed, be equal to taking such a journey, she would meet me in the city, and assist me to buy furniture for the parsonage. This was before the other place was thought of. She sent me fifty dollars to purchase linen, etc., for bedding. At the bottom, she added a postscript to father, saying it has always been her intention to provide for me, and that funds to furnish a house, have been placed with her banker in the city, and could be called for at any time. How very kind in her, for though father will delight to do all he can, yet his salary is only sufficient to meet his wants from year to year, and the small sum he had laid by, has been much decreased by Thomas's expenses at College.

To-day Mr. Gordon walked with me to Dame Street-er's, where I have been to read to her for the last time, and have installed Bessie in my place. After leaving me there for an hour, he returned for me, and we prolonged our walk, as he had some subjects upon which he wished to talk with me. He has been for three Sabbaths to preach in the city, and on many accounts he is pleased with the society. The church have already given him a call, and the parish are to meet for that purpose next week. The salary they offer is nearly double what they can give in B——, but there is the expense of a house, which he has ascertained will be five or six hundred dol-

lars, while the parsonage, a very neat two story dwelling with green blinds, together with a barn and two acres of ground, go with the salary at B——. But the salary is not the chief consideration with Mr. Gordon, though he says a minister in settling, ought to be sure that he can live upon such a support as the people offer, and this there is no doubt but we could do at either place; but the question is, where can he do the most good? "In the present case," he said, "after a careful examination of the subject, I am unable to decide between the two. My prepossessions I own are in favor of one of them, but now I have a right to your opinion."

"And if it does not conform to yours, you will tell me."

"Yes."

"Then I choose B——."

"I shall write at once to the city, and arrest the proceedings of the parish."

I was frightened that the subject was to be so summarily disposed of by my choice, and said, "what if I had chosen to go to the city?"

"Then we should probably have gone there. The committee assured me the desire for me to stay, was very strong."

"But you said you had a choice."

"Your choice was mine."

"I must be very careful what I do and say, if it is to have such an influence with you."

"Indeed you must, Susy," he answered, seriously, "It has now become my duty as well as my delightful privilege, to endeavor by all the means in my power, to make

you happy, and I am glad to know that you have naturally not only a warm heart, but a cheerful, even temperament. Your ardent affection for your parents, and especially for your brothers and sisters, confirmed the admiration which your sweet voice, as you came dancing into the room with Gracie, and your warm blushes had won. Do you remember when I went up to look at the room with your father? Oh, what a beautiful picture that was! and you were the prominent character in it, as you sat soothing your brother, with Gracie in your lap. I have never had a home, Susy, since I was ten years old, when my mother died, and the family were broken up; and when I was admitted into such a family scene, I could not willingly leave it. I have had day dreams ever since that hour. Often my books which you thought so absorbing, were filled with them, and when I turned over the leaves and tried to fix my attention upon the subject of which it treated, I could only see a rosy, smiling face, with eyes glancing up to me for one moment, and then drooped again. Did you think I should be willing to sit at table where I could not see those eyes? But when you were sick with the scarlet fever, I understood fully my own heart, and found that I must fly. I went away and staid as long as I could, and then returned promising myself that I would give way to such feelings no longer. Sometimes you looked in my face with wonder that I had grown so cold, and it required all my power over myself to refrain from catching you to my heart and telling you how dear you were to me. But if I could, I would not have you understand the agony I experienced when after my prayers for your conversion had been an-

swered, you came to me so unconsciously and told me you were unhappy.

After prayers that night, I went to my room, and once I was wild enough to imagine that you did love me, and was rendered unhappy by not knowing that your love was returned. But when you so frankly confessed the cause of your sorrow, I would have sacrificed all my own hope of happiness in your love, rather than to act so dishonorable a part as to strive to win you from Henry. But now that you know my whole heart, I want you to promise that if ever we differ in sentiment, and my views of duty will not allow me to comply with your wishes, that you will bear in mind that it is no want of the affection which I now feel, that prompts me to such a course.

The parish at B—— have been very uneasy, but will now be relieved by receiving their answer next Sabbath.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST MARRIAGE.

I AM to be married to-morrow morning, and after a short journey to M——, to visit aunt Susy, we are to go directly to the parsonage, which by the kindness of dear aunt, seems to me, at least, like a little paradise. Everything is in order there, even to the clothes in the drawers and closets. Mr. Gordon has a delightful room for a study, and a very good collection of books for a licentiate. Then my small library fills the book-case in the sitting-room. For the last week, Thomas has been unwearyed in his efforts to get everything in readiness for this great event. Dear Eleanor too has been full of zeal. It was a source of great pain to me, after Henry left, that Eleanor wholly avoided me, and when I met her, was very reserved; but partly owing to the influence of Thomas, and partly to the representation of her brother, she soon became reconciled, and proved herself the dear friend she always has been.

Dear Mrs. Wells! Though she expressed keen disappointment at the result of Henry's proposal, yet she did not allow it to influence her feelings toward me.

As soon as she knew that I was getting ready to be married, she sent me a generous supply of silver-table, dessert, and tea spoons, two butter knives and a cake basket. Eleanor gave me a variety of small ornamental

articles which I could not buy. Dear Henry acted nobly in representing my conduct to them so as entirely to shield me from blame. I am glad to hear of his good health, and returning spirits.

Mother has made me very happy to-day by promising to let Gracie pass a month with me when I return from my journey. As the parish in B—— is large, Mr. Gordon has purchased a horse, and the people presented him with a chaise, so that I can ride home, he says, whenever I am *homesick*. But I intend to be contented, and to make a good wife.

To-day is Christmas. I have been a wife four weeks, and in my own pleasant home almost three weeks. I have a very neat, active young girl as a servant, and consider myself very fortunate in having been able to procure one, who being a Protestant will attend our church, and join us at family prayers.

My husband, (how curiously that name looks in my diary!) says that I am a dear little housekeeper. He loves to hear me sing as I go about the room sweeping or dusting, and says he can write better when he hears my cheerful voice, because he knows my heart is at rest. I could hardly be otherwise than good, with one who is so easily satisfied. No matter with what I spread my table, he is always pleased, and finds something about it to praise. The house was put in thorough repair, every part of it being papered and painted before my furniture was brought from the city, and every article being new, Nora and I have no excuse for untidiness. I have already made a number of calls upon our people, though

entirely among the very poor or sick. Our other parishioners have most of them called upon us, and appear very friendly. I cannot but love them when they speak in such terms of affection of my dear husband. I find that my having always lived in a minister's family is a great help to me here. It makes it much easier for me to interest myself in so many who are, as yet, utter strangers.

On the Sabbath I went into the Sabbath school, and was immediately invited to take a class. I consented to do so for the day, and told the superintendent that if Mr. Gordon thought it best, I would keep it permanently. After service I related what had occurred, and asked him if I might keep the class.

He smiled at the question, and replied pleasantly, "have you forgotten, my dear, that you are of age?"

"And married, too," I added, "so that I can do just as I please; but I would like your advice."

"That I will give with pleasure. As the Sabbath school meets at noon, I can foresee many inconveniences to you in going at that hour. For instance, when I exchange and you have the clergyman to entertain; but I find you are quite ingenious in overcoming such difficulties, so if your health will endure the additional fatigue, I advise you to take the class."

"I am glad you feel so, and, as I am perfectly well, I shall inform Mr. Hall of my intention to be a teacher."

I thought I would not tell my husband; but when I asked his consent, I really did forget that I was of age. I presume that Mr. Hall thought me a very dutiful wife; and I can now understand the meaning of a quiet smile

which played for a moment about his mouth, as I answered him. I have been so long accustomed to going to my father and mother for their consent to my wishes, that it would seem very odd for me to take any important step alone.

Yesterday began a new year. Father, mother and all the family passed the day with me, and left dear Gracie to make her promised visit. I was very ambitious to have everything pass off pleasantly, and by arising early I was able to make most of my preparations for dinner and supper, so that I was with them until half an hour before the time for meals, when I went out to arrange the tables, and Gracie followed me everywhere. Mother asked me, in a whisper, if I wished assistance from her; but I told her all was prepared. Before she went home she told Mr. Gordon that she thought he had a very excellent cook.

"Yes," he replied, glancing at me with a smile, "but her skill in that department is only a small part of her qualifications for a good wife."

I acknowledge that a feeling of pride arose in my heart at this unexpected and undeserved praise; but I hope it will serve as an inducement to me to do better. Since my return from M——, I have only been home twice, though I thought I should go twice in a week; but I find my time so occupied, and with such delightful duties, that I have not thought of homesickness. Every day I become more interested in our people. They are warm-hearted and very sincere; and so far I have not for a moment regretted the choice I made. A few eve-

nings since, when some of our people were visiting us, Mr. Gordon told them they must thank me for his being their minister; and since that time quite a number have personally expressed their gratitude to me, and have said that it was a great trial to them when they feared he would accept the call to the city.

I find it impossible to be as regular in my writing as before I was married. Since new year's day I have not been able to find time, and now that I have an hour while my husband has gone to the weekly lecture, I have little inclination. It is a stormy evening, and I fear will be a dreadful night at sea, though it is seldom that a ship is wrecked on our coast. I presume there will be very few at the lecture room, but I wished to go, and think myself as well able as my husband. When I proposed it, however, he was very decided in refusing his consent, and as I pretended that I thought myself old enough to judge, and really intended to go out, he actually forbade it. And here I am, after passing nearly half my time since he went, in crying and feeling very, *very* much ashamed of myself. I will write down all my grievances and see how they look upon paper.

This afternoon, as my husband was much occupied in preparing his sermon for the evening, I pleased myself with the thought of surprising him with something particularly nice for his supper. At length all was ready, and I rang the tea bell, which as usual he promptly answered, and took his place at the table. I was already seated at the tray, while before his plate, in my best covered dish, was a pile of smoking hot waffles, buttered,

sugared, and flavored, as I thought, to his taste. I was very happy, and not a little proud of my cakes, which were my first attempt, and I expected no little praise; but what was my disappointment when, after having invoked a blessing, Mr. Gordon lifted the cover, deliberately helped me, then himself, and began to eat without saying one word. I might have spared myself so much trouble, and such a red face, for he ate one plateful after another, without even appearing conscious that he was eating at all; or if eating, nothing more than plain bread and butter. I poured the tea and passed his cup; but my lip quivered, and I could not keep back my tears. It was with difficulty, indeed, that I could eat at all, and nearly half the waffles, upon which I had expended so much time and pains, remained in the dish. As we arose from table he noticed my flushed countenance, and moistened eyes, and quickly asked the cause; but I was ashamed to tell him, and abruptly turned away. After following me to the closet, and trying in vain to find out the reason of my grave looks, he returned to the study. When I rang the bell for prayers, he merely came and said it would much oblige him if I would defer the service till after the lecture. I did not see him again until the church bell rang for the lecture.

Evening before last, while I was writing, my husband returned. I was quite ashamed of myself, that such a trifle should put me out of humor, and when he came in, I made an attempt to appear as usual. I arose and busied myself with putting away his coat and overshoes, taking care to keep my face turned from the light. I

then took the bell in my hand to ring for Nora to come to prayers, when he called me to him, and wished me to sit on his knee, but upon the plea that he must be tired, I sat down by his side.

"I cannot attend prayers," he said, gravely, "until I know the cause of that heavy shadow upon your brow."

I sprang forward to put up a brand which I thought in danger of falling, and he quietly waited for me to reply. At length I said, "shall I ring? It is nothing I can tell you."

"Yes, if you please."

Even after I had the bell in my hand, I hesitated and thought I would confess all my foolish disappointment; but pride said "no," and I rang. Nora came in, and I passed him the Bible and Hymn Book; but he only read a Psalm, and made a short prayer. If it was short, I was sure he meant it all for me, and my heart sank within me. It really seemed dreadful, to have this slight coolness between us.

"Susan," he said, when Nora had retired, "is it true that there is nothing in your heart causing you grief which you can tell me?"

Oh, how I wished I had something that I could tell! But the more I thought of my folly, the more ashamed I was of it, and reluctant to confess it. After waiting a moment, I replied, "I have nothing to tell."

He turned a shade paler, and taking the lamp, gazed sadly in my face for a moment, and returned to his study, when I went to bed, and cried myself to sleep. In the morning when I awoke my heart was so heavy, that I thought something must have happened; and soon the

recollection of what passed last evening flashed across my mind. I determined at once to confess all to my husband, and ask him to forgive me, but found he had already arisen and left the room. At breakfast he was as usual, exceedingly polite; but as he made no farther attempt to win my confidence, I could not bring myself to introduce the subject. Soon after prayers, he came from the study, and found me in tears; but I instantly wiped them away.

"Susan," he said, very mildly, though seriously, "I am going to the farther end of the parish to see a sick man. Though the sleighing is not very smooth, yet I think this bracing air will do you good. Will you accompany me?"

I shook my head, but before he left the room, which he did at once, without another word, I would gladly have accepted his proposal. I had no sooner seen him drive from the yard, than I retired to the study, that I might be free from interruption, and made a business of cherishing my grief until (foolish girl that I was!) I considered myself a most unhappy wife. I even meditated going home to make a visit; but as I should be obliged to wade through three miles of deep snow, I gave that up as impossible. For the first time since our marriage, he remained away from home all day; and toward night I became very nervous, and thought some accident must have occurred to detain him. As night approached, I worried so much that I became really sick with nervous headache. The slightest sound would make my heart beat wildly, and every moment I expected a messenger to summon me to my sick or dying husband. Oh! what

would I not have given to have been assured of his safety! And yet I no sooner saw him driving as usual into the yard, unharness and feed his horse, than all my anxiety turned into indignation, and I really was pleased to think I had now something to complain of. But this thought did not relieve my head, and I was obliged though with great reluctance to resort to my pillow on the sofa.

"Susan, are you ill, my dear," he asked, quickly approaching me as he entered. I only replied by putting my hand to my head.

"Too much heat," he added, in a low voice; and pressing his fingers upon my pulse, "how long have you been so ill, my love?"

Though my heart was swelling with mingled emotions, I could articulate only indistinctly, "for several hours!" He immediately left me, and I heard him talking with Nora in the kitchen. I was really vexed, as I heard her tell him that it was entirely in consequence of my worry for fear something had happened to him, and that I had done little but watch from the window for his approach, until obliged by the pain to lie down. Nora immediately followed him into the room with the tea, which had been waiting nearly an hour. I requested her to remain and pour a cup for Mr. Gordon, as I was not able to rise; but he told her he would not detain her, as he could easily wait upon himself. He then poured a cup of tea for me, and in the midst of my pain I could not help smiling, as I saw how carefully he sweetened it to my taste, then toasting a cracker before the fire, he brought them to me. I tried to eat a piece; but the very smell of the tea made

me sick, and I could not swallow. He seemed really distressed; but I told him I had no doubt a good night's sleep would restore me.

After waiting a long time for the bell, Nora came uncalled to take the tray, when Mr. Gordon who had been holding my head tightly between his hands, said softly, "If you will wait a few moments, Nora, I will eat some supper, as I have had no dinner."

The good girl was loud in her exclamations, and offered to cook him a piece of meat; but he declined anything except what was on the table. After making a slight repast, during which my heart reproached me, as I saw how pale he was, he went to the kitchen for a moment, and then after replenishing the fire, gently lifted my head from the pillow and laid it upon his breast, as he sat upon the end of the sofa. Here he held my throbbing temples so firmly that I found great relief. In a few moments Nora came in and brought me a cup of sage tea, which he had directed her to make, and which really did me good. I thanked him for his kindness in ordering it, and said I was so much relieved, I would sit up; but he begged me to lie quietly a short time longer. "My dear wife," he whispered after a moment's pause, "my heart is very sad at the thought that you do not realize all your expectations of happiness with me; or I may, unintentionally, have said something which has wounded your sensitive heart. If so, dearest, will you forgive me?"

I burst into a passionate fit of weeping, so violent that it brought back my pain; but as soon as I could speak, I told him my trouble from beginning to end. I did not

spare myself, but confessed my pride and my hard thoughts of him. He soothed and comforted me, took all the blame to himself, and promised never to leave me for so long a time if he could possibly avoid it. He did not think it was foolish for me to be disappointed about the waffles, and wondered how he could have been so absent minded. He said he could only account for it by the fact that the subject of his sermon had absorbed him. He begged me to remember this for the future, and whenever I saw him abstracted and reserved, to speak of it at once, and thus assist him to correct the habit. After we had talked of this a long time, he gave me an account of his visit, which was to an aged man, by the name of Rand. When I found that while I had been indulging hard thoughts toward my dear husband, he had been administering consolation to a sick and apparently dying man, I experienced the keenest remorse, and made many resolutions that with the help of God, I would never again give way to such feelings. We both were so engrossed with our conversation that we took no heed to the time, until the clock on the mantel piece struck eleven. But even then I could not retire until I had asked forgiveness of my heavenly Father. I had already obtained it of my husband, and as he started from the sofa where my head still lay against his breast, I whispered a request that he would ask pardon of God for me. He complied; but in such a tender manner did he represent my wants, and so fervently did he implore strength to be an affectionate husband, that my tears flowed afresh. One remark, which he made as we left the room, deepened my resolutions to strive against the

recurrence of such scenes. "Oh, Susan," he said, with deep feeling, "you can hardly realize what a load is lifted from my heart. Last night when I retired I bent over you, and saw the traces of tears upon your cheeks, and listened to the deep sobs which ever and anon burst from your lips. I feared that you had mistaken your affection for me, and that I had done wrong in asking you to share my lot. I could not rest with such fears, and arose, as soon as it was light, from a sleepless couch. Nora's remark, when I came home, that you had been anxious concerning me, sent a thrill of joy through my breast; and now, dearest, you assure me that you do not regret leaving your pleasant home to live with me."

"I only regret," I replied, my childishness and pride, which caused you so much pain."

CHAPTER X

WEDDED LOVE RESTORED AT THE SEA-SIDE HOME.

At the distance of a mile from the parsonage in B—, in a little ingle or nook, formed by a cessation of the bold bluffs, rising abruptly from the sea, is snugly nestled a small cottage, if such it may be called, where from morn till eve, and from eve till morn, may be heard the voice of God saying to the great waters, "Thus far but no farther." In this quiet retreat lived little Jamie McDonald, with his mother and sister; and though at a distance from any other habitation, yet they were not afraid. When the storm raged and the ocean roared, they only kept the closer within their neat and cheerful abode. They felt safe under the protecting care of Him who giveth "to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment." When the long days of summer came, then would Jamie lead his little sister carefully down the low bluff upon which their home was built, and, gently lifting her from stone to stone, would soon reach the smooth, hard beach, which lay for a mile in extent before the cottage door. Here these merry children were never tired of playing: sometimes collecting a quantity of clean shells, and carrying them to a rock out of the reach of the common tides, and using them for plates, with which they could set out their

noonday repast; sometimes building houses of the fine, clean sand, which covered the beach.

Jamie and Lottie had never known another home; and they loved the bright waves which ever kept rolling and breaking in white surf upon the shore. They could hardly have known how to sing and shout, as they did from morning till night, without the accompaniment of the breaking billows. They grew to be as experienced as mariners in calculating the ebb and flow of the tide, and the length of time before the waves would rise to their landmarks.

But let us leave Jamie and his sister, standing with bare feet just out of the reach, as they think, of the next wave, running backward and shouting with great glee, as it laves their tiny toes, and return to the cottage, where Mrs. McDonald is busy with her work.

A year or two before Jamie was born, Jane McDonald with her young husband, left their native land, in the north of Scotland, and came to find a home in this free country. She was a worthy member of the Presbyterian church in Scotland, and, according to its usage, brought with her a letter of commendation to any American church where she might locate. It was true that neither of them had any distinct idea in what the freedom they were seeking consisted; but wondrous reports had reached them from kindred and friends who had come to find their fortune in America, and their ties to their fatherland being one by one cut off, as father, mother, and sister were taken to a heavenly country, then it was that they determined to seek a new home in this western world.

Immediately upon landing, they were cordially met by a near relative, and received into a neat, comfortable abode, which, in its many conveniences, formed such a contrast to their transatlantic home, that they looked about them with wondering and admiring eyes. After they retired for the night they held a long converse upon the probability or even possibility of their ever being equally well situated. When they arose in the morning, refreshed and invigorated for new duties, hope quickened each step and lighted each eye.

For a time everything went on smoothly. James McDonald was active and strong, and soon entered into an engagement with a farmer, who found in his new workman a trusty and faithful hand. Jane remained with her cousin, and proved herself of great assistance in the business by which the worthy Mrs. Dane increased the wages of her husband. The clothes were never so thoroughly washed nor so neatly pressed as when Jane "was to the fore." Thus they continued until autumn, when James was thrown out of employment for the winter; and from this time poor Jane dated the beginning of her troubles. I cannot stop to relate all the trials made by James to obtain permanent employment, that he might have a settled home, which he could call his own; no, nor the reserve and sourness, which gradually changed his once bright and happy countenance.

My story is more of little Jamie than of his parents. But I will just say, that though this good wife did not fail to sympathize deeply with her husband in every fresh disappointment, yet she always endeavored to lead him to feel that they were in the hands of One who knew all

their wants, and who would guide their little bark at last into a safe port. Though James McDonald dearly loved his wife, yet on one point they widely differed. Jane had been blessed with a pious mother, who had early taught her, not only to fear the Lord, but to trust him in all her ways. The good old lady used to say, "It's nae gude to trust him when all's fair and sky clear, and then turn to aither help when storms betide; but trust him alway, and mind your auld mither's words, He'll ne'er forsake you."

Jane used to repeat this to her husband, and try to inspire him with new hope: but he gradually gave up more and more, until almost their entire support depended upon her exertions. This was so gradual, however, that Jane had removed to the little cottage where we found her, and which was given to her for a merely nominal rent, and her sweet Jamie had come, a rich boon to the warm-hearted mother, before the father wholly despaired of becoming rich, and shipped as a sailor on board a merchant vessel, going out from a neighboring port. The young wife felt very sad when she found her husband was really intending to leave her alone in a strange land, especially as, somewhat affected by the thought of the separation, James had renewed his former kindness and affection toward her, and she had begun to look forward to brighter days.

He went, however; and until the opening of our story he had returned but twice. Each time he returned completely tired of a seafaring life, and determined to pursue it no farther. But each time, also, after remaining at home a few months, he grew weary of the monotony of

his cottage life, for he sought no employment; declared that even the life of a sailor was better than this, and took the first opportunity to leave.

In the mean time Jamie had been delighted to welcome a little sister to their sea-side home. Mrs. McDonald was well known and esteemed by all in her neighborhood, and had been able, during the watering season, when fashionable visitors from the city resorted to the place, to obtain a good support by taking in nice washing. Besides the regular pay for her work, so prompt and faithful was she to her employers, that they became her fast friends, and for many of the comforts her cottage contained, she was indebted to their kind benefactions. Her neat cottage, with its bright flowers before the door, became increasingly a favorite resort for the lovers of the sea, and generally, on a pleasant afternoon, some invalid who had resorted to the salt water for the benefit of health, might be seen sitting beneath her humble roof, looking out upon the mighty expanse of water, and counting the white sails in the distance.

In this way summer and winter had passed. Busied in her work and contented in the society and affection of her children, Mrs. McDonald had long since ceased to mourn at the absence of her husband, though she never retired to rest nor commenced the duties of a new day without kneeling beside her little ones, imploring God's blessing upon the wanderer, and asking her heavenly Father to preserve him from the dangers of the deep, and above all, from the temptations of his own unrenewed heart. This daily prayer was so connected in the mind of little Jamie with his father, that he often called Lottie,

and said, "Come, sissy, now mama's going to ask God about papa."

Mr. McDonald had already been absent for more than two years: and during that period, his wife had never heard from him. He had not previously been absent so long at a time; and Jane used to awake during a storm, and hear the thundering of the billows, and fancy that, above the roar of the sea, she could hear her own James calling for help; and then she would draw her children close to her breast, and pray that God Almighty would be the protector of her absent husband, and would bring him safely to his home.

One day when Jamie and his sister, tired of play, returned to the cottage, they were surprised to see a man in the small sitting-room, holding their mother upon his knee. Jamie did not remember his father; and Lottie had not seen him since she was a baby; so the children stood in the doorway unperceived, yet wondering at the sight of their mother's joy, when she discovered them and said, "Jamie, my boy, don't you remember your own father?" Jamie hung down his head and walked bashfully forward to take the extended hand, while his mother, catching up Lottie, exclaimed, "See, James, hasn't the baby grown to a fine size?" The father expressed great pleasure at the growth and improvement of the children.

When supper was prepared, Jamie gave up to his father the seat, at the head of the table, which he had occupied ever since he could remember, and waited for him to say grace. But when he saw his father help himself, and about to commence eating, his little face turned very red, and he looked at his mother in great distress.

"Papa," said he, in a solemn tone, "won't you ask God to please bless this supper?"

Mr. McDonald laughed, and said to his wife, "What a little Methodist you've made of the boy!"

"Papa," continued the child earnestly, "won't you please to pray?"

"Why," said Mr. McDonald, "who prays when I'm gone?"

"I do."

"Well, then, pray now, only be very quick about it; I'm desperate hungry."

In a serious manner, Jamie folded his hands, and asked God to bless the food, and make them all good, and make papa good. Afterwards they ate their simple repast. Many a month had passed since James had heard the voice of prayer; and he seemed impressed by the seriousness and earnestness of the child; and as Jane made no remark, the supper was rather a silent meal.

When the time came for their evening prayer, James had wandered from the house; and Jane took her little ones into the inner room, and there knelt with them, and thanked God for preserving her husband, and bringing him to his home in safety. Then she poured out her whole heart in prayer for his soul, that he might become a child of God and an heir of immortal glory. Jamie looked very wistfully at his mother as she arose and wiped the tears from her eyes with her apron. But she kissed him and his sister, and having heard their prayers and hymns, laid them in their bed.

Not many days passed before the inmates of the cottage had entirely changed. Mrs. McDonald was not

long in discovering that her dear husband, for whose return she had so earnestly prayed, had become a drunkard; and that when intoxicated he was shockingly profane. When sober, a kind of respect for his wife's feelings had hitherto prevented him from swearing in her presence. But poor Jane wept bitter tears as she thought of her husband's wickedness, and also of the dreadful influence he would have upon her beloved children. In her troubles she resorted to Rev. Mr. Gordon, her pastor, who had recently been settled in the parish, and received gratefully his sympathy and counsel.

At first, Jamie appeared completely stunned by the volley of oaths which his father poured out; but recovering himself, he began to tell him it was very, *very* wicked to talk so, and that God wouldn't let him live if he did. James was beside himself with rage; and catching up a chair threw it at the child, telling him he'd teach him to stop his impudence.

But the frightened mother had snatched him away; and, withdrawing with her children into the small bedroom, she wept as if her heart would break. She looked back one week, and thought of the happy peaceful life she then led, with her children by her side, and her dear Jamie learning so fast to read, that she was looking forward to the time when he would be able to read a chapter in the large Bible, which had been her mother's, and which had been so carefully preserved. But Jane wept still more bitterly as she thought of that blessed mother's advice to her, not to marry a man who did not fear God; and she felt that her punishment, though long delayed, had now come; for though she had not married

in positive disobedience of her mother's commands; yet, she knew that she had done so, contrary to her often expressed advice and warning. The very wretchedness her mother feared, had now fallen to her lot. Poor Jane knelt and prayed anew for wisdom and strength to bear the affliction which her own wilfulness had brought upon her. Truly, she had need of strength; for now that his family had witnessed his degradation, James seldom came home sober; and when intoxicated, his wife and children soon learned that their only safety was in flight. Sometimes, however, they could not escape him, and the children would scream with fright as their father cruelly beat their dear mother, or threw her heavily to the side of the room.

Once Jamie started from his hiding place under the table, and stood directly before his angry father, and said "Papa, you mustn't beat my mamma so, I can't let you, it's very wicked!"

It was a strange sight to see the angry man with a chair or stool raised over his head to strike, and then arrested by the voice of his child pleading for his mother. Sometimes, the plea succeeded; and he muttered angrily to himself, and slunk away to bed. But at other times, he seized the boy by his arm or leg, and threw him to the other side of the room. At such seasons Mrs. McDonald suffered far more on account of her children than herself. She began to consider what she ought to do, for the security of their lives and persons. Some of the neighbors, hearing of the trouble of their esteemed friend, came to advise her to complain to the public authorities, and to have him taken up.

But it so happened that the day on which the kind neighbor visited her, James had returned home from the village sober. He had obtained a job of work, and had brought to the cottage some food for his family. Jane now thought her prayers, and those of her pastor, were answered; and her heart was buoyed up with hope of brighter days. "Oh!" said she, "It's not now that I could have the heart to complain of him, and he so kind the day." She related to her sympathizing neighbors the unusual kindness of her husband. For a day or two, until the job was finished, James continued quite sober; but then, intending to make up for lost time, he came home so furious that Mrs. McDonald, catching her children in her arms, fled down the cliff toward the sea, and there, hiding with them behind a sheltering rock, she gave way to the most passionate grief.

All her bright hopes were again dashed to the ground. Unconscious of the lateness of the hour, she still sat until she found herself in a great chill. She instantly arose, and stealing like a criminal beneath her own roof, she found her husband as she had expected, lying unconscious on the bed. She took in the children, and giving them their supper, she heard them say their prayers, put them into bed and laid down beside them. Jamie seemed unusually wakeful, and tried to comfort his mother.

"Mamma," he asked, "don't I grow some every day?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well, soon I shall be a man, and I'll take you away where papa can't come, and then we'll be happy

again just as we were before he came home; only mamma, I wish we could live here. It's so pleasant to hear the loud sea. What makes papa be so wicked and beat us so?"

"It's rum, Jamie; it's *rum* does it all. Before he drank rum he was very kind to us."

Jamie crept closer to his mother, and said in a husky voice, "Mamma, you won't drink any, will you? What could sissy and I do without you?"

Poor Jane comforted her boy with the promise that she would never taste of it; and then she told him as she often had done before of that bright world where there is no drunkenness, no sorrow nor crying; but where all tears will be wiped from every eye. Jamie asked God to please to take them all to heaven. Oh! how often did the heart-broken mother think of that earnest prayer.

After some time the poor weary wife lost the remembrance of her sorrow in sleep. But not long. She was suddenly awakened by a shrill cough; and she started at once to her feet. She well knew the sound, and sprang to relieve her sick child. She administered to him such remedies as she had at hand, but to no effect. She then tried to rouse her senseless husband. "Jamie is dying! *Jamie is dying!*" she cried in his ears. But she was obliged to leave him repeatedly to go to her suffocating boy, when he would instantly fall back into unconsciousness.

One remedy after another she tried, and wrung her hands to see how ineffectual it was for his relief. At length, rendered desperate by despair, she succeeded in

awakening James, and she implored him to lose no time in bringing the Doctor. James was really frightened at the distress of his child, and willingly started off on his errand.

When the Doctor arrived, the poor little fellow was somewhat relieved; but was still dangerously ill. The physician remained with him until morning, when he left his patient asleep.

But to the croup succeeded an attack of lung fever; and the Doctor was, before many days, obliged to acknowledge to the heart-broken mother, that her Jamie, her first-born, must soon leave her. The sweet boy himself was aware of this, and calling his mother to the bed-side, he held out his burning hand and said: "Mamma, I'm going to die; and I'm not sorry except for you. But who will take care of you when I am gone? If papa comes home angry, who will tell him it's wicked?"

Poor Jane could answer only with tears. James soon came in, and the little finger beckoned him to a seat at the bed-side.

"Papa," said he, in a feeble voice, "you know I am going to God; I can't stay here any longer, because He calls me to go; but I want you to be good when I'm gone, so that mamma will have somebody to take care of her."

James could not resist the pleading of his dying boy, he began to weep, drawing his coarse sleeve across his eyes.

Seeing his father weep, the dear child continued: "Dear Papa, won't you be good, and not beat mamma any more? Every-body's father don't beat every-body's mother."

James cried aloud.

"Don't, Papa," said Jamie, "please don't cry so, because I have a great deal to say to you." But the poor child began to cough so violently that he could say no more at that time. Mrs. McDonald took him in her arms and rocked him gently, after having administered his medicine. He soon fell asleep, while James went out before the door, and sitting upon the step, wept long and bitterly because he was about to lose his boy. Thoughts of other days came crowding into his mind, and he struck his head with his hard hand, wishing he had never left his fatherland. Here he sat, alternately weeping and thinking, until his wife called him to supper.

After tea, he took a seat near the bed, and sat looking with great tenderness upon his suffering boy. He was not wholly hardened by years of profaneness and crime.

Jamie slowly opened his eyes to see his father gaze tearfully upon him.

"Dear Papa," said the little fellow, "I would not have slept if I had known you were here. Will you please to take me up; I want to talk, and it don't hurt me so much when I am up."

James, with unwonted tenderness, put the comforter around the sick boy, as he had seen his mother do, and sat down with the child in his arms. Poor Jamie missed the tender arms of his gentle mother, but he said nothing. His little heart was bent on doing his father good, and bringing happiness back to the home he was so soon to leave.

"Papa," said he, laying his head back on his father's arm so that he could look him in the face, "Mamma says you were kind to her, and loved her very much, and when you came home she used to run out to meet you, instead of hiding away. She says it is only rum, *naughty wicked rum*, that makes you beat us all, and say such awful words. Now, papa, I am going away from here, and you won't have any little Jamie; and Mamma won't have any body to take care of her. Dear Papa," continued the child, putting up his hand to brush away the tears that were pouring like rain down his father's cheeks, "won't you please to be good to her as you used to be, and never drink any more rum? Then when you die you can go to heaven, and see me there, and I'll show you where Jesus is, because I shall be there a great while perhaps before you go. *Will you, dear Papa?*" The last word could hardly be distinguished. The pale sufferer lay with closed eyes and throbbing breast, entirely exhausted.

He looked so much like death that James in affright called out, "Jane, come quick! Jamie's going!"

His mother was instantly at his side. Indeed, she had not been far away. She had fallen into a seat back of the rocking chair; and there she sat, eagerly listening to every word, her swelling heart echoing a fervent *amen* for every wish of her darling child, while she tried to smother her sobs in her apron.

Without removing him from his father's arms, Jane held camphor to the nostrils of her dying boy; and, when he slowly opened his eyes, wet his parched lips with drink which the Doctor had left him.

In his earnest desires for his father, the boy had exhausted his remaining strength, and lay panting for breath. Just at this time the physician entered; and taking his sweet little patient from his father, whose strong frame was so agitated and shaken with the violence of his feelings, as to prevent his proper care of the dear boy, laid him gently in the bed, propping him up with pillows.

Mr. McDonald rose to leave the room; but Jamie cried feebly, "Papa," and putting out his hand motioned for his father to sit by his side. Though not able to speak, he looked at him with the utmost tenderness as the bowed head of his father was buried in the pillows, while his broad breast heaved and fell with the violence of his emotions.

After taking some medicine from the Doctor, he was relieved; and again turning to his father, said, "Did you say you would, papa?"

The Doctor looked inquiringly. He saw that a scene of uncommon interest had taken place; and he determined to await the result.

Poor James! The fountain of his feelings was broken up. The hard shell which drunkenness, and profanity, and other crimes had formed around his soul was fractured, and an arrow from the divine quiver had penetrated it, though directed by the feeble hand of his infant child. As the words, "Did you say you would, papa," fell on his ear, a new purpose was formed within him.

He arose from his seat; with a great effort he stifled his sobs, and falling on his knees, said, "Jamie, my own dear boy, I will promise. May God help me to keep the

vow I now make to my dying child, that I never, *never* more will taste of rum!"

A fervent *amen* burst involuntarily from the Doctor, while Jane fell upon her knees to thank God for the unexpected answer to her prayers.

A heavenly smile played on the sweet countenance of the sufferer, while he calmly folded his little hands on his breast as if in prayer. His work was done. He was now ready to be offered. A gasp, a sigh, drew them all quickly around the bed. The dying eyes passed lovingly from father to mother who stood holding his beloved sister in her arms, and then resting for a moment upon his kind physician, they were slowly closed, never to be opened until the morning of the resurrection.

James McDonald arose from the bed-side of his Jamie a new man, with hopes and resolutions filling his soul, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. It was the blessed privilege of the good pastor to lead this wanderer back to the fold, and to commend him to the care of the great and good Shepherd. The mourning mother had indeed lost her son, but had gained her husband.

In a quiet little knoll, but a hundred yards above high water mark, lies the body of the little subject of this simple sketch, where the rolling waves which he so much loved, are ever swelling a requiem to the memory of the departed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE THREE WEDDINGS.

THE day has been very warm for the season, and my husband called me to the window to show me that the buds have begun to swell. I presume, however, as it is only the middle of March, that we shall have more cold weather. Mr. Gordon is quite anxious to get to work upon the garden, and amuses me by the eagerness with which he seeks advice of his agricultural parishioners.

This afternoon I accompanied him to Rand farm, as it is called, which is more than two miles distant. This is the residence of the aged man whom my husband went to visit in the winter, and who was suffering from paralysis. He is considerably better than at that time, but entirely helpless. The family consists of Mr. Rand and his wife, with their daughter who is married, and two children. Mr. Choate, the son-in-law, I did not see; but from the account of my husband who has met him several times, as well as from the words of the old gentleman, who wished to talk of him to the exclusion of every other topic, I am quite impressed in his favor.

I am more and more pleased with Nora. She is very conscientious with regard to the Sabbath, and extremely affectionate in her disposition. She is never more pleased than when I allow her to comb my hair, or to bathe my temples, when I am afflicted with the headache, which

has been the case more frequently since the warm weather came on.

A fortnight since we had a wedding at our house, which is the second Mr. Gordon has attended. The bride and groom appeared very youthful. Indeed, the young man seemed little more than a boy. Upon reading his certificate, however, my husband found that he was of age; and she, nineteen. I called Nora into the room, both because I thought it would please her to be present, and because we wanted her for a witness. When the simple ceremony was nearly concluded, and the words "I pronounce you man and wife," had been repeated, the new husband clasped his wife in his arms and imprinted the first kiss upon her lips. Poor Nora sprang forward in alarm, supposing the bride about to faint, which was the reason of his putting his arms about her. She was very much confused when I put my hand on her arm; and she saw by my smile that she had made a mistake.

"Indeed, ma'am," she apologized, after they left, "and I thought the lady would fall, but I saw she looked the one way all the time," meaning that she did not grow pale. "And is that the fashion in this country?" she asked me the next morning. "I never saw the like of it before."

After the wedding party had left, I told Mr. Gordon an anecdote which I had heard my father relate. A friend of his was called to a small house in the suburbs of a city, to marry a black couple. It was the custom of the place for the clergyman to approach the bride, when the ceremony was concluded, and, after wishing her joy

in her new relation, to give her a fatherly kiss. The gentleman in question in due time pronounced the twain one, and after the benediction called upon the ebony groom to salute his bride. But with great respect for the office and privilege of a clergyman, the modest man could not think of aspiring to the first kiss, and humbly replied, "after you, mass'r."

I have always been curious to know how the good man extricated himself from this dilemma, without wounding the feelings of the bride. But true christian courtesy is seldom at a loss for expedients.

I have to-day returned from a visit of a fortnight at my old home. Though reluctant to part with me, Mr. Gordon urged my going, as he thought the change would be beneficial, and as I wished the advice of my mother about many things. Thomas was at home most of the time, as it is his vacation. Eleanor also passed three days with me, and assisted me with my sewing. Every one in the family endeavored to make my visit agreeable. Mr. Gordon came over every day or two, and reported the news from home. He carried me one day to see Dame Streeter, who is very near her end. But she is not only calm in the prospect of death, but looks forward with a glorious hope to her inheritance beyond the skies. She welcomed me most cordially, and at parting, after Mr. Gordon had prayed with her, she committed me most tenderly to his care.

I was much pleased to observe the improvement in Bessie. She has grown really pretty, and has much decision of character for a girl of her age. Nora says

a great many have called upon me in my absence, and expressed a wish to be of service. On inquiring what she had for dinner, she appeared very mysterious, and said she could pick up something; but upon going to the table I found a nice leg of lamb, which our kind neighbor, Mrs. Hall, sent in, with asparagus and spinage. Nora had cooked it nicely, and I made an excellent meal. Mr. Gordon said it really did him good to see me opposite him again, and able to eat heartily. He says the house has been as still as a tomb; that Nora, fearful of disturbing him, has moved about as noiselessly as a ghost; but the silence was so unusual that he could not write; and missing my voice and step about the house, he took the opportunity to exchange both Sabbaths while I was away. I am equally delighted to be once more at home.

This morning I received a call from Mrs. Jason, the wife of our lawyer, who is one of our nearest neighbors on the hill opposite. In the course of the conversation I told her I was much pleased with the people as I became acquainted with them. She asked if I had ever seen Mr. Choate, son-in-law of Mr. Rand. I replied that I had not, though I had been twice to the house.

"He is in very humble life," she added, "and with but few opportunities of self-improvement, yet I have a greater respect for that young man, than for almost any other in town." She was so enthusiastic in his praise, which accorded exactly with what my husband had said of him, that I begged her to give me his history,

which so much interested me that I have determined to write it.

He is the only son of Mr. Choate, a farmer who lives about half a mile beyond Mr. Rand. His sister is a prominent singer in our choir, and is soon to be married to the gentleman who has for four successive winters taught our public school. For many years James Choate and Elizabeth Rand were attached to each other; but after the death of her only sister Mary, Mrs. Rand fell into a melancholy state, and could not readily be induced to part with her only remaining daughter.

One evening, early in the month of August, James presented himself at Rand farm to accompany Elizabeth to an evening lecture at the village. Before he went he resolved to make one more effort to induce the parents of his friend to consent to their marriage. This determination he made known to her, and in consequence she undertook to lay the subject before her parents. Just as they were leaving the house she turned back from the door, and approaching her mother, with slight embarrassment, whispered, "please talk with father this evening, about what I asked you, and coax him to consent, and let me tell James when we return, it will make him so happy."

The rather sad expression upon her mother's face gave way to a smile, as she looked at the blushing girl, and glanced from her to a young man near, who, conscious that something had been said which would greatly affect his "weal or woe," stood tracing, with the toe of his wide boot, the bright color which was ingeniously braided into the hearth rug.

In another minute the door was shut, and the aged couple were alone. For a short time they sat in silence, the face of the mother again wore the pensive expression which had become almost habitual, and her husband, not feeling particularly cheerful himself, did not like to interrupt her meditations. At length, however, he said, "come, wife, don't look so sad; if Mary could speak to us, she'd tell us she was far better off than when she was in this wicked world, for she is in the presence of her Saviour, and beholds his glory. It won't be long, either, before you and I shall follow her. We've got most through, wife, and we ought to be thankful that we have the promise of a mansion above. We shall see all our little ones when we reach that better land."

Tears flowed fast down the furrowed cheeks of Mrs. Rand, as her husband thus spoke; but they soothed her excited feelings, and she replied, "Yes, husband, we've almost lived out our allotted time, and I look forward with trust in my Saviour, to the end of my journey; but our dear Mary was not the subject of my thoughts when you spoke. I was thinking of Elizabeth."

"Of Elizabeth! why then look so sorrowful? The very thought of her makes my old heart glad. Why, when I'm out in the field mowing or ploughing, if my bones ache, or I'm very weary, I just sit down on the stump of a tree, and think of our Elizabeth; and the vision of her bright, happy face, her merry laugh, and, more than all, of her love for her poor old father and mother, rests me a sight; it's better than meat and drink to me."

"What shall you do, then, when she's gone?" asked the mother mournfully.

"Well," answered the father, swallowing a sob which struggled up from his full heart, "we must make the best of it. James is a right clever fellow, and he loves our girl. Now that he's calculated upon having her for so many years, I couldn't make up my mind to tell him he must give her up."

"But, husband, wouldn't it be better for them to wait a little longer? What can we do without her?"

"Do you remember what neighbor Gray's wife told your mother the evening we had that famous quilting in the old red house?" 'It's the way of the world,' says she, 'and Scriptor sanctions it. A man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and if it's right for him, it's right for her.' When I get clear down, about Elizabeth's leaving us, I think o' that, and remember that we shouldn't a thought 'twas right for any body to have kept putting us off from year to year. But, wife, I've been thinking this ere subject over and over nights, for more'n a fortnight, and I've about come to the conclusion to set off half my farm and give James a clean deed of it, providing he'll agree to fix up them north rooms and live here."

"Oh, husband!" almost screamed Mrs. Rand, her face radiant with joy.

"Yes," continued the good old man, "we are growing old and shall soon need somebody to take care of us, and I've pretty nigh made up my mind to do it."

An hour after, when Elizabeth returned from singing-school, and James loitered near the door, while she ran

in to ascertain if there were any good news for him, Mr. Rand called out from the bed-room, "Elizabeth, tell James, as soon as he's milked in the morning, to take a walk over here, 'cause I want to see him on business; and tell him not to be frightened, 'cause it's nothing alarmin'."

I cannot stop to tell of the whispering at the door, nor how the young man's heart beat, as he walked home, cheered by the words of her he loved: "I know 't was something pleasant, by the way father spoke." Nor will I relate his thoughts during that long, sleepless night. Suffice it to say, Brindle, and her associates, were treated the next morning to a very early breakfast, and, after being milked, were sent forth to enjoy the beauties of a glorious sunrise,—so that the young man reached Rand Farm about half an hour before the owner had left his bed. But Elizabeth considered this a most fortunate occurrence, for, by means of his assistance, she too soon finished her morning labors, and returned to the house in season to hear what her father had to say.

The young people were overjoyed at the plan, and after consultation with the father and mother of James, the carpenter and mason were called in to make some slight alterations in the part of the house which was to be given up to them. The north parlor was to be newly painted and papered; and a door cut from the entry into a large cheese-room, which was now to be converted into a kitchen; and such other improvements made as the young people might suggest. All this was in the month of August, and the wedding was appointed

for Thanksgiving-day. In answer to James's look of dismay, when she mentioned so distant a time, Elizabeth blushing replied that she couldn't get ready a moment sooner; and one who had witnessed the bustle that commenced at the quiet farm-house, would have supposed that three months, at least, would have been requisite to restore order.

When the carpenters were fairly at work, and Elizabeth had fully expressed her wishes to them, she started for the city, to be absent three days, for the purchase of articles, too numerous to mention. She went directly to the house of her aunt, and carried on her purchases under her direction. James was awaiting her at the tavern, at the time appointed for her return, with her father's covered wagon, to take her home, a distance of nearly two miles. He was rather shy of her at first, for her three days in the city, on such important business as the spending of fifty dollars, had given her an air of confidence and smartness, which quite awed him. But as soon as they were out of sight of the crowd around the stage-coach, he said: "There, Elizabeth, these three days were the longest that I ever see. Nothing goes well when you're away. It didn't seem right, somehow, to have the sun shining, and the birds singing, when I was so dull without you."

Oh, Elizabeth, how could you answer so coolly when the thought that you were so dear to the large, warm, honest heart, beating by your side, quickened every pulse in your body, and sent the tell-tale blood to your cheeks!

"You'll soon be used to it," she answered, with as-

sumed indifference, "for I must go again, and aunt says 'twill take me all of a week to get my things, for I haven't bought a dollar's worth of my furniture, and aunt has given me a silk dress on condition I'll come there and have it made up in Boston style."

James sighed, as he wondered what the city aunt would think of so awkward, ungainly a fellow as he thought himself to be.

Weeks and months flew by, amid the hurry of preparation for so great an event as the marriage and settlement of their only child. Mr. Rand had been to Squire Jason on the hill, and the legal instruments were all prepared, conveying to James Choate the farm bounded thus and so, together with half the farm-house thereupon. The neat parlor with its gay carpet, a present also from the city aunt, and its row of nice cane-seated chairs; the closets with the shining dishes, the clothes-press where the new silk hung side by side with a very suspicious looking garment, in the form of a coat, all were in readiness for their new master and mistress. James came and went, smiling and coloring up to his ears, but somehow not feeling so much at home in the new parlor, as in the spacious kitchen where the familiar settle held out its arms as to an old friend. He was impatient for the time when he could have Elizabeth all to himself, for now there was so much to be done, and so many neighbors at the farm helping to quilt, or to knit one more comforter, that for a fortnight he had hardly found time to tell her how grateful he was to his Father in heaven who had given him so dear a friend, and the prospect of so pleasant a home; or how humble and ashamed he often felt,

that he was no more worthy of her, knowing as he did, that both Seth Hazen at the great store by the tavern and the winter schoolmaster had been refused her hand. On the evening in question, he had come to make some final arrangements for the wedding, for it now wanted but one week to Thanksgiving.

"In the first place," said Elizabeth, "you must call and invite parson Green, or he may engage to go out of town."

Poor James! the bare idea of asking the minister to come and marry him, made the perspiration start from every pore in his body. Ever since the wedding-day had been appointed, the poor bashful youth had trembled as he thought of the dread ceremonies through which he was to pass before he could claim Elizabeth as his own; but the idea had never occurred to him, that *he* must invite the parson.

Little suspecting the cause of the silence of her lover, Elizabeth went on to mention a variety of matters which came under her own department, such as making a loaf of bride-cake, putting up curtains, etc.

"And I," said James, "have a couple of loads of wood to haul, and a new hen coop to make; but—Elizabeth," he added, in a distressed voice, "couldn't I get somebody to do the job with parson Green? I'd rather plough the toughest piece I ever see."

"Why?" said she, laughing merrily, "I hope you're not ashamed of me."

Dread of the formidable business of the evening, entirely took away the appetite of the young man through the next day; but with the courage of a martyr, at sun-

down he donned his Sunday suit and proceeded to the parsonage. "It will take but a minute," he thought, "and then I can go down to the farm, easy in mind."

The clergyman was in his study, where his young son ushered the visitor, and left him to his fate. At the end of an hour, the good man began to manifest a little curiosity to know the business which had brought his young parishioner to make him so long a call. The whole subject of crops and weather had been thoroughly discussed. Then the new singing school was brought forward, and James agreed with his pastor that the appointment of Seth Hazen for a chorister was judicious. At length the devoted clergyman feared his friend had met with some discouragements in his spiritual progress, and now he imagined, "I am right," for James, who had been growing more and more reserved, entered with interest into conversation of a religious nature. But when after receiving gratefully much kind advice, he made no motion to depart, but only seemed the more embarrassed, Mr. Green was at a greater loss than before.

In the mean time poor James sat twirling his hat, which he refused to lay down on his entrance, upon the plea of being "in something of a hurry." He grew very red in the face, sometimes making up his mind to go home and write to the parson, and then thinking "'twould take me all of a week to prepare such an epistle," sometimes calling himself a fool to be so afraid, and then wishing he were a thousand miles off, until in his desperation he started up from his chair, saying, "I guess I must go, I didn't calculate on staying so long; but I

was afraid you might be out of town, and I've brought you an invitation for Thanksgiving evening."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Green, quietly.

"And Elizabeth told me to invite your wife and all the family," added the young man, while the blood seemed actually ready to start out of his face.

Mr. Green now began to have an inkling of the truth. "Ah!" said he, "there's to be a wedding, is there? I suppose then I'm to go to Mr. Rand's. I understood you, it was your mother who was to have the company."

"I suppose so," answered James, "and they calculate on seeing you all there."

Thanksgiving day dawned clear and bright. The ground was covered with a light fall of snow, which upon the foundation of well frozen earth, promised fine sleighing. Mr. James Choate arose early, and after an introduction of his successor to the office he had filled in his father's stable and farm yard, gathered together and packed into his chest what few articles belonging to him remained about the house, a new trunk well filled with shirts, flannels and stockings from his mother, together with four new linen bosoms stitched and ironed by the skilful hands of his sister Kate, had been already conveyed to his new abode, and were laid neatly in the chest of drawers appropriated to their use. Then the young man waited rather impatiently for breakfast to be placed upon the table.

"Come, James," said his mother, "this is your last meal at home. I hope you don't begrudge us the time to make it ready."

"No, mother," he replied, springing to her side, "here, let me pare these potatoes for you; I reckon you'll miss me some, and if ever you or father need a helping hand, I shall be ready. You know 'tisn't my way to say much; but I an't the boy to forget all you've done for me." After a moment he added, "Elizabeth told me last night that her father said, 'twas everything for her to marry into such a steady family. He said he'd rather have her connected with the son of godly parents, who had brought up their child to fear the Lord, than to have a king for a son-in-law."

Mrs. Choate turned hastily away, to wipe a tear from her eye with the corner of her apron, and answered, "there, did he say that? 'Twas kind of him any how. Well, I hope, my boy, you'll be a good son to them, and a kind husband to Elizabeth. It's a great thing for you to get such a wife, and have such a setting out. There an't a young man in town but would be glad to stand in your place to-night."

"I know it, mother," and the young bridegroom's breast heaved from the intensity of his emotions. After laying down the knife and wiping the perspiration from his forehead, he added, "If God gives me strength and grace to do it, I mean to show her, and her parents too, that I'm not ungrateful."

Having breakfasted and joined with the family in their morning devotions, during which the dear son, about to leave the parental roof, was earnestly commended to the care of a covenant keeping God, James harnessed the horse into the sleigh, and having kissed his mother and sister, and again reminded them to "come early, very

early," (for Kate was to be bridesmaid,) he carried his chest to the door, and with the help of the young man who was to accompany him and drive back the horse, lifted it in and drove away to his new home.

In the newly furnished north room, the wedding guests were all assembled. There stood Mr. Choate the groom, and his really pretty bride, decked in the Boston silk with its new fashioned boddice and straight sleeves. By their side was Katy, and the school-master, who found much more favor in her eyes, than in those of her new sister. Opposite them stood their beloved pastor, whom old and young regarded with great respect, while the sides of the room were lined with chairs brought from every part of the house, and occupied by relatives and friends.

This hour has been contemplated with dread by the bashful James; but in the all-engrossing interest and solemnity of the occasion, he has forgotten everything save that he is now about to ratify in public, the vows he has heretofore made, to love and cherish through all the checkered scenes of this mortal life, the dear one standing by his side. Unnoticing, or wholly indifferent to the earnest gaze from the many eyes fixed upon him, the young man, with a countenance expressive of high and noble resolves, dedicates himself renewedly, first to his Maker, and then to the promotion of her welfare and happiness, who has so lovingly given him the best affections of her young heart. As the reverend pastor pronounced them, "man and wife," the idea that he was henceforth to be her protector as well as friend, caused the tears to start to his eyes, and a gush of tenderness to

thrill his whole being, as with a respectful pressure of her hand, which she was about to withdraw from his, he placed it on his arm. The benediction was pronounced, and the aged father and mother of Elizabeth came up to salute and bless her who alone, of all their dear ones, has been left to them.

Then followed the parents of the groom. "You did well, my boy," whispered his mother, with an approving nod, "and made your old mother's heart glad."

After the young people had followed the example of their elders, and sundry smiles and jokes had passed between them, the door leading to the spacious kitchen was thrown open and a long table was discovered, loaded with the most tempting viands, in the midst of which was a large, beautifully frosted and decorated bride-cake.

Of these good things, both young and old appeared nothing loath to partake; and, with the assistance of the young men, the chairs were brought from the parlor, and all were soon seated at the table.

Poor James! Now he became fully alive to the awkwardness of his situation. Seated, with his bride, in a conspicuous place, near the head of the table, and being made the incessant subject of jokes and remarks, during the discussion of the ample repast, — he became more and more confused, was constantly obliged to resort to his handkerchief to wipe the perspiration, which stood in drops upon his forehead, and heartily wished his friends would take some more private opportunity to express their congratulations and kind wishes.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOOD HUSBAND.

Two years have passed since the scenes related in the foregoing chapter. It is now August. The afternoon is intensely hot, while scarcely a breath of air is stirring. Mrs. Rand is seated in her neat kitchen, and presents the very picture of rural comfort. Let us enter, and renew our acquaintance with her. The sun, which is so cheerful a visitor to the aged people during the early part of the day, has gone on in his daily march, and now shines upon the opposite side of the house; — the blinds are closed, the yellow painted floor swept so carefully that not one speck of dust can be seen; the chimney is concealed by a huge pitcher filled with asparagus and flox; the small stand, on which for years has laid the sacred law of the household, is in its place in the corner, and near it, seated in a low rocking-chair, whose musical creaking has soothed many a babe to sleep, sits the good old lady whom we have come to visit. Her neatly frilled cap, with its broad band of black ribbon, her short, white, loose gown over a black skirt show that, in her dress, she studies comfort rather than fashion. With her foot upon the rocker of a cradle, and her steel-bowed glasses upon the end of her nose, the aged dame alternately reads a few lines from her favorite paper or imitates the example of Master Jimmy, in the cradle,

and the large tabby, lying asleep on the rug at her side.

In the meantime, the young mother has taken an umbrella to shield her from the scorching rays of the sun, and gone out into the orchard, behind the house, to gather a bowl of blackberries for tea. At the end of the orchard is a meadow, and there her husband and father are at work pitching into the wagon their last load of hay.

Having filled her bowl, Elizabeth turned, for a moment, toward the green meadow, to ascertain how soon they would finish, when she was surprised to see the hired boy, who was raking after the cart, leave his work and come running toward the house. She was too far off to distinguish objects distinctly, but supposing that he had been sent by her husband for a fresh supply of sweetened water, she walked slowly toward him. As soon as he saw her, he made signs for her to approach quickly, and called out, when near enough for her to hear, "Oh, Miss Choate, your father's in a fit, and your husband and Mr. Sanders are bringing him home."

Elizabeth grew very pale, and had a faint feeling at her heart, but the necessity for immediate action conquered this, and only stopping for one earnest glance toward the figures of two men who were bearing the insensible body toward her, she darted forward to the house. Mrs. Rand had sunk into a profound sleep, but Elizabeth quickly roused her, saying, "Mother, father is not well, and James is assisting him home."

So suddenly awakened, the poor old lady started up as if she supposed herself under the influence of some fright-

ful dream, while her daughter fled to the bedroom, and saw that everything was prepared for him to be placed upon the bed. She then begged her mother to be calm, and ran out to meet her husband.

The countenance of the good patriarch indeed resembled death, as his dutiful son bore him gently across the neat kitchen and placed him upon his lowly couch. As he lay wholly insensible, Mrs. Rand threw herself upon the bed beside him, with passionate exclamations of grief, and necessity alone prevented her daughter from following her example, — the noise having awaked the baby, and the young mother being obliged to restrain her manifestations of sorrow, and attend to his wants; so that upon James devolved the duty, first of sending the boy on horseback for the Doctor, and then of doing all that could be done for the poor sufferer. With the tenderness of a woman he bathed the cold, damp brow, untied his neckerchief, and chafed his hands, and ever and anon bent down his ear to listen to his feeble breathing.

Fortunately the messenger met the physician, and sooner than they had any reason to expect, he entered the room. Mrs. Rand arose from her humble posture at his entrance, and with tears unconsciously flowing down her cheeks, caught his hand, led him to the bed, and whispered, "Oh, Doctor, do save him. I can't be left alone."

Doctor Bond soon ascertained that his patient was suffering from an attack of paralysis, and resorted to the most rigorous treatment, which soon resulted in his being restored to partial consciousness. In the course

of a few hours he recognized each one of the anxious faces bent so lovingly over him, and smiled, but could not speak.

The following day he evidently considered himself dying, and it was really affecting to witness his efforts to articulate some parting words. At length they understood that he wished to hear a few verses from his favorite psalm, and James read aloud, beginning, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." The good old man listening as if his very soul were drinking in the consoling truths.

During the second night he lay in such a deep stupor, breathing very heavily, that the physician was hastily summoned, as his friends feared he was dying. But by the application of powerful draughts to his feet, and a blister to the back of his neck, he again revived, and was able to take a few teaspoonfuls of nourishment.

The next day, as his afflicted wife and children were by his side, he opened his eyes, and looking with the utmost tenderness upon her, who for forty-two years had shared with him life's joys and sorrows, he feebly murmured, in broken accents, "I'm—going—home. Jesus—will bring you safely there. Don't mourn for me," he added later, "My Saviour will be with me through the dark valley. I'm full of peace and joy here," laying his right hand upon his breast.

At night, finding himself alone for one moment with his dutiful son-in-law, he said, "James, you have been a good son to me. I leave her to your care. Be gentle with her, for she will be lonely, and so will Elizabeth

too. She's a good girl, and I've often thanked God for giving her so kind a husband."

Poor James! Through the long days and nights since his good father-in-law fell fainting over his rake in the field, he had scarcely left his side. It was he who so gently raised him in his bed, smoothed his pillows, administered his medicine, and fed him with what simple drink he was able to swallow. Above all, it was James who, while his own heart was swelling with grief, spoke words of comfort to the invalid, pointing him to the blessed land he appeared about to enter. It was James, also, who soothed the hopeless sorrow of the aged wife, and by cheerful tones, sought to allay the almost frantic grief of the weeping daughter. He seemed all at once endowed with qualities they never knew he possessed, so calm, so self-relying, so gentle and efficient had he become in the performance of the new duties which had devolved upon him.

But in that midnight hour, when he bent over the aged man who had been to him so loving a father, and received what he supposed might be his last charge and his last benediction, he was wholly overcome. He covered his face with his hands, while his whole frame shook with emotion. He realized what a friend was about to be taken from them, and at the same time he resolved by the grace of God to fulfil the solemn trust reposed in him: to be a dutiful son, and an affectionate husband to the afflicted wife and daughter.

Mrs. Rand, as we have seen at the commencement of our story, was rather of a melancholy temperament. Having been deprived by death of one after another of

her children, until only Elizabeth remained, she was apt to indulge in feelings of gloom and despondence from which it required all her husband's native cheerfulness to arouse her. Her daughter inherited this tendency, and during her father's sickness, even after the physician began to express a hope that he might partially recover, could never be induced to share her husband's hopeful trust, that all things would be ordered for their good.

I have to-day received a call from Mrs. Wells and Henry. He is just on the point of embarking for Europe on a tour, which he postponed since last summer, because he intends to remain in Germany for several years. I was at first painfully embarrassed at the meeting, especially as my husband was from home; but Mrs. Wells, by conversing upon indifferent topics, soon put me at ease. But even now my heart aches as I think of poor Henry. He is extremely thin, and scarcely smiled during the call. I cannot but think he regretted the interview, though when he went out, he said it would be a satisfaction to him to have seen me once more. After his mother got into the carriage, he returned to the door where I stood, and taking my hand, led me back a step into the entry. "Susan," he said, in a broken voice, and apparently with great effort, "I trust you will not be displeased at my coming to bid you farewell. Something tells me that I shall never return, that this will be our last meeting, and ——."

"Oh, Henry!" I exclaimed, interrupting him, "Don't give way to such despondency. I hope to see you many, *many* times, and before long I hope to hear that you are

happily settled. "I tried to speak cheerfully; but my voice failed me, and my eyes were filled with tears.

He shook his head sadly, and then asked suddenly, "are you happy, Susan?"

"Yes," I said, softly, "I am very happy, except when I remember that I have caused you pain," and I could not keep back my tears.

"Bless you for those tears," he said, quickly, "but indeed I must go; I am only giving you pain. If you could realize how I shall live upon these last words; how I shall treasure up every kind expression of interest, you would give me at least the poor consolation of bidding you farewell."

"Henry," I said, as I held out my hand, "you are dear as an own brother to me. I never, *never* shall forget you, nor cease to wish for your happiness, and," I added, in a lower voice, "every night I pray that you may become a follower of Jesus." With a sudden thought, I stepped back to the parlor, and took from the table a small Bible with clasps, the same my father gave me on my birth-day. This I put into his hand as I said, "Dear Henry, will you read this daily for my sake?"

"I will," he answered, firmly, then with a warm pressure of my hand, he darted from the house. I watched the chaise until it turned into another street, and then hastened to my chamber. When my husband returned an hour later, I had cried myself almost into hysterics. He was really alarmed, and proposed going at once for the physician; but I declined, and by the aid of his quieting voice, and soothing attentions, I was soon able to control myself, and to give him an account of what had

passed. I loved him better than ever, when I found how truly he sympathized with me in my sorrow for Henry, and how earnestly he approved all that I had said and done. But as I became composed, I noticed that he grew more serious, until at tea he scarcely spoke. Directly after prayers he asked me to go with him to the study, where he placed me by his side, and with the utmost tenderness, said, "Susan, do you remember the night when you came home from Squire Wells's after Henry's return?"

"Yes," I answered, wondering what was to follow. "You then said you had always loved Henry as a friend; but you were not sure whether you loved him as a suitor, and that if he were a Christian, you probably should marry him."

"I remember."

"Is there no feeling in your heart, my own wife, of sorrow or regret at the answer you gave him the next day?"

I will not say what I replied, but judging from his brightening face, and his earnest thanks, I presume he was satisfied.

Yesterday was the fourth of July. I was just hesitating on account of the heat, whether to accept an invitation from my husband, to go home for a few hours, when a chaise stopped at the gate, and Thomas with Eleanor made their appearance. They stayed to tea and rode home by moonlight, but their errand was to bring me a beautiful silky spaniel, which belonged to Henry. It was given to him when it was a puppy, four years ago,

and has been his constant companion ever since. He taught the little creature to eat from my hand, and to obey my call, and as I caressed her she soon followed me almost as readily as her master. Eleanor told me her brother sailed last week, and that he sent Moselle home by a friend who saw him on board the vessel.

"Read her the message in the letter," exclaimed Thomas, and after Mr. Gordon had repeated the wish, she took the letter from her pocket and read the postscript. "Will you deliver Moselle to Susan, with the following message: 'To the dearest friend of my childhood and youth, I commit my faithful companion, with the hope that she may sometimes call to mind the wanderer from country and home.'"

I begged Eleanor to leave the whole letter which contained his plans, for me to peruse, and she did so.

This afternoon I accompanied my husband to Rand farm, to pay my last respects to the dead. The aged sufferer was attacked on Monday with another shock of paralysis, and died the next morning, without reviving from the stupor. Mr. Gordon called the same evening, and found the family in great affliction. Mrs. Rand was wholly overcome, and her daughter, Mrs. Choate, seemed incapable of soothing her. Upon her husband there came all the care, both of his own family and the preparations for the funeral; and Mr. Gordon says he nobly discharged these duties. At the funeral I had an opportunity of seeing something of the manner in which he relieves his wife from care. The eldest child is, I should think, about two years old. He sat during the exercises very quietly in his father's lap, until Mr. Gordon arose for prayer,

when a loud cry from the kitchen called the weeping father from the room, taking the child with him. The baby had awaked from its nap, and was afraid of the kind neighbor who had offered to take care of it. I heard the father's voice, from my seat near the door, and his tones of affection, as he walked softly across the floor, soon produced quiet. Before the prayer was concluded he had again laid the child to sleep in the cradle, and softly opened the door to listen to the devotions. All this would have been perfectly natural with a mother, but in the case of this young farmer, I confess it really affected me. I stepped forward, as the mourners were called to take their last look at their dead, and took my seat by the cradle, motioning him to go to his wife. With a very expressive "thank you," he left me, and giving his arm to his weeping mother, led her to the entry where the coffin was placed upon a table. He then returned and accompanied his wife, after which the names were called out for the relatives to proceed to the grave. Mr. Choate returned to the kitchen for his hat, and to see if the neighbor would remain. "I will take care of the baby," I said, as he glanced anxiously around the room. "I will remain until you return." Mr. Gordon came to find me; but I begged him to accompany Mrs. Rand, and give her his arm for support. When all were gone except the boy who works upon the farm, I laid aside my bonnet and shawl, and made preparation for the awaking of the little miss. But by constant rocking she slept until a few minutes before their return, and then she awoke so good natured that it was easy to cultivate her acquaintance. When my husband entered with the

widowed mourner, I was holding the young lady before the small mirror, and introducing her to her own image, with which she was so much pleased that she cooed with delight. Mr. Choate came forward, and the child sprang almost out of my arms in her joy at seeing him. After a few words of sympathy to Mrs. Rand and her daughter, we took our leave.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWINS, FAITHFUL MOSELLE, AND THE WELCOME LETTER.

THIS morning I happened to go to my desk, and there saw my long-neglected journal, and the perusal of its pages has carried me back so vividly to old times, and given me so much pleasure that I have determined to continue it as opportunity may occur. It was in July, I think, that I last wrote, and now it is January. How much has occurred during these few months which have intervened! In September my dear husband was attacked with a return of pleurisy in his side. His sufferings were dreadful; I could hardly endure the sight; and yet nothing could induce me to leave him. No, not even his own request, for he was very unwilling to have me with him; and in the midst of his agony would try to repress his groans lest they might add to my distress. How quickly he assured me he was relieved, the moment the pain began to abate! How anxious he was, lest in my desire to administer to him I should injure myself! But I was graciously supported through it, and found abundant reason for gratitude in the abounding kindness of our people. Mrs. Hall was truly a mother to me, both at that time, and also when, a month later, my hour of maternity drew near. On the sixth day of October a precious gift from heaven was sent us. Two sweet cherubs came to en-

liven our home. Oh, may it be our constant endeavor to prepare them to return to their home in the skies! In his tenderness and love toward our little ones, I find fresh reason to be thankful for such a companion. His whole character is softened and subdued by it, and his soul seems to go out in prayer to God, that their lives may be spared, and that they may be fitted for usefulness here, and happiness hereafter. I remember well the first time I was able to ride out, and reluctantly left my babes for an hour. We approached a house where a woman was holding an infant in the doorway. Mr. Gordon rode up and asked how old it was, and when he found it was near the age of our twin babes, he requested leave to take it and pass it to me. With what delight we viewed the little hands and feet, and compared them with the tiny rounded limbs we left at home! The young woman, who was an aunt of the child, was evidently much gratified at the attention, a feeling I can well understand, for it would be very easy to win my love through fondness to my babes. In addition to Nora, I have now a young girl of nineteen, who so far proves to be an excellent cook. Nora is advanced to the situation of nurse, and faithfully do she and Moselle fulfil the trust reposed in them. My husband and I have often been amused at the steadiness and sobriety of demeanor manifested by Moselle, since she has taken the crib in charge. Before this she was very frolicsome, after she found she was among friends, and would run jumping upon us, if we were going out, begging to accompany us; and whenever she heard my husband's voice, would start from sleep, and run joyfully to meet him. But now, though she often springs from the

mat, raises her silky ears, and listens intently, yet she immediately turns back to the crib, as if she would say, "I should be glad to welcome you, but I have more important duties to discharge." While I am nursing and tending my sweet little treasures, Moselle and I often have very long talks about her former master. It would be difficult to convince me that she does not understand what I say. At the name Henry, or Wells, she is all attention, and at first used to look wistfully at the door as if she would try to find him; but now she comes to stand by my side, and when I say, "poor Moselle, Henry all gone," she gazes mournfully into my face; but if I change my tone and repeat, "Henry will come back some time," she commences the most violent demonstrations of joy. About a month since Mrs. Wells, with George, drove over to see me. Moselle was almost beside herself with delight, and kept running back and forth, as if expecting Henry. Mrs. Wells was really affected when I talked to the little creature, and George urged me to give the dog to him, when Mr. Gordon, seeing my unwillingness to part with her, playfully answered for me, that she had become so important a part of our family we could not think of parting with her; and he called her caressingly to him, as he added, "even if for the sake of the giver we did not value her so highly." When they left, however, George tried many experiments to coax Moselle away with him, and the poor creature seemed almost distracted with conflicting emotions; with a desire to go in the hope of finding Henry, and a wish to stay with the babes. At last, however, a sense of duty prevailed, and with a most demure look

of regret, she returned firmly to the nursery, and lay down by my side. I placed the small velvety hand on her head, and called her "my good Moselle, my faithful Moselle!"

We have to-day had quite a pleasant excursion to the shore, with a party of friends. I carried bathing clothes for the little girls, and took them with us into the water. As they have been daily in the habit of taking a cold bath, they were not much frightened, but caught their breath when their father plunged them one by one into the surf. After wandering for some time on the pearly beach, and picking up shells and bright stones, we joined the rest of our party, who were seated behind a great rock, and nearly ready for the discussion of the chowder which they had prepared.

On my return I was surprised to see Nora standing at the gate watching for us. She followed me up into the nursery and put a letter into my hand. Before I proceed to tell what it contained, I must relate what had occurred a few months previous. Upon going to the nursery one day, after having been out making calls upon our people, I found Nora in tears. For some time she sobbed so violently that I could obtain no satisfactory account of the cause of her grief; but at length she took a letter from her pocket and gave it to me to read. The letter was from a relative "at home," as she always calls her native Erin, and contained the intelligence of the death of her only brother. The poor girl was very much affected, but at length was composed enough to tell me about the family he had left, which consisted of a wife

and three children. The good girl, with that warm hearted generosity which so distinguishes the inhabitants of that green sunny isle, immediately began to lay plans whereby she could contribute to their support. A new bonnet neatly trimmed with delicate purple ribbon, which hung in the window of the milliner's shop, had long been the object of her especial desire, and on the week preceding the reception of the letter, she had inquired the price and partly engaged it. This bonnet she at once concluded to relinquish and send the amount, it would have cost, to her deceased brother's wife, adding with an affecting tone as I began gently to expostulate, "Indeed ma'am, and I couldn't have the heart to be wearing that pretty hat, and my only brother lying in the cold grave."

I advised her to wait until I could write to her sister-in-law, asking for particulars of her brother's death, and a statement of their circumstances. This I did without delay, and the answer she had just received. As the letter was directed to my care, and she could by the utmost attention, barely spell it out, she had preferred to wait for me to read it to her.

Helen was climbing into my lap, I took her upon my knee, and broke open the seal, when my eye fell upon the name at the bottom of the page.

From your affectionate brother,

"JOHN ROBERTS."

With my heart beating quickly in sympathy with the joy which was in store for her, I asked as calmly as I could, "What was your brother's name, Nora?"

"John, ma'am, John Roberts."

I pointed to the name at the close of the letter.

She gazed earnestly at it for a moment, before she could comprehend the joyful fact, then burst into tears, as she exclaimed, "my brother is alive! Oh, I thank God!" Her face grew pale with the intensity of her emotions, and her lip quivered as I read the affectionate epistle from her brother, in answer to the one I wrote. It was the death of his son by the same name, which had caused the mistake of the relative who wrote her, and of which he gave a particular account. He also informed her that he was in good business and able to provide well for his family, and enclosed her a curl of hair from the head of his baby, which he had named for their deceased mother.

Poor Nora sat on the very edge of the chair, with parted lips, gazing into my face until I had finished, when she took the little curl, pressed it passionately to her lips, and heaved a deep sigh of relief. No little incident has affected me so much for a long time. The kind and sisterly feelings she has manifested, have greatly increased my respect for her.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WHIPPED WIFE.

For a few weeks my husband has been much tried by a case which has come before the church, of a member who has ill-used his wife, who indeed does not hesitate to say that he has whipped her, and who claims a right to do so. She is naturally a woman of violent temper; but if ever so amiable, I think the treatment she has received, would be enough to rouse her. The name of the man is Philip Winn, and from the examination of the case, by a committee of the church, to whom it was referred, it seems that her father was a wealthy farmer, who employed him to work upon the farm. The young people became attached, but when young Winn applied to his master for liberty to marry his daughter, the old man was excessively angry, and forbade him the house. This course, however, only served to strengthen the affection existing between them. Dorothy, whose wishes had never been crossed, did not for one moment think of yielding to her parents' commands to forget her lover as quickly as possible. She continued to meet him by stealth, and at the expiration of a month, consented to leave her pleasant home and indulgent friends, for one who was comparatively a stranger, who easily convinced her that her parents would soon be reconciled, when they knew she was really married.

But in this, the young pair found they had deceived themselves. The father and mother persisted in their refusal to meet their daughter or to forgive her disobedience and ingratitude; and, after lingering in the same town a number of weeks, the young couple concluded to return to Mr. Winn's native State. About a year after her marriage, Dorothy was seated in the small room which her husband's limited means enabled him to hire, when she was startled by hearing a low knock at the half open door. Before she could reach it, a woman entered with a young child in her arms, which she laid upon the table, wrapped up closely in blankets. The wild and haggard appearance of the woman would have startled a person of stronger nerves than Dorothy, who could hardly find voice to ask: "What do you want?"

"Want," repeated the beggar; "I want everything—food and clothes for myself and baby! I've walked fourteen miles to-day with that great lump of a child; for one of my neighbors brought me word from Philip that he couldn't give me money, but if I would bring the boy he would support him, and I could go to work."

"What has my husband to do with your child?" asked Mrs. Winn, starting to her feet, her eyes sparkling, and her nostrils dilating.

"You better ask him that question. If he tells the truth, he'll say that the child is his own, and that he is more my husband than he is yours, for I was all but married to him when he went away, to be gone but a few weeks,"—and the poor creature sank into a chair, and hid her face in the tattered shawl which partly covered her person. In the midst of her overpowering

indignation at the deceit her husband had practised upon her, and her horror at his vile character, she could not resist an emotion of compassion for the trembling form before her, and was just about to express some words of sympathy, when they were both startled by the appearance of Mr. Winn at the door.

At one glance he comprehended the whole scene, and determined what course to pursue. "Is that you, Molly," he inquired, advancing into the room. "Ho, what have you got there, rolled up so tight?" he said, glancing at the child, and making an attempt to smile.

The woman arose, took off the coarse blanket, and without a word laid the sleeping babe in his father's arms.

Notwithstanding his criminal conduct toward the mother, and his base desertion of her, the father's heart was touched; a softened expression stole over his features as he passed his hand, softly, over the little head lying on his arm. "It's a very pretty baby," he said, with an inquiring glance at his wife, who deigned no reply. "Well, Molly, what are you going to do with it," he asked, after a moment of awkward silence; "can't you take care of the little fellow?"

The question restored the mother's voice. "Take care of it! Yes; it's like tearing my limbs asunder to give him up, and if you'll provide me food and clothes for him, and leave him with me, I'll forgive all the sin and shame you've brought upon me."

Mr. Winn shook his head. "I can't support two families. It's hard work enough for me to support one. But you may leave the boy here; wife and I will take

care of it, and you can go out to service, and earn something for yourself, and enough to clothe the boy."

"Never," said Mrs. Winn, in a voice so full of passion that Molly caught her child to her breast. "Never, while I live!"

"We'll see about that," replied her husband, with a sneer. He did see about it, and the child remained; and though in her husband's presence Mrs. Winn never took the least notice of it, yet her woman's heart yearned over the playful little fellow; and her many hours of solitude, while her husband was about his work, were enlivened by her increasing fondness for the child.

Molly went out to work in the neighborhood; and, occasionally, Mrs. Winn saw her, at dusk, watching about the house to catch a glimpse at her boy. But she never suspected, until nearly a year afterward, — when her little girl was ten months' old, — that her husband's sinful affection for the poor woman continued. At the end of that time, a second scene occurred, similar to the first, — except that the criminal parties were more hardened in their guilt, — and the abused wife was now entirely devoid of compassion for the guilty woman, who had a second time become a mother. She now positively refused to have anything to do with the helpless babe, who was not more than six weeks' old. No threats or entreaties prevailed; — the child should not be left under her roof.

Soon after this, she was persuaded by her husband to remove to this State, where, he had been informed, he could obtain much larger wages; and, after a few years, settled in B——, bringing with them not only her own

children, but the little boy who had been left in her care. Since they have lived here, they have been considered good people; and, as they brought letters from the church, where they last lived, they were received into ours. Of late, however, the family, who reside in the other part of the house, have heard loud talking and quarrelling, which, at length, on his part, proceeded to blows. When my husband called upon her, she showed him the marks of abusive treatment on her arms and neck. The case has been before the church for more than a week. To-morrow, Mrs. Winn, who was turned out of her own house by her husband, just before the matter was taken up, is coming to pass the day at the Parsonage, as my husband wishes me to have some conversation with her before the meeting of the committee here, in the evening. Seldom has anything occasioned so much talk in our quiet village.

Mrs. Winn reached the Parsonage about ten o'clock. Poor woman! she has my warmest sympathies. From several interviews I have had with her heretofore, I have supposed her to be very passionate in her temper, and probably equally to blame as her husband, for the unhappiness existing between them. But though I cannot, now, esteem her wholly innocent,—indeed, she is frank to confess her haste of temper,—yet, I believe there are few who would have endured the treatment she has received without wholly sinking under it. Besides relating many particulars which were not contained in the papers, she told me that, during the past ten years, she had frequently received money from her parents;

but that he always had taken the letters from the office and appropriated the money to his own use, not even telling her he had received it, except, as she expressed it, 'to aggravate' her when it was all gone. She said she had been bitterly punished for her hasty marriage, and disobedience to her parents, by the conduct of her own children; for when she endeavored to train them as she herself was taught, to habits of decency and propriety, he took part against her, until not one of them paid any attention to her wishes or commands. She had truly brought upon herself one of the severest trials I can imagine, and that is, being married to a man whom she can neither respect nor love. She says, and this was confirmed before the church, that he is in the constant habit of using the vilest expressions before her and the children, and even before neighbors who come in. And all this time the great majority of the church have supposed him a good man, and have listened to his exhortations at the weekly prayer meetings with interest. She told me yesterday the reason she never went to those meetings, which was that she could not endure his hypocrisy, and that he often returned home and boasted what a good speech he had made. After all, I think she must have some kind of affection for him, for she wept as she showed me a large green spot on her arm, where he had pinched her, and said that he himself confessed afterward that he was sorry for it. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "if I could only keep my tongue still when he begins to abuse me, I would give all I have in the world!" She then gave one instance when she endeavored to do this.

"A few weeks ago," she said, "I was sitting with my

sewing by the fire. It was about nine o'clock in the evening. I had been thinking and thinking until I was almost crazy; but at last I grew more calm, and determined to see if I could restrain my temper. If I did so, I knew I must keep my mouth shut; so when I heard his step down the street I dropped my work and sank upon my knees to ask God to help me to bear patiently whatever he might say. When he opened the door I looked up at him and tried to smile, but calling me a vile name he took down his pipe and began to smoke. I felt angry enough to answer back in the same strain; but I bit my lips and continued my sewing.

"What's the game now?" he asked contemptuously, "out with it. None of your sulks." But I persisted in not answering, though as he went on, my lips bled where my teeth had entered. I never saw him so angry in my life. He declared he'd kill me if I didn't answer him, and so I had to give up," she added with a deep sigh, "and when I once began I couldn't stop until I'd told him all I'd been thinking of, how he took me away from my pleasant home, and had ever since rendered me the most miserable being in the wide world."

What could I say to comfort her? My eyes were overflowing in sympathy with hers; but my voice was mute.

In the evening six gentlemen met in the parlor, and as she was the only female, I reluctantly consented to her wishes, to remain by her side. I seated her in a rocking-chair, and placed a chair on the opposite side of the room for her husband. When Nora opened the door below, and she heard the voice which last she had heard as he

ordered her to leave his house forever, the poor woman fell back in her chair, and grew so pale that I ran to the nursery for cologne, with which I bathed her head. After a few minutes' conversation in the parlor, the committee accompanied my husband to the study; but Mrs. Winn put her handkerchief before her face. After a short prayer, for guidance in the case before them, one of the gentlemen proposed some questions to Mr. Winn, who commenced, though in rather an embarrassed manner, to speak of his strong affection for his wife. He soon became quite eloquent in his imaginary sketch of his feelings, and called her by the most endearing terms,—"my own dear wife!" "my dear Dorothy!"

In the mean time, she had uncovered her face, leaned forward in her chair, and with her lips parted was eagerly listening to this unusual language of tenderness! At length, with an expression half-comic, half-tragic, but in which she was evidently sincere, she burst out: "O, I never heard so fine a speech in all my life! Why can't you talk so at home?"

The embarrassment of the poor man at his sudden downfall was so ludicrous that, notwithstanding the grave import of the meeting, every member of the committee laughed aloud; and nothing but my sympathy for the poor wife, as she suddenly recollected that she had "spoke in the meeting," prevented me from joining with them. After Mr. and Mrs. Winn were dismissed from the room, the committee were by themselves, until a late hour, and at length were obliged, by the evidence before them, to cut the husband off from communion with our church, until such time as he shall manifest

sincere contrition for his past course, and a determination to live differently in future.

My husband was requested to draw up a letter, to be read to Mrs. Winn, whereby the church sympathize with her in her trials; but also censure her for the indulgence of such passionate bursts of temper as she has freely confessed. She passed the night at our house; and this morning, before she left, Mr. Gordon imparted to her the result of their meeting. She was very much affected at the punishment (as she called it), of her husband, and said: "It will touch him in the tenderest point; for he always looks upon the good opinion of the church."

With regard to herself, she thought they had been very lenient; and said, she was afraid Mr. Gordon did not know how bad she was when she got excited. I saw my husband had difficulty in keeping his countenance unmoved, at so frank a confession. After she left, Mr. Gordon listened with interest to all my plea in her behalf, which he was not before willing to do, lest his mind should be biased by my enthusiasm, as he was pleased to call it.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST HUSBAND'S FAMILY AND PARISH.

WHEN the twins were two years and a half old a little son was added to the family, at the Parsonage, who soon received the name of Frederic. He was a very large, healthy child, and when nine months old bid fair to become the master of his two gentle sisters. With his nurse, however, he was infallible; and the wonderful stories she related of "our baby" were the astonishment of her companions throughout the parish.

About this time Mrs. Hammond, the widowed sister of Mr. Warren, came to pass the summer with her favorite niece. The arrival of aunt Susan was welcomed with great delight. The spare chamber was arranged just as the young Susan thought would gratify her taste. Flowers were placed upon the mantel-piece and work-table, and aunt Susan declared it looked like a little paradise. Though suffering from debility, yet nothing pleased her more than to have the quiet little girls bring their basket of toys into her room, and there amuse themselves in their play. Helen and Fanny had never been known to quarrel with each other. Sometimes, if one of them insisted upon a toy, the other had in possession, the lip would quiver, and tears fill the eyes; but this always ended in their giving up to each other.

In the management of their children, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon displayed much tact and wisdom, though the young mother often declared that she shrank from so fearful a responsibility. With the twins but little exercise of authority was necessary, for they were naturally mild and yielding. A word of reproof brought a flood of tears, in which the innocent one always fully sympathized. Though their watchful parents were not long in discovering the germs of evil, which, if not eradicated, would grow and bear bitter fruit; yet they every day thanked God for the lovely characters of their first born.

With Frederic it was very different. He was, from his birth, a self-willed, obstinate little fellow, who, if his wants were not instantly gratified, made it known to the whole neighborhood by his loud crying; and if either of the parents attempted the slightest discipline, such as to keep him in bed when he wished to be up where the bright light was burning so beautifully, or to withhold his food when he had already eaten too much, his poor mother's head ached with the violence of his screams; and she often said, "the neighbors will certainly think I am killing him." Mr. Gordon, however, had no scruples on that account, and by never yielding to him simply because he cried, the little fellow soon learned wonderful self-control. But with Nora he had his own way. Never was there a more devoted and willing slave, than she was to his numerous whims and caprices.

The grounds about the parsonage had become very productive. The trees which Mr. Gordon had planted the first year of his settlement, were now beginning to bear, so that during this year they had a plentiful supply

of cherries, peaches and plums, with currants and gooseberries. For the last two years Mr. McDonald, now a steady man and kind husband, had taken the care of the garden and orchard. This, however, occupied him but a part of the time; and he readily procured work by the day, from the farmers in the neighborhood, sometimes taking his pay from the produce, and sometimes in ready money. But he always obtained a comfortable support for his family. Another little Jamie had come to them, but when night and morning they bowed before the family altar, they never forgot to bless God for their first-born, who was now an angel in heaven.

Mrs. Rand had for a year been sleeping peacefully in the quiet churchyard, by the side of her husband. The character of her daughter, now thrown wholly upon the companionship of her husband had assumed a more cheerful tone. Mr. Choate was highly respected in the community, and was in a fair way to become a wealthy man. At the old gentleman's death the whole farm became his, together with some personal property. By selling a few acres of his meadow land, he procured the means to enlarge his stock and enrich his soil. Mrs. Choate was considered one of the best dairy-women in the county. Certainly she commanded the highest prices for her butter and cheese. Many a golden ball of the former, nicely stamped with a bunch of grapes or a sheaf of wheat, found its way to the parsonage. Accompanying this expression of affection for their minister and his family, James always put into the wagon a few of his best early potatoes, or golden pippins, or something

else, according to the season, for he never forgot Mrs. Gordon's kind interest in his sickly baby, while he followed his father-in-law to the grave.

Late in the fall, Mrs. Hammond, after passing a few weeks with her brother, proceeded to New York for the winter, where she was persuaded to purchase a house.

Notice having been given of their return to B——, Bessie had taken the children home to meet their parents. It was indeed a joyful meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Warren, with their whole family, being present, as Thomas happened to be on a visit from New York, where he had gone into business. The parishioners had somehow found out the day of their pastor's return, and substantial tokens of this knowledge came to the parsonage in the shape of roasted fowls, pies, bread and cake. When they drove up to the door, three little heads were peeping from the front windows, which, however, suddenly disappeared, and at length, when their parents entered, emerged, in state, from the dining-room, under the supervision of Bessie, on one side, and Nora on the other. The little girls were leading between them Master Frederic, who consented to walk upright, after having for fourteen months been on "all fours." Upon their bosoms were cards printed in large characters, "*welcome, dear father and mother! Welcome home!*" The young gentleman was, however, so much excited by the sight of his parents, that he snatched the card from his dress, and kneeling on the floor darted across to the spot where they stood, that he might put it into his mother's hand.

"That was too bad, brother," exclaimed Helen, "aunt

told you to walk; come and let mamma see how well you can go."

But papa and mamma had already caught the loved ones in their arms, and the exhibition was postponed until another time.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEATH AT THE PARSONAGE.

THE following spring was a season of unusual mortality in B——. The scarlet fever, that terrible scourge of some parts of New England, raged fearfully among the inhabitants. From almost every house came the sound of sorrow and wailing; and as surely might be heard the voice of the good clergyman, pointing the dying to a crucified Saviour, by whose merits alone they could be saved, or administering consolation to the mourners. From some parents all their children were taken, and many lost one, two, or three, from their family circle. As soon as he ascertained that there were comparatively few cases in her father's parish, Mr. Gordon insisted that his wife and children should leave B—— until the fever had subsided. In vain were all his wife's remonstrances. He sent a note to Mr. Warren, requesting him to come with a carryall and take them to his house. But he promised if he should be taken sick that he would at once inform her. With this promise she was obliged to content herself, and reluctantly left her dear home, taking with her Nora and her three babes, Hannah having consented to remain with Mr. Gordon. Twice every day, for three days, did the young wife hear of the continued health of her husband, by means of a market man, who passed through the town. But on the morn-

ing of the fourth day she watched in vain for the messenger. It was nearly ten o'clock, and her father had been endeavoring to convince her that her alarm was needless, and that she would probably hear from him in the afternoon, when a man was seen driving hastily into the yard. Mrs. Gordon sprang to the door, as she recognized her husband's horse and buggy, and saw that the man was Mr. Cleaveland, one of their nearest neighbors. "How is my husband?" she asked quickly.

Mr. Cleaveland either did not hear, or he could not reply, for he immediately beckoned to Mr. Warren, and followed him at once to his study.

Mrs. Gordon experienced a sudden faintness, and while every particle of color faded from her face and lips, she caught hold of a chair for support. But quickly rallying, she exclaimed to her mother, "I cannot bear this suspense, I must know the worst," and followed her father to his study. Mr. Warren advanced and took her hand. "Be calm, my daughter," he said, though in hurried tones, "Your husband has had another attack of pleurisy, and we must hasten to him."

"Is he alone?" she asked, catching her breath with difficulty.

"Oh, no!" answered Mr. Cleaveland, averting his face from her tearful glance. "The Doctor is there; and Mr. and Mrs. Hall have been with him through the morning."

Without a tear the poor wife turned to leave the room, merely saying in a broken voice, "I will go at once;" and her father made hasty preparations to accompany her. It was hardly ten minutes from the time when Mr.

Cleaveland drove into the yard, before he was on his way home. Not a word was spoken by the distressed wife, as they drove hastily on, though with her hand pressed upon her heart, she listened to every inquiry which her father made. As they approached the house, Mr. Warren observed her close her eyes and move her lips as if in prayer. In silence, he lifted her from the carriage, wondering at her outward calmness, and praying that she might be sustained in the coming trial; for he knew Mr. Gordon could not live. Pausing but for one moment to throw aside her bonnet and shawl, the young wife flew up the staircase to her own room.

Alas! What a scene awaited her! Though the day was cool, the windows were all thrown open to obtain a draught. The poor sufferer was propped up in the bed with pillows, while Mr. Hall stood before him with a large fan in the vain endeavor to enable him to catch his breath. Mrs. Hall was wiping the cold moisture from her pastor's brow, while the devoted physician stood by his side watching with intense anxiety the effect of the medicine. All this the distracted wife saw at a glance. She needed not to be told in words; she knew that her husband was dying; and with an agonizing cry, "oh, why was I away!" she sprang forward to the side of the bed. A faint groan escaped the lips of the dying man; but he made a feeble motion to all to withdraw. They did so, and though every breath was a gasp, he placed his hand upon her bowed head, as she knelt by his side, her whole form shaken by the fierce emotions which were almost overwhelming her. "Dear — precious — wife," he murmured, "May — God — sustain — you — in — this

— hour — of trial. It won't — be — long — ere we shall meet — to part no more forever. — You have been the greatest blessing of my life. — Remember this." — After a dreadful struggle for breath, he added, "oh, it is hard — to part with you. — I thought I had done with earth."

"I cannot, Oh, I cannot give you up!" cried the poor distressed wife. "Oh, God, take my children, take all else, but spare my husband!"

The dying man sank back gasping, and making a feeble effort to wipe his mouth. When the handkerchief fell from his hand, it was covered with spots of blood.

"Father! Doctor!" shrieked Mrs. Gordon.

They instantly approached; and it needed but one glance to tell them that the dread messenger who must sooner or later come to all, was at hand. Dr. S—— gently raised the head of the sufferer, while Mrs. Hall arranged the pillows. The short convulsive gasps grew fainter and fainter; his eyes which had been fixed with an expression of unutterable love upon his wife, were raised to heaven; a celestial smile stole over his countenance; and with the whispered words, "blessed Saviour," upon his lips, his spirit ascended to God.

After a moment the physician stepped forward and gently closed the eyes, when with a heart-broken cry, which those who heard it never forgot, the newly made widow fell senseless to the floor. We must draw a veil over many of the events which followed. After that first cry of anguish, wrung from her heart, Mrs. Gordon arose from her couch, and without a tear, went on in the performance of her duties as a mother. Her neighbors and

friends wondered as they witnessed her calmness. Even her father and mother could scarcely realize this change in their impulsive daughter. But the physician knew that this was an unnatural calmness, and it rendered him far more anxious than the most passionate outbursts of grief.

In the remembrance of the oldest inhabitants in the town, there had never been so large a funeral or so long a procession as followed the remains of this beloved pastor to the grave. Many tears were shed by young and old. Many eyes, unused to weeping, were suffused, as they gazed for the last time upon the marble countenance of their loved pastor, so placid and peaceful in death. Many more, as they caught a glimpse of the tearless eye and bowed form of her, from whom had been taken the companion of her youth, the light of her young life. It was not until dust had been consigned to dust; not until she, with her sorrowing parents, brothers and sisters had returned to her desolate home, where five blissful years had been passed with him who had gone forever, and not until her fatherless children were brought into the room, placed in her arms, and her little girls gazing around in affright—lisp'd the name of "papa," that the fountains of her grief were broken up, and tears flowed forth to relieve her bursting heart. She clasped her orphan children to her breast, in a close, warm embrace, while her sympathizing friends turned aside to wipe the thickly falling tears.

Oh, who would not pity a widow who had no such blessed ties to earth, when he who is best loved is removed forever from her sight! Who would not pray

that in these precious mementos of his love, she might find a healing balm for her torn and bleeding heart!

When, at the end of an hour, the physician reluctantly left the house rendered so sacred to him by the death of his respected and beloved pastor, he left it with gratitude that his plan had been successful, far beyond what he had dared to expect, that the sight of her children had called forth a natural expression of sorrow, which had probably saved her reason, perhaps her life. That night her parents remained with her at the parsonage, and the next morning she made not the slightest opposition to returning with them to the parental roof.

When her kind friend, Mrs. Hall, asked, as she was leaving, if she had any directions to give, she only shook her head, as she mournfully replied, "I can never come back." Just one week from the time when she reached her father's house to remain a few days, she returned thither, with her babes in her arms, *a widow*.

Months after, when time, that blessed comforter, had allayed the poignancy of her grief, she found a painful consolation in writing in her diary.

The first date was the following spring, when she wrote, "A widow! Yes, *a widow!* How truly I now understand the import of that word! God alone, who knows the struggle in my heart before I could say, 'thou art just in all thy ways,' has had respect unto my lonely condition, and heard my earnest, agonizing cry for grace and strength to submit to his will. Often have my knees been bent in prayer, and my voice refused to articulate—but my heart cried out, 'Oh, God, I am a widow from whom thou hast taken him who was dearer to me

than all beside. Thou hast left my soul desolate; Wilt thou not be to me a support and strength?' Oh, how many precious words of consolation there are in the Scriptures, addressed to just such bleeding hearts as mine! Surely my heavenly Father understands and pities my lone condition."

A month later she writes, "How many times have I wept sympathizing tears, as I have seen a husband buried from his wife! But oh, how little I understood the bitterness of her grief! Parents, brothers and sisters are no less dear than before; but oh, my husband, did you realize that you would leave me *alone*?—that when the waves of sorrow dashed over me, and well nigh overwhelmed me, your sympathizing breast would be mouldering in the dust, and your heart so quick to feel all my sorrow, be unmoved by my tears! Oh, my God, help me to raise my thoughts to thy throne! Dissever them from the frail tenement of clay, which, alas! is mingling with its native earth, and follow the blessed spirit to its seat at thy right hand!"

"All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

To-day I attended the funeral of Mr. Sawyer. Oh, how vividly did it bring back my dreadful loss! "Bring back," did I say? The crushing weight upon my heart has never lightened. Day and night I live in the past. Even in my dreams, I am with my dear, blessed husband. Alas, I awake, and it is but a dream! As the widow bent over the coffin, and pressed her pale lips to the cold clay which would soon be buried from her sight, my

breath came quickly; and I was almost suffocated with the violence of my emotions. I wept so much that my friends became alarmed, and while the procession was forming, led me from the room. For a time I lost all control over myself, and was unable to speak. But by the kindness of Mrs. Wells and Eleanor, who remained and administered to my comfort, I was at length enabled to ride home. Dear father blamed himself for inviting me to accompany him. But he could not know with what freshness it would bring my loss to mind. I often fear that my heavenly Father who searcheth my heart, seeth there a spirit of rebellion to his chastening rod. My prayer is, that I may from the heart say, "thy will, not mine, be done." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Divine grace alone can enable us to repeat these inspired words.

Helen and Fanny already seem to have forgotten the loss they have sustained,—a loss which can never be made up to them. Blessed buoyancy of childhood! Frederic will remember neither a father's care, nor a father's love. But there is nothing which interests them so much as to relate instances of his tenderness, and affection. Every hour in the day I am reminded of him. When my little ones say anything which I think would please him, I feel for one instant the impulse, "I must remember to tell their father that; but oh, so soon comes the thought, 'He is no longer on earth!'"

Sometimes I have such a yearning for one more interview with him, that I may ask his advice, or hear his expression of affection, that I can hardly be reconciled to

* the affliction that has taken him from me. God forgive me, if his all-seeing eye discovers in my heart anything that is wrong. But when I remember that for five years I had not a joy nor a sorrow unshared by him, and that never, *never* more can I lay my head upon his breast and hear him say, "my darling wife," my soul refuseth to be comforted.

Since writing the above, I have been led to see that while cherishing such grief for my husband, I was in danger of forgetting my mercies. When my little Frederic lay at the point of death, I saw clearly where I had sinned. God has a perfect right to all my treasures; but he in mercy gave back to me my babe, in answer to my importunate prayers. I saw also that I had made an idol of my husband, and was in danger of doing so with regard to my children, and my heavenly Father took this method to draw my affections more to himself. I love to think that he had a special regard to my being a *widow*, when he thus spared my only son.

For six months I have lived in New York city, with aunt Hammond. She invited me for the winter months; but now she insists that I shall consider this my permanent home. She has been like a kind parent to me in all my affliction. The sum of five thousand dollars which my husband had in the bank, previous to our marriage, is still untouched; and she added to it what was obtained from the sale of my furniture. All this, she says, I shall need bye and bye, for the education of my children; but while she lives, she will take care of me. She has a nephew, Mr. Whitney, who is also very kind

to me, and very generous in his gifts to my little fatherless ones. He was a favorite nephew of uncle Hammond, being the only child of his youngest sister, and early left in his charge. Ever since uncle's death, he has had the care of her property, and purchased for her the elegant house in which she now resides. Indeed this street is considered one of the most aristocratic in the city, and on every side we are surrounded by millionnaires. As yet I have made very few acquaintances. Brother Thomas is in business here, and often passes an evening with us. So far he has never repented the choice of a mercantile life; but says he will refund to father every cent he has spent on his education; and by that means Edward can be fitted for a minister. He has already been very successful, and has lately been taken into the firm as junior partner; his old friend, Squire Wells, generously advancing the money to enable him to do so. Next winter, he intends to pass in the southern states, transacting business for the firm.

Nora and Moselle take the children for a daily walk, around the Park, a key to which aunt generously procured for me. When I remonstrated against the expense, she replied, "We shall gain it in freedom from care, while they are out."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HEIRESS.

IN a spacious, richly furnished parlor of an elegant mansion in S——, sat three ladies busily occupied with their sewing. The elder was a middle-aged woman of mild and pleasing countenance; the others appeared to be from fifteen to seventeen. Helen, who was seated near the window, suddenly looked up from her work, and was about to speak, when she was interrupted by a quick step in the hall, the door of the parlor being eagerly thrown open, and a young lady bounded into the room, exclaiming as she did so, "good news, mamma! good news, girls! Laura has accepted our invitation, and will be here the latter part of next week, or the first of the week following; the wedding is to be on the twenty-second." Helen and Marianne instinctively started from their seats, and before they were aware, Clara had put her arms around them, and was rapidly whirling them about the room.

After a moment, the excited girl sank breathless into a chair, saying, "oh, mamma! I'm so delighted, Laura wants us all to be bridesmaids."

"If that is the case, I shall write at once for Willie to come home and stand with me," said Helen, archly looking at the blushing countenance of her cousin. "How convenient it is to have a brother. Then it is pleasant

to hear people say, 'what a fine looking fellow that young Russel is, and how fond he appears of his sister.'"

Mrs. Russel smiled, as she saw the crimson becoming deeper and deeper upon the cheeks of her daughter, and said, "I should like to hear Laura's letter. When does she say her husband elect, will come?"

While she is thus engaged, we will introduce our readers to the members of this happy home. Mr. Russel, the owner of the mansion, and the father of the family, was a merchant of great wealth; and what was of far more consequence to his family, he was a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian.

His father died when he was very young, leaving himself and two brothers, one older and the other younger, to the care of their widowed mother. But well was she fitted for the work, and nobly had she performed her duties toward her fatherless boys. She taught them to depend upon themselves; to think and act rightly; to be industrious, persevering and prudent. Above all, she earnestly endeavored to cultivate their affections toward each other, and toward their Maker. Morning and evening she knelt with them at the family altar, and committed herself and her beloved children to Him who has promised to be "the widow's God, and a father of the fatherless." As they grew up toward manhood, she had the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing her dear sons amiable and virtuous, guided and governed by the precepts of the inspired word of God.

The elder son, Mr. George Russel, chose the mercantile profession, and represented its advantages in

such glowing colors, that both his brothers followed his example. When Henry, the younger, attained the age of twenty-one, the three went into partnership, in a firm named "RUSSEL AND BROTHERS." Strictly honest and upright in all their dealings, they had been eminently prosperous in their business; and year after year found them able to enlarge their operations, and to make immense profits.

But in the midst of their prosperity, death had suddenly entered this united family, cutting off in the prime of life, the one who, to human appearances, could least be spared. By the dreadful scourge of cholera, Mr. George Russel and his lovely wife were hurried to the grave, in the short space of twenty-eight hours, leaving his vast property to his only daughter, Laura Russel, then a child of two years. Mr. William Russel, the subject of this history, was, at the time of his brother's death, on the eve of marriage, and took the little orphan into his own family, where she had ever been treated as a dear child.

About three years previous to the time of our story, the younger brother, Mr. Henry Russel, was called to his heavenly home, — having lost his wife, by consumption, about eighteen months before. His brother was by his side till the last, willingly consenting to be a father and a guardian to the children thus bereft of their parents, at a time when they most needed a father's care and a mother's watchfulness. Standing by the bedside of his beloved brother, and witnessing the dying grace mercifully bestowed to enable him to triumph over his last great enemy, Mr. William Russel seemed to catch a

glimpse of the home of bliss provided for those who live, by faith on the Son of God; and he devoted himself, more fully and unreservedly, to his Master's service.

Mr. Henry Russel left two children, William, named for his uncle, a young man of twenty, and Helen, a miss of thirteen. William was then a senior in college. More recently he had entered a law-school, and had now but one year more of study before he would be admitted to the bar. Helen was, at the time of her father's decease, a young girl, so volatile and unreflecting, that it needed all the unceasing affection and care her aunt was ready to bestow, to keep her from violating every rule of propriety. But Helen was so full of fun, so cheerful and good-tempered, so ready to acknowledge her faults, that she had been an inmate of her uncle's family but a few weeks before she was a favorite with every one in the house. Helen was handsome, and she knew it. Her mother had been a lady of uncommon charms of mind and person, and her children greatly resembled her.

Clara and Marianne were the only surviving children of Mr. and Mrs. William Russel; they having buried two sons, and a daughter, in infancy. Clara was their fourth child, and was now seventeen. Marianne was fifteen, a few months younger than her lively cousin, Helen.

Nearly a year after William and his sister had become members of their uncle's family, an aunt of Mr. Russel came to the north to pass the summer, a great part of the time being spent in the happy home of her nephew. She took a lively interest in her young nieces, and as

the time approached for her to return to the south, she strongly urged Mr. and Mrs. Russel to consent to allow Laura and Clara to return with her to Charleston, for the winter. Though well aware that Mrs. Norton would exercise a most beneficial influence over their children, yet they could not at first think of parting with them. Clara was engrossed with her studies; and Laura was unwilling to leave her friends. But, at length, they were prevailed upon to consent that Laura should go; and the increasing infirmities of Mrs. Norton, together with the great delight she found in the society and affection of her niece, had so far prevented her from returning to her home for any length of time; though she had made them a hasty visit, when travelling to the north, during the previous summer.

It was in the second winter of her residence at the South, that Laura had formed the acquaintance of Thomas Warren, who was passing a part of the winter in Charleston. From her first interview with him, she had been uncommonly pleased with his noble, manly deportment, and the perfect ease and polish of his manners, because she had seen that these were united to, and produced by, strong religious principles.

Mr. Warren, too, when introduced to Laura by a young lady, who, at the request of his college friend, Mr. Stanwood, had accompanied him from the north, and who had been a former schoolmate of Miss Russel, thought he had never beheld a more interesting countenance united to a modest, unassuming appearance. On further acquaintance, he became convinced that Miss Russel possessed every qualification which he could ask

for in a wife; nay, more, he confessed that she fully answered to the ideal, he had formed, of a perfect lady. Every hour that he passed in her society increased the favorable impression, until he was obliged to acknowledge to himself that he was decidedly in love; and he lost no time in paying to Miss Russel those nameless attentions which he hoped would interest her in his favor.

Mrs. Norton, who felt a mother's interest for her lovely niece, soon perceived the design of Mr. Warren, and took pains to make inquiries among her friends as to the private character of the suitor; for, though he had never, in words, spoken of his love, yet he took no pains to conceal his attachment. Her inquiries were answered so satisfactorily that she had no hesitation in allowing the acquaintance to proceed; and so far the course of love had appeared true, and had "run smoothly!"

But at length a change took place. From being a daily visitor at the house of Mrs. Norton, Mr. Warren only made a hurried call once in a week or two; and, if he accidentally met them at any place of public resort, his manner was so embarrassed and reserved as to cause great pain to the heart of the gentle Laura, and, even indignation, on the part of her aunt. After every such meeting the sensitive girl retired to her room, and passed hours in tears,—while she vainly tried to account, by any appearance of caprice in her own conduct, for the unaccountable change in her friend. All her woman's pride was roused, that she could not banish from her thoughts the image of a suitor who had basely treated her. Every mark of affection he had exhibited, every

tender word and look were carefully reviewed; and Laura, though disposed to reflect upon herself, and to exonerate him, could but feel that he had given her reason to think he had wished to gain her affections, and that he had certainly acted a part unworthy of a gentleman, and wholly inconsistent with the character of a Christian. This conviction produced a reserve in her manner, whenever she met with the subject of her constant thoughts, so that for several weeks nothing more than the most common-place sentiments passed between them. Still, she often met his eye, fixed upon her with such sadness, almost amounting to anguish, that the blush burned upon her cheeks, and her heart thrilled with the thought, "Notwithstanding his strange conduct, he does still love me!"

Miss Carlton, her schoolmate, had for a few weeks been visiting a friend, who lived out of the city. She had become very intimate with Mr. Warren, having heard much of him from Mr. Stanwood, the gentleman to whom she was to be married on her return home. Immediately upon her arrival in Charleston, she called upon Laura, and soon introduced the name of her friend Mr. Warren, and was at no small loss to conceive the cause of the change which passed over the countenance of her companion.

Mrs. Norton, too, spoke with great reserve, saying, "we have been disappointed in the character of Mr. Warren, and even his name produces unpleasant emotions."

"What can he have done?" inquired Miss Carlton, in surprise. "I have known him for many years, and con-

sidered him a pattern of all that is good and refined. Then he thought so very highly of you, Laura."

It was with some difficulty that Laura could keep back her tears; but making a great effort at calmness, she replied, "let us drop this subject, dear Mary; it is plain he thinks so no longer. He has almost entirely dropped our acquaintance."

"Astonishing!" she answered thoughtfully, "what can it mean?" and she fell into a reverie so profound that her friend left her, and walked to the window.

After a short pause, she added, "If this, indeed, be true, he is no longer worthy the name of gentleman, or of being a son of his excellent parents; there is nothing, in my opinion, so mean as coquetry in a man," and she took a hasty, though affectionate leave of her friend.

Two evenings later, however, Miss Carlton called in company with Mr. Warren, and though at first Laura was cold, almost haughty, in her manner toward him, yet, through the influence of Mary, the evening passed off pleasantly, and the hurried remark of her friend, at parting, brought hope once more to her affectionate heart. "Laura," she whispered, as her friend was assisting her to adjust her shawl, "there is some mistake. He speaks of you with the greatest enthusiasm, and says he never met a young lady whose character was so near perfection."

The suddenness of this remark so disconcerted poor Laura, that when she gave Mr. Warren her hand, to bid him good night, and met his ardent look of admiration, her eyes fell, and she became most painfully embarrassed. The night was passed by her in vain attempts to solve the mystery.

Scarcely had she left the breakfast table before a magnificent bouquet was brought to the door, with a card attached to it, upon which was merely written, "For Miss Laura Russel, with the kindest wishes of a friend." The heart of Laura told her quickly who was the donor, and she carried it to her room, without even mentioning to her aunt its reception. In the course of the following days she met Mr. Warren several times, either in the street, or in society. He was always accompanied by her friend Mary, who had a most mysterious air, which she in vain endeavored to conceal. Even a less partial observer than Mrs. Norton might have noticed in his sudden brightening of countenance, and the eagerness with which Mr. Warren started forward to meet Laura, that he felt no ordinary interest in her welfare. Neither could they fail to perceive in the shadow, which, after an instant, passed over his face, or the reserve with which his second thought caused him to dissemble his real feelings, that there was a drawback which prevented his appearing in the character of a lover, however ardently he wished to do so.

It was nearly a week since she had received the bouquet, and Laura was in her own apartment selecting such of the flowers as had begun to wither, and putting them in a book to press. She had just returned the card accompanying them, to her portfolio, when a servant knocked at the door, and brought her another bouquet, with a letter. It would be foolish to try to conceal the fact that Laura's heart bounded as she glanced at the address, and saw that it was in the handwriting of the card, which she felt sure came from Mr. Warren. She

however thanked the servant, and asked who brought them.

"A colored man, from one of the hotels," was the reply.

Laura had never received a communication from Mr. Warren, and her heart beat quickly, and then almost stopped, as she thought, "the mystery will be explained." She longed to open it; and yet, with an inconsistency which she could not reconcile even to herself, she dreaded to do so. She arose, put the flowers in a vase of fresh water, and set them upon the mantel, wondering if the note would explain to her satisfaction all the contrarieties of his conduct toward herself. At length she sat down, and, breaking the envelop, read as follows:—

"To Miss Laura Russel.

"How strangely to my throbbing heart look those cold words, that chilling address; yet I have schooled myself to my disappointment, and must bear it as best I can. I am about to leave Charleston, the place where I have known more of joy, and more of bitter sorrow, than I ever knew before. Justice to you, and justice to myself, require an explanation of my variable conduct toward you. I think, my dear, aye, *too* dear, Miss Russel, you must have seen, from our first interview, how much I admired your person and character. I have sometimes, of late, been called heartless, or rather, wanting in those finer traits of character, which make a man susceptible to love. I have sometimes feared this were too true. But it is not so. In the agony of the past week, I have almost wished my heart had never awoke to the

bliss of loving with my whole soul, one who was every way worthy of such devotion. I saw you, and had not been many times in your society, before I acknowledged I could ask no more in a companion for life; and that if I could win your hand I should be the happiest of mortals. Excuse me for the seeming presumption, when I say, that your manner was so kind, I felt encouraged to hope that I was not displeasing to you. All this time I had an impression that you were dependent upon Mrs. Norton; and visions of a happy home, where my ardent affection should make up for the loss of greater elegance in style and manner of living, began to dawn upon me.

"I was on my way to visit you, determined to end my suspense by a frank avowal of my affection, when two young gentlemen, with whom I am slightly acquainted, overtook me just as Mrs. Norton's carriage, containing you and herself, dashed past us.

"Look there, Warren," said one of them. "Did you see that elegant girl? She's handsome, accomplished, and very agreeable; but what is worth more than all the rest, she's rich as Croesus."

"I think you are mistaken about her wealth," I replied, "she is dependent, as I understand, upon her aunt, who will, no doubt, leave her some property."

"The gentleman who had not spoken, responded, 'all very well for you to try to make us believe you think so, my dear fellow. But for all that she is a great heiress, and you know it. Much joy I wish you in your love match.'

"My blood boiled with indignation; but I hastily left them, and returned to my rooms. I will not attempt to

describe to you the feeling of keen disappointment I then experienced, nor the anguish of heart I felt (when, on farther inquiry, I found what I had heard was true,) before I could resolve to tear myself from your presence. It has been a principle instilled into my mind from childhood, never to seek a connection with one possessed of more wealth than I could offer in return. For the sake of winning your love, I would forfeit all my hitherto cherished hopes of making for myself a name and a place among men; but I cannot give up my self-respect. You would despise me should I address you thus. Therefore, though every feeling of my heart rebels, I must leave you. This is now my only honorable course.

"I need not assure you, that a line from yourself, saying that I have not entirely forfeited your esteem, and that you will sometimes pity your unfortunate friend, would give me greater pleasure than anything I have now a right to expect.

"THOMAS WARREN."

Poor Laura! She had sometimes paused as if unable to proceed, while the hot tears had fallen thickly upon the written sheet. "Oh, what would I give," she exclaimed passionately, when she had finished, "if I could write and tell him I had not a cent in the world. I will give it away. Oh! what can I do?" and she burst into a flood of tears. She wept so long that she brought on a violent headache, and when her aunt sent up for her to go to dinner, she asked to be excused, and to have a cup of tea sent to her room.

Mrs. Norton went to her niece, but finding the door locked, she retired to her own apartment.

About an hour later, Miss Carlton called to beg Laura to accompany her to do some shopping.

Mrs. Norton, who received her, said that Laura was not well, and had kept her room through the day.

Mary turned quickly to the window and began to talk, in a hurried manner, of a gay equipage which happened to be passing; but, after a moment said she would go to Laura's room. It was not, however, until she had knocked repeatedly, that she gained admittance. She found her friend apparently calm, but with such a mournful expression that Mary's eyes involuntarily filled with tears. After sitting by her side, she at length prevailed upon the poor girl to tell her the cause of her grief, when Laura silently put Mr. Warren's letter into her hand.

Mary took it eagerly; though her face grew almost scarlet as she read, or rather glanced, at its contents. "Why, Laura," she urged, "I don't see anything here that need distress you so much. I am sure I like him the better, for feeling so."

"But he is going away," sobbed Laura, in such distress that Mary, though her eyes were humid with tears, burst into a merry laugh.

"Excuse me, dear," said she, kissing her tenderly; but I really couldn't help it; I've grown very nervous lately," she added apologetically, as she saw Laura seemed grieved at her mirth. "But Laura, really, you take it too much to heart,—write him an answer, telling him he can't get off in that way; he has won your

affections, and he'll be obliged to take you. That will bring him to."

Laura looked up quickly and smiled through her tears, at Mary's words. "Are you in earnest," she asked, "do you think I ought to answer him?"

"In earnest! Oh! no, of course not! You wish him to leave Charleston, thinking that you deem him a scoundrel for trying to woo the richest heiress in —, when he is only junior partner of a house in New York. He deserves to be punished for such unwarrantable presumption."

Laura started to her feet. "Stop, Mary, I won't hear you talk so; you know I don't think any such thing. I would give all I have in the world for such affection as he has shown in that letter. So noble and generous a heart cannot be bought with money."

Poor Mary! She had, indeed, grown nervous. She could not meet the indignant glances of her friend; and she rapidly walked to the mantel, and began admiring the flowers. "If that is your *real* feeling," she at length said, with emphasis, "you are bound in honor to tell him so."

"But how can I? It would be unmaidenly to tell him that I love him, when he has never asked me to do so."

"I am sure, every line of that letter breathes the deepest affection," said Mary, again averting her face.

I need not detail all the conversation that followed; but will turn to Mr. Warren, who, the morning following the reception of this note, was walking his room, with hasty strides, trying by the violence of his exercise to lessen the agitation under which he was laboring.

At length he stopped. "But ought I not," he soliloquized, "to see her before I leave? Would it not be dishonorable in me to allow her to remain in doubt as to my feelings? Ought I not to tell her how dearly, how truly I love her, and the reason I cannot offer her my hand? No, I dare not trust myself; and, I am too proud to sue for her hand, when, with it, her husband will obtain so much paltry gold!"

At that moment, he heard a knock at his door, and on opening it, he took a sealed envelop from the servant. It was superscribed in a delicate hand, and he hastily opened it, wondering not a little who could thus have honored him with an epistle. But his astonishment was increased ten fold when, glancing at the signature, he read, "From your true friend, Laura Russel." He threw himself into a chair, and with suspended breath, hastily read its contents, which were briefly these:—

"Mr. Warren,—

"Your note, received this morning, I will not conceal from you, has caused me much pain and embarrassment. Though Providence has bestowed upon me a large share of the things of this world,—yet, I have never valued wealth, at all, in comparison with the affections of the heart; and, indeed, I have often shrunk from the responsibility, every Christian must feel, as the steward of Heaven's bounty to the destitute.

"My dear friend, we profess to be Christians;—you say you love me,—why should so trivial a circumstance have given you so much distress? I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you before you leave Charleston.

"With sentiments of high esteem and respect,

"I am your true friend,

"LAURA RUSSEL."

Mr. Warren sank back in his chair, breathless with astonishment. He put his hand to his head to convince himself he was not in a dream! "What can this mean? She received my note this morning? I have never written her! Some one has imposed upon her by an anonymous letter; or rather, a forged one, signed by my name. How can I relate to her the humiliating circumstance that she has replied to that which has not been written? Shame and disgrace meet me whichever way I turn."

He walked the room, with knitted brows and agitated mien. But reflection brought other thoughts, and he determined to go that very evening to see Miss Russel. He rang for his servant, and despatched a note requesting a private interview with that lady; then ordered his horse and started off for a vigorous ride, to compose his excited feelings preparatory to his call in the evening.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE YOUNG BRIDE.

MR. WARREN consulted his watch, which he had done very frequently for the last hour, and exhibited signs of impatience on finding there was still twenty-five minutes before the time he had appointed for his interview with Miss Russel, when a knock at the door arrested his attention. He hastily opened it, muttering impatiently: "I shall plead a positive engagement, whoever it may be." But it was only his servant with another note, which he took mechanically, and resumed his seat. The contents did not wholly surprise him. It was from Miss Carlton, and ran thus:—

"Mr. Warren,—

"I write to beg you to call upon me, before you go this evening to Mrs. Norton's. I have something of importance to communicate. I earnestly beseech you not to fail, as you value the peace of my dear friend, Miss Russel.

"In great haste, yours, sincerely,

"MARY CARLTON."

During his ride in the forenoon, Mr. Warren had had time to collect his thoughts; and had come to the conclusion, from the purport of Laura's letter, that Mary

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must have been the one who had dared address her in his name. He called to mind the earnest conversation he had held with that lady on her return to Charleston the week before, and that he had then told her his views and feelings in regard to marrying an heiress. How well he remembered the remark she made at parting. "Mr. Warren, you are misled by a false pride; and will sacrifice to it not only your own happiness, but the happiness of one whom you have given every reason to suppose you valued higher than a friend."

When he had read the note, he responded at once to her summons, and soon found himself at the house of the lady whom Miss Carlton was visiting. He was shown into the parlor, where he found her impatiently awaiting him. Her countenance bore the traces of recent tears; but she eagerly approached him, holding out her hand. "Thank you," she said, with emphasis, "for coming to me."

He led her to a seat, where she was painfully embarrassed in her attempt to introduce the subject upon which she wished to speak. At length she said hesitatingly, "Mr. Warren, I don't know what you will think of me, but indeed I did it from the best motives," and she ended in a passionate fit of weeping.

For a moment the gentleman was entirely at a loss for words. He thought her very culpable for the liberty she had taken with his name; but he was much distressed to see her so deeply moved. Then he did not doubt that she had, as she said, hoped it would bring matters to a crisis. At length he replied: "I will not pretend to misunderstand your meaning. You wrote a

letter to Miss Russel in my name. I received an answer this morning. Did you see the answer?"

"I did. Indeed she would not have written unless I had urged her to do so. I also sent her two bouquets which she ascribes to you, as the penmanship was the same. But," she added, much excited, "she was suffering keenly from your neglect, never having dreamed of the cause, and I thought—I thought—perhaps this would set it all right. I feared your pride would prevent what I knew you were in honor bound to do, after the marked attentions you have paid her."

"And so," resumed Mr. Warren, with a faint attempt to smile, "you undertook the duty for me. Have you a copy of the document?" he added, in a tone which was slightly bitter.

Mary eagerly put a folded letter in his hand. "It was copied verbatim et literatim," she replied, blushing deeply.

He took it and stood under the chandelier to read, while she sat upon the sofa with her face concealed in her handkerchief. His countenance exhibited deep feeling as he read; but he quietly folded the letter, put it in his pocket, and returned to his seat on the sofa.

"Miss Carlton," he said, respectfully taking her hand, "I must acknowledge your letter is very honorable to me; I can hardly conceive how you were so well acquainted with my feelings."

Mary looked up eagerly at the earnestness of his tone, and replied: "I only wrote what you have from time to time told me. I knew you loved her, and I *thought* that she respected you until——. When I went there yes-

terday, after she received it, I found that she was much distressed to know what she ought to do. I will take all the blame of her answering, if you think she did wrong, for I convinced her that you would think she agreed with you, that it was from mercenary motives you had tried to gain her affections. I may as well confess all," she added, hiding her face for one moment in her hands. "I wrote an answer which I did my best to prevail upon her to copy. But she is so very discreet and modest she would not, but wrote instead of it, the one you received, which I considered very cold, saying you had never asked her to love you."

Mr. Warren made no answer except by an ardent press of one of the small hands lying near him. Whether he meant it as an expression of his forgiveness, or was actuated to this sudden movement by the encouraging nature of her conversation, has never transpired.

Mary went on. "I did not stop to reflect upon the step I was taking, and when I saw Laura weeping over the letter, I urged her to answer it. But I have been sorry ever since, that I did not tell her at once I was the author. I walked my room all night, fearing the worst consequences from my rash action, and went early this morning to confess it to her. But it was too late. The answer had been sent, just as I had seen it last night, and I was really afraid the mortification would kill her if I told her then," and Mary shuddered as she spoke. "Oh!" she exclaimed, starting to her feet, "You will not tell her, Mr. Warren. Promise me you will not."

"I have no present intention of doing so," he replied; "but it is time for me to go."

On his way to Mrs. Norton's he reflected that if he allowed Miss Russel to consider the letter from him, why he was bound in honor to —— "but" he thought after an abrupt pause, "I must be wholly governed by circumstances." So after stopping near a lamp-post long enough for a second perusal of the epistle, he walked hastily on to meet his appointment.

When he left Mrs. Norton's, though it was at a late hour, his heart was so full of happiness that he felt he could not be confined within the four walls of his room at the hotel, and wandered off at a rapid pace until he was out of the city, where he strolled in the bright moonlight until near the dawn. It was wonderful what had become of all his fixed principles, his solemn determination never to marry an heiress.

Laura pursued a much wiser course. Her heart, which for quite a number of weeks had been wandering like Noah's dove, in search of a resting-place, had now found its home, and she was at peace. She therefore retired to her bed, and from the sweet smile upon her lip, one might reasonably suppose she was living over and over in her dreams the bliss of the last few hours.

Early the next morning, Mr. Warren called upon Miss Carlton. "I feared," he said, "that I did not sufficiently thank you last evening for your kind interest in my welfare."

Mary blushed deeply, as she replied archly, "I see that all has happened just as I hoped and expected; but oh! worlds would not tempt me to do the like again."

"I confess," he replied, with a smile, "it is rather a dangerous game to play, but in my case — at any rate,"

he added, slightly blushing, "you remember the old adage, 'all's well, that ends well.'"

As Clara has long ago finished reading the letter to her aunt, we will turn back to the commencement of our story. It was now the first day of June, the wedding was to be on the twenty-second, and soon all were busy with preparations for the happy event.

Mrs. Norton and Laura had left Charleston the middle of May, and the same letter which had announced Laura's approaching marriage, had contained an earnest request that one of her nieces might take the vacant place in her family the coming winter.

Mr. and Mrs. Russel had written immediately to Laura. They could not consent that her marriage ceremony should be performed in any other place except in her own home, and among the friends who had known and loved her from her infancy. Laura had gratefully accepted so kind and cordial an invitation, and was now on her way to S——. She stated in her letter, which had caused so much joy, that it was their intention to leave for Niagara, immediately after the wedding.

Clara, Helen and Marianne had gained the ready consent of their parents that they should be bridesmaids, as Laura had requested. Helen wrote immediately to her brother William, stating the time of the wedding, and telling him he must allow nothing to prevent his being present on so interesting an occasion. In a postscript Helen added, that of course he would stand with her, and that she had made all her arrangements to that effect.

The young student read the letter from his affectionate sister with a smile, and said aloud as he tossed

the epistle upon the table, "how Helen likes to tease me!"

It was a bright morning in June. The birds were filling the air with their joyous melody. The dew was still kissing the flowers, but Clara Russel, little heeding the dampness of the grass, wandered to the end of the orchard back of the house in search of some beautiful white rose-buds. "Laura, dear Laura, is expected to-day; and kind aunt Norton! How glad I shall be to see them!" She had come out, while all were still sleeping, to gather Laura's favorite roses, for the decoration of her room. Clara was an artless, ingenuous girl. She was not handsome; that is, her features were far from regular; but her skin was of transparent whiteness, her mouth was rather large, but displayed a regular set of teeth of pearly whiteness. Her eyes! Oh! when one looked into them they forgot everything else, there was such a world of light and soul beaming in those large hazel orbs. Clara's countenance varied with every thought and emotion. The color was constantly coming and going in her cheeks, telling to observers many a tale which she was striving to keep close in her heart of hearts.

She was very happy on this pleasant June morning. No doubt the arrival of aunt Norton and cousin Laura were sufficient cause to send the warm crimson blood to beautify her cheeks. The expected arrival of Helen's brother, was so far from being an uncommon event, that it of course had nothing to do with the joy which kept gushing up from her heart, and causing her to sing for very gladness. She was standing part way up on the

wall, trying to reach a beautiful bud, which was almost beyond her reach, at the same time that she was warbling the familiar song of "Home, sweet home",—when she was suddenly startled, by hearing a fine base accompaniment, close by her side. She turned quickly, to be caught in the arms of her cousin William. She had quite forgotten her exalted station, and would have fallen, had he not prevented her. Mr. Russel, junior, earnestly begged her to go on with her singing; asserting that he had been drawn from the carriage-road to the house, by the carolling of what, he thought, must have been a bird of great value, and that he had taken the pains to wade through the wet grass in order to secure the prize. But Clara, hastily picking up the roses which in her fall had dropped from her basket, declared that she did not feel like singing, and walked demurely back to the house, expressing neither surprise nor joy at his sudden appearance.

"Why, Clara," said William, at length, "I expected you would wonder where I came from so early in the morning, and you have not even said you are glad to see me!"

Clara suddenly raised her eyes, looked him full in the face for one instant; but probably the morning light was too strong, for she as suddenly dropped them again. Whatever William gleaned from this earnest gaze, he appeared satisfied, and walked quietly by her side. But just as they reached the house he said, in a low tone: "I started from M—— at four o'clock, and rode over before breakfast, to tell you that,—to ask you to stand with me at Laura's wedding. Will you, dear Clara?"

The color mounted to her brow, as she answered, "If Helen will consent, for she anticipates that honor."

"Who, then, did you expect as your partner?"

"Mr. Warren has a friend who is to accompany him," she replied, evasively.

At noon Laura arrived, and was welcomed amid great rejoicings. But Mr. Russel observed with anxiety that his aunt had failed in strength, since he had seen her the previous summer; and with pain acknowledged to himself that it would, indeed, be hard for her to return alone to Charleston, in the fall.

It was very fortunate for the young ladies that they had waited to consult Laura's taste in the selection of their dresses; for she had brought each of them a full suit, as nearly like her own as Aunt Norton would allow, — she having insisted on presenting Laura with her bridal trousseau.

After the evening repast, when the family were seated in the parlor for evening prayer, Clara earnestly begged Laura to resume her seat at the organ. This, she at length consented to do; but was so much overcome with associations of the past, together with the thought that she was soon to leave these dear friends, that she was obliged abruptly to leave her place at the instrument, motioning to her cousin to go on with the accompaniment. But when her uncle, who had been to her a kind father, began to pray for her, and for him who was so soon to be united to her in the most endearing of bonds, — though much affected, yet her excited feelings were calmed and soothed. She wondered how he could have so well understood all her wants and desires, as he

went on to thank God for restoring her to the home of her childhood, and to pray that He, who had watched over her in youth, when bereft so suddenly of her earthly parents, who had called her by his grace, and had adopted her into His family, who had now, in his Providence, provided for her a partner, that feared God, and that was already bound to her in the more enduring tie of Christian friendship, — might still watch over her and bless her, helping her always to keep in mind that, as her blessings were great, so, too, were her responsibilities; that her wealth would be a joy or a curse, just as she used it. Mr. Russel remembered, also, the kind friend who had been restored to them, though in impaired health, and prayed, that as her day was, so her strength might be.

When they arose, all were softened and subdued; while Laura, after having given her dear uncle an affectionate embrace, conducted Mrs. Norton to her chamber; and Clara accompanied her. William begged his sister to go out with him for a walk, when he succeeded in procuring from the lively girl a promise that she would not tease Clara about any attention he might think proper to pay her, saying: "I have invited a friend of mine to be your partner on the occasion."

But Helen pretended to be much disappointed, and said, "Clara was very unkind to try to wean the affections of her only brother from herself; and at this particular time, when she was aware that she had set her heart upon appearing with him."

"Nonsense, Helen," said William, half vexed, though he could not avoid laughing at the airs she assumed.

"You know you don't care a fig about it, and then you know Clara is very far from asking such a favor. You will be much better pleased with the attention of Mr. Stanwood, only you'll have to curb your spirits. He is a married man."

"Then I won't stand with him at all. I'll choose Mr. Seymour if Miss Warren does not come, which Laura says is uncertain," and Helen looked archly in her brother's face as they came on to the piazza, where the lights shone through the windows.

"Remember," said William, detaining her as they were entering the house, "you have promised not to joke her about me at all."

"I only say I'll do my best to avoid it," and she laughed gayly.

Another week passed in this happy home, happy because though ever cheerful, yet they acknowledged their heavenly Father as the author of all their mercies, and endeavored to conform their lives to the standard he has given. Mr. Warren arrived with his sister Bessie and Mr. Seymour leaving his parents and younger brother and sister to follow the next day.

Helen had claimed frequent praise from her brother during the past week for her discreet behavior, though her conduct had been far from satisfactory to him. She was continually making blunders, followed by the most formal apologies, which were equally trying to bear; for instance, she would address Clara as "my sweet sister, my beloved sister," and when Clara blushed painfully she would say, "do excuse me, coz. I wonder how I could have made such a mistake, when of course the na-

ture of the case forbids such a relation," and this always took place when William was present to profit by the blushes.

All this rendered the poor girl so shy, that it was next to impossible for him to see her, except in the presence of the family, and he was obliged to content himself by the thought that he would pay Helen in her own coin, if she should ever fall in love.

Mr. Stanwood arrived with the friends of Mr. Warren the evening of the twenty-first, and the wedding was to take place on the following day. It had been Laura's wish to be married in the morning, and proceed on her journey, but she had at length consented to comply with the earnest wishes of her cousins to postpone it until evening. Mr. Warren had been noticed to be very busily engaged with Laura's uncle and guardian for a day or two, and at length Mr. Stanwood was called into the study to assist with his legal knowledge. On the morning of her wedding, Mr. Russel summoned her to his study, where she found her aunt, her lover, and Mr. Stanwood. She was rather startled at the seriousness of their appearance; but her uncle said kindly, "I have been rendering an account of my stewardship, and Mr. Warren has at length consented to take the care of your property, but he has insisted (contrary to what I was sure would be your wishes,) upon settling every cent of your fortune upon yourself."

"I cannot consent to such an arrangement," exclaimed Laura, much agitated by the remembrance of a letter she had once received.

"My dear Laura," said her betrothed, advancing and

taking her hand, though he was very pale. "Do not distress me by speaking thus. Much as I regard your wishes, it is absolutely impossible for me to consent to have it otherwise. My feelings on this subject have never changed," he added, in a voice intended only for her ear.

Laura said no more, but with a sudden determination to prevail upon her cousin William to have the whole matter reversed after her marriage, she asked her uncle if that were all, left the room, and summoned William to follow her to the parlor. After being closeted with her for an hour, he came out holding checks signed by her to her bankers to the amount of several thousand dollars, to be given by him to various objects of public and private charity.

The hour of eight had been appointed for the wedding. The guests had arrived. Reverend Mr. Warren, who was to perform the ceremony, with his wife, Edward and Gracie, and beside these a large number of neighbors and friends, were now seated awaiting the appearance of the bride and bridegroom with their attendants. A slight movement in the hall, announces that they are near at hand. The clergyman arises from his seat and sets his chair one side, to allow the bridal company to pass him. The young attorney enters first with Clara, who blushes as if she were to be the bride; then Mr. Seymour and Bessie, Edward Warren and Helen, followed by Mr. Stanwood and the timid Marianne. After these had taken their places, Mr. Thomas Warren, and Miss Laura Russel advance to the vacant space which had been left for them, when the good minister invoked a blessing

upon the intended union. He then in a few words explained the nature of the ordinance, the interest taken in it by our Saviour, who performed his first miracle at the wedding of Cana in Galilee, and with deep emotion he administered the oath to them, by which they bound themselves to love and cherish each other, and to perform all the duties of the matrimonial relation according to the Holy Scriptures. He then pronounced them husband and wife. The bride was exceedingly pale, and it was only by a great effort that she restrained herself from tears; but at the close she glanced for one instant into the face so lovingly bent over her, a thrill of joy passed through her frame that she had henceforth one heart which beat only for her, and that heart was so regulated by the sacred principles of religion, that she could confide in it with perfect safety. Her friends eagerly gathered around to express their congratulations and kind wishes to the newly married pair. Among the first who approached, was Mr. Warren's mother, leaning upon the arm of her new friend and relative, Mr. Russel. With moistened eyes, she expressed the pleasure it gave her to call Laura, "my daughter," and after a cordial motherly embrace, both of the bride and groom, she was led back to her seat. Mrs. Norton, too, was much affected as she realized that her dear niece now belonged to another. But the thought, "I shall soon be called to my heavenly home," soothed the grief she would otherwise have felt at the painful separation. There was a sweet dignity in the manner of the young bride, as she received the kind wishes of her friends, which won the admiration of all. Her husband, as he gazed with pride

upon her, drew her arm closer within his, as he thought, "she is my own."

During the remainder of the evening cake and fruits of all varieties were passed to the guests, and the younger people made themselves very merry upon the occasion. Mrs. Thomas Warren was repeated so often that Laura was likely to become accustomed to the title. Helen whispered in her ear, "don't you think that Mrs. Edward Warren is quite as pretty a name?" She then attacked Clara, but William had found an opportunity in the course of the day, to say a few words to his cousin, with the full permission of her father and mother, which hung like a charm about her, and prevented her from any farther annoyance. So Helen in dismay turned to her partner to impart her ill success.

The evening, like all other evenings, came at length to a close, and Laura experienced a feeling of sadness, as one friend after another approached to bid her adieu.

The next morning she started for the Falls of Niagara, and for a tour to the West, after which she was to return for a few days to S——, before she settled in her new home, in New York city. On her way she visited Mrs. Stanwood, who one evening said gravely, "My dear Laura, I have had some thought of publishing a series of letters, as a help to gentlemen in making matrimonial proposals to ladies. I have known the happiness of some gentlemen to be almost destroyed, merely for the want of some proper guide of the kind I mention. If you have any of my documents in your possession, I shall be extremely obliged to you for the use of them. Mr. Stanwood gazed at his wife, and

then at her friends, in amazement, while Laura put her hand to her head and wondered if Mary were not beside herself. Mr. Warren, with a deprecatory shake of the head, advanced quickly to his wife, and seated himself by her side.

"What can you mean, Mary?" she said at length.

Mary threw herself on the carpet, before her friend, saying, "dearest, will you promise to forgive me, because if you wont, Mr. Stanwood, who is a magistrate, will divorce you at once."

Laura seized her husband's hand, whom she perceived was much agitated, and said hurriedly, "tell me, Thomas, is she crazy?"

"Do you remember," asked Mary, hiding her face, which was covered with blushes, "that when we were in Charleston, I one day, after repeated knockings, gained admittance to your room, and found you weeping over a letter, which I had some difficulty in prevailing upon you to answer?"

"Well," said Laura, turning very pale, and taking her hand from her husband.

"I wrote it, dear Laura, don't feel so," she added, really frightened, as she glanced up to meet Laura's gaze.

But the mortification had been too great for the sensitive bride, and she wept bitterly. She gently put away her friend, and even her husband, when he attempted to soothe her, sobbing, "it was cruel to deceive me so." Mr. Stanwood left the room, motioning to his wife to accompany him, when she, for the first time, related the circumstances connected with their betrothal. He told

her he hoped she would never again be guilty of such an action, and she shed many tears at the thought of her weeping friend.

It was a long time before Laura was composed enough to hear the explanation which her husband was so anxious to impart. But when he informed her Mary had only written what he had told her were his sentiments, and that before he went to her on the eventful evening which had been one of the happiest of his life, he had received Mary's confession, and had acknowledged to her that she had rightly represented him to her friend.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TOURIST.

WHEN Henry Wells reached London he had faithfully kept the promise he had made to his friend, Mrs. Gordon, at parting, and read every day in the silver-clasped Bible she had given him. At first he only read because of that promise, and because of the pleasure he experienced in doing what he knew she would approve; but the more he read the more interested he became, until he passed an hour or two every day during his voyage, in the perusal of its sacred pages. He had, when a child, read and re-read the historical portions of the Scriptures; but now he perused with delight the powerful diction and pathos of Job, the sublime visions of Isaiah, and the thrilling eloquence of Paul, and his soul was moved within him. The desire to be a Christian, and to follow the precepts of the holy book, became stronger and stronger every day. But on his arrival in London, so many new and pleasing objects occupied his attention, that he had little time except for a hurried performance of his pledge, just as he was retiring to rest.

On the second Sabbath of his stay in London, the celebrated Dr. ——— was to preach. Notice of this had been published in many of the papers; and Henry, among the rest, determined to hear him. The sermon was the means of producing a deep conviction of his

guilt as a sinner, before God, and now again he turned to the sacred pages for comfort and peace. Here he read, as if for the first time, the story of Christ's sufferings and death, and here too the gracious spirit applied this sacred truth to his mind, and the Saviour became to him light and salvation, the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely.

After remaining for a week longer in London, he departed for the Continent, and at the expiration of a few months, having visited France and Italy, he returned, early in the fall, to Germany, for the winter. It was his object to acquire a thorough knowledge of the language before he returned to his studies in the law. Whenever, of late, his thoughts turned to his chosen profession, he was restless and dissatisfied, and at length, after weeks and months of doubt and uncertainty, determined, if his father would consent, to relinquish that profession, and by a protracted stay in Europe, to prepare himself for a Professorship of Languages. But after a short time he was equally dissatisfied with this project, and early the following summer, with the consent of his parents started for Scotland, and joined the University in Edinburgh, with which Dr. Chalmers was associated. Here he remained three years, then returned to Germany, and passed one year more, after which he visited the other principal countries of Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land, and then he went back to Edinburgh, where he began to preach. He received an earnest invitation to settle in a neighboring town, but his heart was in his native land, and he began to yearn for home. Taking with him letters from his Professors, in Edin-

burgh, and other gentlemen who had become much interested in him, he left Liverpool early in 1836, and after a short passage landed in New York, having been absent more than six years. By his particular request no one out of his own family were aware that he had changed his profession ; but as the fact would now transpire, and as he had several hours before the boat would leave for his native place, he determined to present a letter of introduction to a clergyman in the city. This call resulted in a promise from him to supply, for a few Sabbaths, a vacant pulpit in that place ; his engagement to commence the next Sabbath but one. Had he known his old townsman and friend, Thomas Warren, occupied one of the magnificent houses he passed in his walk back to the hotel, or that his friend Susy had, for nearly two years, been a resident in New York, he might not have been so impatient to leave. True, in the years which had passed, he had schooled his heart until he believed not a trace remained of his old passion for her, but still she would always be to him a dear friend. He knew, from his correspondence with his sister, that Mr. Gordon had died suddenly about two years before, and he knew also of her grief for him ; but of late, Eleanor, who was about to form new ties, had said less of her old friends, especially as Thomas and Susan resided at a distance, so that he only knew, in general, that Thomas had become a merchant, and had married a wealthy lady, and that Susan was living with her aunt. The visit to his home revived many associations, especially those relating to the parsonage, where he had never been since his sad

interview with Susan, which materially changed the course of his life.

He opened the gate and passed up the walk, where in childhood he had so often played, and lifted the Lion's head upon the brass knocker. The door was opened by a tall and elegant lady, in whom he found it difficult to recognize his former friend Bessie. Without making himself known, he asked for her father, and was introduced as a stranger into the parlor, where Mr. and Mrs. Warren were sitting. He advanced quickly to them, holding out his hand, when the joyful recognition took place.

"It is Henry! our own Henry!" said the good man, clasping both his hands, while Mrs. Warren gave him a motherly embrace. Bessie then came in blushing to welcome him, and with a glance reminded her father that there was a gentleman present who had not been introduced. Mr. Warren then smilingly presented Mr. Seymour as a young gentleman of the same profession as himself. Mr. Wells returned the smile, but made no reply. Edward and Gracie were then called, at his request, and after half an hour in general conversation, during which he learned that Mrs. Gordon as well as her brother lived in New York, and *inferred* that Mr. Seymour was trying to woo his old friend Bessie, he requested a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Warren in the study. He then communicated the fact that he had become a clergyman, and showed him his letters from Dr. Chalmers and others. Mr. Warren was very much affected, and said earnestly as he grasped him by the

hand, "God bless you, my young friend; you have chosen wisely, and I rejoice in your decision."

Henry then promised, though with some natural reluctance, to preach the next Sabbath in his native place. He knew this was the wish of his parents, and that he ought to gratify them, but he knew also that to him it would be a trying day.

Through the remainder of the week it was noised about, that the son of Squire Wells had returned from abroad, had become a minister, and that they would have an opportunity to hear him on the next Sabbath, so that it is no great wonder that all the stories of his boyish pranks, and youthful frolics were revived, or that at an early hour the church was crowded by persons eager to recognize in the polished traveller, the youth they had known and loved so well.

It was one of June's most lovely days, and in that calm and quiet retreat where all nature seemed to unite in praise to its Maker, the young man who had so lately taken upon himself the holy vows, felt his soul stirred to its inmost depths, as he realized the sacredness of his office. Here apart from the busy cares of the world, he seemed to hear the voice of God, speaking directly to him, and he drank deep draughts of spiritual knowledge as he listened to the sacred words, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." "Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." "Great is your reward in heaven."

It was with such feelings and meditations as these, that at the appointed time the young minister accompanied

his parents to the church, followed them up the aisle, waited at the door of the pew until they were seated, then ascended the stairs to the pulpit. Mr. Warren was already there, and soon the services commenced. In a low but distinct voice, every word of which could be heard even at the extremity of the house, Mr. Wells invoked the divine blessing. Mr. Warren then, at his request, read the hymn, and conducted the other devotional services, after which, he arose for the delivery of his discourse. If some wondered that the young man, after all his foreign education and travels, should have nothing more in manner to distinguish him, there were many who, with tearful eyes and earnest hearts, thanked God for raising up, even from their midst, a man mighty for God; a man who, in his zeal for his Master, forgot himself. It was with such feelings that Mr. Warren listened to his young friend; and he prayed that his life might be spared to become a bulwark upon the walls of Zion.

On Thursday, of the same week, he again started for New York, and called immediately upon Thomas, now one of the merchant princes of that great city. Here he was introduced to Laura, who delighted him by her simplicity and frankness. He congratulated his friend upon his good fortune, who replied, "When you know her better, you can understand how much I ought to be congratulated." Mr. Wells was however disappointed to learn that Susan, with her aunt and children, had left the city for a few days; but Thomas assured him they would probably return the first of the week.

In reply to the question proposed by his friend, whether

he had not brought home a wife with him, he said, briefly, "I have never loved but once." The answer was given in such a tone as to preclude all farther conversation upon that subject.

When Henry rose to take his leave, both Thomas and his wife insisted that he should take lodgings with them, while he remained in the city. Indeed, for a long time, they would take no denial; but, at length, reluctantly consented that he should remain at the hotel until the first of the week.

On the following Sabbath, as Mr. Wells sat in the pulpit while the congregation were assembling, his eye fell upon a pew about half way up the middle aisle, in which were seated a lovely group—a young mother, with two beautiful little girls, while between her and them was an active boy with black hair curling up from his white brow, and keen black eyes entirely unlike either of the others. A middle aged man occupied the seat at the head of the pew, and as the mother had some difficulty in keeping the child quiet, he beckoned to the boy to sit with him. When he perceived this action, the preacher tried to avert his eyes from them, and took up the hymn book to divert his thoughts into another channel. But no; another minute, and his eyes are again riveted upon that fair young face, about which there is something which sends the blood wildly through his heart. This time the lady looks up, glances at the speaker, her eye meets his, she starts forward, her color fades from her cheeks and lips. The recognition is mutual. For one moment he gazes at her, and then presses his hand upon his eyes as if to shut out the

sight. Ah! in that single moment the labor of years was undone! He awoke to the fact that Susan Gordon was still dearer to him than everything but the precious truths of the Bible she had placed in his hands.

To the young widow, this sudden meeting was painful as well as pleasing. To see him at all would have been a surprise,—but to see him in the pulpit!—she could yet hardly realize or understand her own emotion. When they arose for prayer, her feelings overpowered her; and while the choir were singing she wept, until she feared she should be obliged to leave the house. “Can it be,” she asked herself, “that my prayers have been answered?”

Seeing his mother in tears, Frederic slipped from the cushion and crept softly to her side, where, taking his small handkerchief, he attempted to wipe her eyes, as he often did at home. This kind act Henry noticed, and it almost overcame him; but he firmly fixed his mind upon his subject, and at length regained his self-possession. Mrs. Gordon, too, as her little son, who supposed that she was weeping over his misconduct, whispered “Please, mamma, don’t cry, I will sit still and be a good boy,”—endeavored to remember that she was in the house of God, and engaged in his worship. The sermon was from these words, “Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days.” He opened with a brief account of the manner of casting bread, or sowing rice upon ground covered with water, as is the custom in some Oriental countries. After this, they find a plentiful harvest. He then applied it to sowing good seed in the hearts of men, even if the soil

appear ever so unpromising, the seed sown may find a lodgment there, and in God’s own good time spring up, and bear fruit to His glory.

Upon this part of his subject, he gave several illustrations in point; one was this: “A man was one day walking in the streets of London, when he observed a child, apparently about five years of age, endeavoring to scrape some filthy offal from the gutter, with which to satisfy his earnest craving for food. Just as the gentleman was opposite him the boy began to cry, because he could not find sufficient to gratify his hunger. The noise arrested the attention of the gentleman, who was at that very time engaged in one of the Sabbath schools, for the reformation of such boys. He stopped, ascertained the cause of the child’s grief, and, at length, by the promise of food, persuaded the filthy boy to accompany him home. This was on Sabbath morning. The boy was washed, fed and clothed, and in the afternoon taken to the Sabbath school, where, with open mouth, he listened to the words of the teacher, as she repeated the lesson for the day: ‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain:’—which command having been explained to him as coming from God, seemed to his young mind wholly inconsistent with the lessons, both of precept and example, which he was in the habit of receiving from his parents, and which, therefore, made a deep impression upon him.

“For four successive weeks the boy found his way to the house of the kind gentleman, where he was treated in the same manner as on his first visit; returning after

service to leave his clothes. But after this nothing more was seen of him. Whether his parents had removed from the neighborhood and the child could not find the way back, or for what reasons he stayed away they never knew.

"But more than thirty years afterwards as this gentleman, now in the decline of life, was sitting in his parlor, a stranger was announced as wishing to see him. A tall, noble-looking man entered, his countenance somewhat embrowned, but with an expression of firmness and resolution stamped in every feature. He approached and held out his hand, saying frankly, 'I presume you do not recognize me; nevertheless, I have had the pleasure of enjoying your hospitality, and that for several weeks in succession.'

"The old gentleman gazed earnestly at him, but shook his head as he replied, 'I have no recollection of your face.'

"Exhibiting deep emotion, the stranger inquired, 'Do you remember, sir, a poor boy, whom, more than thirty years ago you picked from the gutter, and after feeding and clothing him took him with you to the Sabbath school? I am that boy, sir, and, under God, you are the means of preventing me from being in the gutter still.'

"The aged man motioned his friend to a chair, and resumed his own seat, too much affected to speak, while an invalid lady, at the farther part of the room wept aloud. She well remembered the dirty boy, and the remonstrances of some of her family against his being brought to the house.

"The stranger then, in a few words gave them his his-

tory. Forgetting the instructions he had received, he soon preferred to spend his Sabbath in play, rather than to go to the Sabbath school, and as years passed, grew more and more hardened in crime. At length, at the age of fifteen he embarked on board ship as a sailor, and here he soon became so profane as to shock the ears of his wicked companions. For more than two years he continued in this wicked course, until one night in a terrible storm at sea, the vessel in which he had sailed for India, was dismasted, and they expected every moment to go to the bottom, he was standing aft holding on to the rigging, when a wave came and washed him the whole length of the vessel. With a horrid oath he resumed his place, when a voice like thunder sounded in his ears, "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." He gazed around, but no one was near. In one moment he was carried back to the small school-house, where he had heard those words.

"Years had passed since he had heard them, but now they came to him with convincing power, and he found no rest until he threw himself at the feet of a crucified Saviour, revealed to him by the very one who, of all others, on ship board, had been a butt for his low ridicule. As soon as he was discharged from the ship, he went to work in earnest to get an education, for at that time he could do little more than to spell out a page of simple reading; and, not to tire you with his trials, difficulties and discouragements, he had at the time he called upon his former patron, been a minister of the gospel for six years. He was connected with the Methodist denomination, and had labored in one of their foreign

fields, to which he was now intending to return, after an absence of a few months. That good old man cast his bread upon the dark waters, and though for many long years it was choked with weeds and tares, yet through the blessing of God it had at last been found after many days."

The preacher then urged his hearers never to be discouraged on account of the unfruitfulness of the soil, nor any other adverse circumstances, for God had power by his holy Spirit, to make use of the humblest instrumentality, even by a word spoken in season, to redeem souls lost in sin, and give them a place among his people.

He then closed in the following manner. "A young man was about to leave the shores of his native country. He had been religiously educated, but was without hope, and without God in the world. Indeed the precious word of God was little more to him than a skilfully devised fable. Just as he was about to sail, a dear friend put into his hands a small Bible which she requested him to read daily for her sake, assuring him, that morning and evening she would pray that the truths it contained might be the controlling principles of his life. He took the book and gave the required promise, and by the blessing of God upon its life-giving doctrines, joined to the earnest prayers which I doubt not ascended morning and evening in behalf of the absent friend, this blessed book, (holding up to view a well worn volume,) became truly a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path."

His broken voice and humid eye, convinced more than one hearer that the preacher alluded to himself, and when he rose for prayer many hearts responded to his appeal,

and determined to cast their bread upon the waters, that they might find it after many days.

But what were the feelings of Mrs. Gordon as she was thus assured of the rich blessing which had attended her parting words. A quick, bright flush upon her pale cheek, and a convulsive sob, attracted the attention of her companion, but as there were many in tears, the emotion passed without more thought.

As Mr. Wells came from the pulpit, he perceived his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Warren, waiting to speak with him; but on glancing toward the pew occupied by Mrs. Gordon, he saw that she had left the house.

After Mr. Warren had expressed his pleasure at hearing his old friend, he said with enthusiasm, "I wished all the time that Susan could have been here. She would have enjoyed your sermon exceedingly."

"I think she was here," remarked Mr. Wells, quietly, "I recognized her, though she has lost her bloom."

"Yes, she is very much changed," answered Mr. Warren, abstractedly, feeling sure from his friend's manner that all particular interest for his sister had subsided into calm friendship.

Refusing the earnest invitation of his friends to dine with them, the young clergyman returned to his hotel, and attempted to fix his mind upon his afternoon discourse. But on the page before him, he could only see a black bonnet, from under which a pair of earnest tearful eyes, were gazing at him.

"Strange," said he aloud, throwing aside his manuscript, "that one glance at her pale face, should have revived in full force the affection I counted as dead. Oh,

Susan, is your heart buried in the grave of your husband! Or can you now return my devoted love?"

It was not without a struggle that the young man at length gave his attention to the subject before him, when his mind was so much engrossed with it, that he was surprised by the ringing of the bell.

The next morning, Mr. Wells, having the previous week ascertained the residence of Mrs. Hammond, turned his steps in that direction, wondering at how early an hour he might venture to call. Not being much acquainted in that part of the city, he was just going to ask if he were in the right direction, when he saw approaching him a boy, running at full speed after a hoop, followed by two girls, and a beautiful spaniel, which he instantly recognized as Moselle. They were all running past him, when with a low whistle he called, "Moselle! Moselle! poor fellow, good Moselle!"

The dog turned, raised her ears, and her tail, began smelling around for a moment, and then sprang with a joyful bark of recognition upon her old master. So violent and almost fierce was her joy, that Fanny became alarmed for fear she would injure the gentleman, or tear his clothes. She called, "Moselle! Moselle! Come, Moselle!" But this time the faithful creature took no heed to the oft repeated call.

To witness what they would do, Mr. Wells turned as if to walk on, and Moselle, though barking for the children to follow, went with him.

"Oh!" exclaimed the distressed Fanny to her sister, "what shall we do? Moselle is going off."

After one moment's hesitation they both set off after

her, and soon overtaking the gentleman, Helen said "please, sir, will you give us back our dog? Mamma would feel very sorry if we should come home without her."

"The beautiful creature seems to like me," replied Mr. Wells, smiling, "Don't you think your mother would sell her?"

"Oh, no, sir!" they exclaimed in alarm, "She wouldn't give her up on any account. Somebody gave Moselle to her a great while ago."

"Who was it?" he asked, with a choking voice.

"His name was Henry, sir; and she loves Moselle very much, and talks to her about Henry. Come, Moselle, go with me to mamma, and she'll tell you. Henry come back sometime."

At this speech, Moselle renewed her manifestations of joy by jumping on her old master.

In the mean time Frederic had been standing by, his face growing very determined, as if he were making up his mind to defend his rights to the death. When his sister had done speaking, he came forward looking very red. "No, sir," he said, "you can't have her; mamma wouldn't sell her for a whole lot of gold."

Mr. Wells patted the boy's head as he smiled and said, "If she thinks so much of the dog, I wouldn't ask her to give it up; so, 'good bye, good bye, Moselle,'" and he began to walk away; but as he expected, with the faithful creature close at his heels. In vain did the children run after her to entice her back. She would not go until the gentleman asked, "where does your mother live?"

"I shall have to take the dog to her, as she will not leave me."

"Oh, thank you; thank you, sir. She lives in the next street;" and now Moselle appeared satisfied that matters were in a right train, for she trotted along quietly until they reached the steps of Mrs. Hammond's house. When the servant answered the door bell, Frederic rushed forward exclaiming, "mamma, don't let Moselle go away; here's a gentleman with Moselle."

It was still very early, and as the children in their earnestness ushered Mr. Wells into the breakfast room, he saw the young widow standing at the table wiping the silver. Helen was preparing to introduce the stranger, when with a sudden start forward, he caught her hand, and the interchanged names, "*Susan*," "*Henry*," showed that they were already acquainted.

Poor Susan! the color came and went, and with a thought of the loss she had sustained since he left home, she burst into tears. Henry led her to a chair and sought to soothe her, when she soon regained her composure, and introduced her aunt, who well remembered him.

After explaining to the children that this gentleman was the Henry who gave her Moselle, she dismissed them to their play, though the dog absolutely refused to accompany them. With regard to the old friends, it is sufficient to say that after conversing together an hour in the breakfast room, while Mrs. Gordon finished her morning duties, they adjourned to the parlor, accompanied by Mrs. Hammond. Their themes of conversation were far from exhausted. When the bell rang for dinner, Mr.

Wells suddenly took leave, as he had engaged to dine at Mr. Warren's, but asked leave to come again in the evening.

"Come as often as you please," said Mrs. Hammond cordially, "we shall make no stranger of you."

CHAPTER XX.

THE YOUNG WIDOW.

AFTER dinner, when she had seen her aunt in bed for her daily nap, Mrs. Gordon retired to her own room and made the following entry into her diary.

"Henry Wells has come home—a Christian and a clergyman. How grateful I ought to be, that any words of mine were blessed to his soul. Yesterday I thought him very much changed. So calm, when he used to be impetuous; but to-day he seemed just like the Henry I knew when a child. I longed to ask him if he were married; but somehow I could not, as he did not allude to such a connection. He listened with great interest to the subject on which I most love to talk, the character of my dear husband. Oh, how he would have rejoiced in the conversion of this dear friend! Aunt Susy was very much interested in his conversation. He says he has much to tell me not only of his travels, but also of his plans for the future. He passed last Sabbath at home, and preached in the old church for father. I presume, if he has a family, he left them there. I will ask Thomas about it. I wonder if he would have called to-day, if it had not been for Moselle."

In the afternoon, on the way to his counting-room, Thomas called to say that he and Laura would accompany Henry there in the evening, and his sister took the

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opportunity to ask some questions with regard to her friend.

In the evening, when they were all seated together, Thomas, with something of his former teasing habit, said, "Henry, a lady asked me, to-day, if you were a Benedict. I believe I understood you to say you were not."

Mr. Wells, whose hopes had been so buoyed up by the kind reception he had met with in the morning, experienced a sudden sinking of the heart. He bent his eyes upon Susan with almost a look of reproach, and if he had doubted before who had asked the question, he doubted no more, as he saw the deepened color in her cheeks; but with a seriousness Thomas considered wholly uncalled for, answered briefly, "You understood me aright. During my absence I saw many beautiful ladies, and many accomplished ones, but none whom I wished to ask to sustain to me the relation of wife."

The evening passed off pleasantly in general conversation, but the question of Mrs. Gordon to her brother was the occasion of a sleepless night to the subject of it, and he could not but confess to himself that her manner was more constrained after knowing that he was still unmarried.

"Could it have been the supposition that it was otherwise, which led her to receive me so warmly in the morning?" was a question which he asked himself again and again, but which he saw no way to solve to his satisfaction, unless he asked the lady herself.

Early the next morning, hearing Mrs. Warren express her determination to send for her aunt and sister to

come with the children to pass the day, Mr. Wells volunteered to be the bearer of the message, as he was intending to invite the little girls out for a walk. He did so, and as Mrs. Warren had requested them to come very early, he proposed to accompany them when he returned.

"The children will be happy to do so," replied Mrs. Gordon. "Mr. Whitney will drive aunt and myself over, as she is feeble."

During the walk Mr. Wells endeavored to drive away his despondence, and render himself agreeable to his little charge. He was not long in ascertaining that his conversation must be confined to the little girls, each of whom claimed a hand, for Master Frederic was as untamed as a wild colt, darting up this street and down that, with Moselle barking at his heels.

"Who is Mr. Whitney?" was a question he longed to ask; and yet he did not think it quite honorable to elicit information from the children, and so he went back with them to a description of their life at the parsonage. True, they could not remember all that they told him, but they had often heard their mother and Nora talk of their old home, and well understood their subject.

After waiting a few moments, while Mrs. Gordon attended to the dressing of the children, Mr. Wells was about to take his leave with them, when Mr. Whitney entered, and was introduced to him. Mr. Wells instantly remembered him as the gentleman he had seen in the pew with Mrs. Gordon, and a sharp pang shot through his heart. Mr. Whitney was, however, very much pleased to see the clergyman, having been exceedingly

interested in his preaching, of which fact he kindly assured him.

On his way to Mr. Warren's, he met two gentlemen who had come from his hotel, and were going in search of him. They made themselves known as the committee of the church, and then walked with him to the house of his friend. They there assured him, that as far as they had been able to ascertain, the congregation had been much interested in his discourses, and wished to lose no time in engaging him to preach as a candidate.

Mr. Wells replied that he had been employed by the clergyman, upon whom he had accidentally called, to supply the pulpit for three Sabbaths, but did not wish to be considered as a candidate for settlement, certainly not at present, as he might yet conclude to return to Scotland, where he had a call to settle.

Though he did not design it, yet this answer only made the gentlemen more earnest to engage his services; but as they found him decided to give them no encouragement at present, they ceased for the time to press him farther. As he waited upon them to the door, the thought passed his mind, "if I only knew that I could gain Susan's affections, I would allow them to proceed as they wish."

Entirely unconscious that the lady who passed them on the steps, had such an influence on the fate of their church, the committee departed, regretting the unfavorable answer they had received. "We must see Mr. Warren," remarked one of them, "and enlist him in our service. He is a townsman, I hear."

"Yes," replied the other, "and a staunch Christian he

is, too, as well as a thorough business man. I am told he will not use a cent of his wife's money in his business, but prefers her to give away the income for charitable purposes.

At dinner Mr. Wells had a farther opportunity to become acquainted with Mr. Whitney, who he found was a nephew of Mrs. Hammond's husband. He also ascertained that he was an unmarried man, and that he owned a beautiful house and grounds three miles out of town. That he kept a carriage, and was often in the habit of taking his young relatives to ride, was very evident from their conversation with him. He had no sooner entered, than master Frederic was on his knee, showing off to his new friend, his acquaintance with all that concerned uncle William, as he had been taught to call him.

"How are Carlo and Dix?" inquired the boy.

"Well, very well, and sent their regards."

The children laughed, and the boy continued, "may I ride home with you to-night?"

"If your mother is willing."

"You ask her," whispered the boy.

"Yes, Frederic," Mrs. Gordon answered, overhearing the question.

"I'm going to live with uncle William sometime, aren't I, mamma?"

"I cannot say, my dear."

"You said you'd see about it."

Mr. Wells noticed a quick glance between uncle William, and the lady, and he bent his eye piercingly upon her, so that it was no wonder her cheeks burned pain-

fully, as she answered the child. "Well, my boy, I will keep my word."

"Then I shall go," he whispered again, "Fanny and Helen say she always lets us when she sees about it."

This remark made the whole company smile; but Mr. Wells did so with a sad pain at his heart. To Mr. Whitney, however, though the conversation contained nothing particularly encouraging to his hopes, yet he was thankful that it did not repel him. For nearly two years, he had been much in the society of the young widow, had witnessed her piety, her devotion to her aunt and children, her enthusiastic yet even temperament, and he thought if he could have her for the mistress of his suburban home, he should be happy indeed. His aunt had long suspected his affection for her dear Susy, and rejoiced at it with all her heart; but to the object of it Mr. Whitney had never breathed a word of love. For a long time this would have been improper, and of late, as he had watched her, he imagined a certain coolness, or rather a dignity, on her part, which prevented him from willingly running the risk of losing her by a formal presentation of his hand. Though nearly forty years of age, and with sufficient property to sustain a family in affluence, he was willing to wait rather than to lose all by being premature, especially as, in his frequent visits to the house, he had every opportunity to enjoy her society, though she was very chary of her company when her aunt was not present.

Such was their relation to each other. Of Susan's feeling we may hereafter judge from her diary: but at present Mr. Wells was very ingenious in finding some

look or word with which to torture himself when alone. Mr. Warren and Mr. Whitney left after dinner, to return to their business; but though they invited Mr. Wells to accompany them, Laura immediately replied that they could not spare him; that it needed one gentleman to entertain Master Frederic.

In a few moments, the young gentleman slipped from the room, and Mrs. Warren, in passing through the hall, heard him in earnest conversation with the porter. She returned to the parlor, and beckoned his mother and Mr. Wells to follow her. From their position they could hear all that was said without being seen.

"My mamma whips me, when I am naughty," said the boy.

"That's too bad!" replied the man in a sympathizing tone.

"No, it isn't too bad," exclaimed Frederic with warmth. "It's just right;—I like to have her, because it says she must in the Bible, to save me from going to the wicked place, and it don't hurt me any."

"There's a lesson for you," whispered Henry; in reply to which she gravely shook her head, though she could not resist an inclination to join in the laugh.

"I fear I am too lenient with him," she responded, after a moment,—and when they had returned to the parlor,—“He is so different from the twins. If his father had lived,” she added, her eyes becoming moist, “he would have had better management. He will sadly miss his father's firm government as he becomes old.”

Days grew into weeks. The church had presented Mr. Wells a unanimous call to settle with them; but he

told the committee that he preferred the parish would not take any steps until his own mind was determined in regard to his future course. In the mean time, Mr. Warren had urged his friend to settle with them. He perceived that Henry was undecided and doubtful, and that this state of mind was injuring his health; and he at length drew from him the confession that he was unwilling to decide the question until he could ascertain whether Susan could return his affection. “If she cannot,” he remarked sadly, “I shall pay my parents a farewell visit, and return at once to Scotland.”

“I certainly had no idea of this,” responded Mr. Warren, “and cannot at all judge of her feelings. I am sure Mr. Whitney is fond of her, and I have wished that, at a proper time, she would marry again, but I never thought her particularly interested in him. I will say to you, in confidence, that I understood Mr. Gordon wished it; that is, if she could be happier. In his case, however, I may be mistaken, as I may be also in yours.”

“In mine? What of mine?” asked Mr. Wells eagerly.

“Why, I concluded that absence and Susan's marriage had entirely weaned your affections from her; but I'll get Laura to ascertain her feelings.”

A day or two after, Mrs. Warren called upon her sister-in-law for this purpose. When they had been conversing for some time upon indifferent topics, Laura said,—“I regret extremely that we cannot prevail upon Mr. Wells to remain in New York. It will be a great disappointment to the society; but I understood my husband that he will probably settle in Scotland.” Susan rose abruptly and left the room, and though

after half an hour, Mrs. Warren sent one of her nieces to see if she were not intending to return, she came back with an apology from her mother, on the plea of a bad headache this morning. "She is crying," artlessly added the child. Mrs. Warren departed quite delighted with the fact she should have to relate to her husband, as an evidence of his sister's interest in his friend.

After nearly an hour passed in tears, — during which poor Susan yearned for the sympathizing heart of him who was sleeping quietly in the village churchyard, — she turned to her journal, and began to write. At the bottom of the desk was a letter from Mrs. Hall, her dear friend from B—. This lady had passed a few days with her on her return from a tour to the west, and, during that visit, put into her hand this sealed note. She had witnessed the attentions of Mr. Whitney, and thought the time might be at hand when she should deliver a message to the widow she had received for her from her dying husband. As she hinted at the subject, Mrs. Gordon really felt incapable of opening it, and was grieved that her friend should suppose she would ever marry again.

"Oh yes, my dear!" answered Mrs. Hall; "you are young yet; life is all before you. I have no doubt such will be the case at some future time. If you do not choose to read my letter now, lay it aside till you need counsel."

This she had done; and now the letter lay before her. She took it up, and was about to tear open the seal, — then, with a sigh, returned it to her desk and resumed her writing; — from which we will take liberty to read a few extracts: —

"How much Henry reminds me of my dear husband. I think his christian character has softened and subdued, as well as elevated him. I often wonder if he ever thinks of the last time we met at home. From his calm appearance, I judge not; and yet, he sometimes gives me a look which recalls the past. I fear he thinks me very forward, and I have often heard that widows are considered so; but I must be on my guard. I certainly wish to preserve his respect."

Later: —

"Henry has received a call from our church. On many accounts it would be pleasant to have him here; but I have never mentioned the subject to him. He is very kind to me, and appears fond of the children. He was much pleased when aunt said to him: 'If I did not remember you from a boy, I should feel acquainted with you from hearing Susan and her husband speak of you so frequently.'

"Dear aunt! — She would hardly have told him that, if she knew all that has passed between us."

"Yesterday I heard Henry preach for the fourth Sabbath. I have sometimes thought it strange that, except in his first sermon, he should never have made the least allusion to the Bible I gave him. This morning he called to take the children, for their usual walk. I happened to be alone, for the moment, with Mr. Whitney, in the breakfast-room, an occurrence which I have studiously avoided since I suspected his affection for me. Poor Henry seemed to feel that he was an intruder; but I begged him most earnestly to stay, and Mr. Whitney

soon departed. Henry began to apologize; but I said: 'On the contrary, you relieved me from an embarrassing position.' Could I be mistaken in thinking that he was much pleased at the confidence I reposed in him?"

"This morning sister Laura has been here, and told me Henry would probably go to Scotland. It was so sudden to me that I was obliged to leave the room to conceal my emotion. What must Laura have thought of me! Or what can I think of myself? Why should I be so much overcome? Henry has never, since his return, spoken to me of love. Can it be that I have been so wanting in self-respect as to give my affections unasked? But I hear Nora opening the door, and as aunt is riding out, I must prepare to go down."

A few hours after the call of Mrs. Warren, Mr. Wells rung at the door, and inquired for Mrs. Gordon.

As Nora went to her room to call her, she started to look in the mirror. Her eyes still bore the traces of tears; and she was very reluctant to have him see her in such a condition; but on a second call, from Frederic, she went below. If her face was flushed with weeping, his was intensely pale,—for he had come to know whether she would return his affection. As soon as they were seated, he said to Frederic, in a low voice, "I wish to talk with your mother a few moments; will you run and play with your sisters?"

The boy glanced from one of them to the other; then nodded his head, and ran away.

"Susan," he began, after two or three impatient turns across the room,—“you may think me presuming on

your kindness; you may think my conduct absurd,—but I can bear this suspense no longer." He hesitated, and then seated himself by her side: "My former affection for you has returned; and not only that, but it has increased ten fold."

"And the same is true with me, dear Henry," she replied as she placed her hand in his, though her face was covered with roses.

I will not tire the reader with an account of the delight experienced by Henry at this frank avowal; nor of the two hours' uninterrupted conversation which followed. Neither will I try to express the pleasure of the committee who, by appointment, waited upon him that evening at Mr. Warren's, when the young clergyman informed them that his business had terminated so favorably that he had concluded to remain in this country, and would do nothing further to prevent the parish from meeting to act upon the vote of the church.

On returning to her room,—after the interview with Mr. Wells, which would have such an important bearing upon her future life,—Susan again wrote a few lines in her diary, which she found she had, in her haste, left open upon the table; but, before she did this, she again drew out the letter from Mrs. Hall, and having broken the seal, with a trembling hand, and a beating heart, proceeded to unfold and read it.

The letter was brief, and was as follows:—

"Very Dear and Respected Friend,—

"More than a year ago, on an occasion of great grief at the death of my beloved pastor, your dear hus-

band, made a memorandum of a message from him to you. It was when I was first summoned to his sick room, and while my husband had gone for the physician, — that supposing he could live but a few hours, and fearing that you might not reach him while he was living, — he said to me, in a broken voice, — for his agony at the time was great: ‘You have always been a good friend to my dear, *dear* wife, and I wish to leave a confidential message for her with you, not to be delivered for the present; but according to circumstances, and at such time as you may judge proper. She is young and attractive, and will probably receive proposals to marry again. It may be that a dear friend, who is now abroad, will, at a suitable time, renew his offer to her. If he, or any other one gains her affections, I do not wish her to hesitate or to devote herself to a single life, for she is eminently calculated to give and receive happiness in the married state. I feel that this message is due from me to her, as she has sometimes expressed herself strongly against second marriages.’

“He was so much distressed as he proceeded, that I interrupted him, by giving him medicine or by fanning him; but he returned to the subject again as soon as he was at all relieved. When my husband came in with the physician, I leaned over him and said, ‘I understand your wish, and will strictly comply with it. I will also promise to be a friend to her as long as I live, and at some future time to make known your kind message.’”

Tears blinded the eyes of the widow as she endeavored to read the kind words of love, and unselfish con-

sideration for her happiness, which seemed to come to her from the grave of her beloved husband. In the midst of all his agony, he had provided for her welfare. Again and again she took up her pen, but was obliged to lay it down, and give way to the grief which the remembrance of that never to be forgotten scene occasioned her, — at length she wrote: —

“Henry has again proposed marriage, and this time I did not decline his proposal. The affections which I thought forever dead have revived under the influence of his warm and constant attachment.

“In a dying message from my beloved husband, through my kind friend, Mrs. Hall, I find that he anticipated such an event, and expressed the wish that I should marry, if I found it would contribute to my happiness. This dying act was perfectly consistent with the whole of his conduct with regard to me. Oh, am I not mistaken in supposing I can ever love another! Shall I not render myself and Henry unhappy by the indulgence of undue grief or regret at the loss I have sustained! Let me rather strive to act upon the principle which, in such an eminent degree, governed him, and follow the example he set me for nearly five blissful years.

“For the sake of my children, especially of Frederic, I confess it is desirable I should marry, especially if, as I now feel sure will be the case, they will find a true father in my choice. Henry has already acquired a great influence over my restive boy, which I doubt not will increase, and be in the highest degree beneficial to him.”

The betrothal of Mrs. Gordon to Mr. Wells occasioned great joy, not only to her brother and aunt, but to their parents in C——, who were immediately informed by him of his happy prospects. Henry urged an immediate union, stating in glowing terms the propriety of a clergyman being a married man, and having a home where his people could call upon him, and Susan having consented to be his, saw no reason for delaying the marriage beyond a few months. Mr. Wells, therefore, with the assistance of a gentleman of the committee, began the search for a house. Mrs. Hammond soon heard of this, and put a final stop to such a necessity, by calling in a lawyer, and making over the elegant mansion in which she lived, to her niece. This she told Mr. Wells she had intended to do at her decease, if Susan preferred living in the city; or, if not, to invest the property for her benefit elsewhere. The young widow was very much affected at her aunt's generosity, and drew from her a promise not unwillingly given, to remain with them, and constitute, as they had done, but one family.

It was now the last of July. On the next Sabbath Mr. Wells intended to give an acceptance to the unanimous call which he had received from both church and parish, after which he had agreed to supply either by preaching or exchange, until the first of October, when he wished to be absent a month on his wedding tour. The services of his ordination were to be postponed until his return, and probably would take place the second week in November. The intelligence of the early marriage of their intended pastor, excited for the fair widow

no slight degree of attention. The story of his attachment to Mrs. Gordon previous to her first marriage, his constancy to this attachment through all the temptations of his foreign life, and many other circumstances connected with their private history were related and exaggerated as usual on such occasions. The lovely twins and the fearless boy also came under notice, and whereas heretofore passers by contented themselves by remarking as they met them at play upon the side-walk, "what beautiful children," now their deep sun-bonnets were often pushed back by ladies, who asked, "are you Mrs. Gordon's little girls? How is your mamma?" While some not so prudent, asked, "how do you like the idea of having a new papa?"

Upon Mr. Whitney this announcement came so suddenly, that he could scarcely credit it, until informed by his aunt of their previous history, which Henry related to her when he asked of her the hand of her niece. Finding his hopes thus disappointed, he concluded to leave home, until after her departure for her native place, where her aunt was to accompany her in a few weeks. His aunt advised him to see Susan, and bid her farewell, which he at length concluded to do, though with great reluctance, for he thought that she must have been aware of his increasing attachment to her, and he respected her for the course she had adopted, which prevented his enduring the mortification of being refused by her.

In this farewell interview, he assured her that no one rejoiced in her prospects of happiness, more than he himself did, and he added, "I think you eminently qualified for the station which you are to fill."

Mrs. Gordon was so frank in her expression of interest for him, and her gratitude for his kind wishes that, as he left, he ventured to hope that she might have been deceived as to the nature of his affection, especially as she said: "I trust that we shall always retain you not only as a parishioner, but as a friend."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WINNING WIFE.

HENRY STANWOOD, the former classmate of Thomas Warren, was a young lawyer of good talents and amiable disposition. Whether his "cuteness" with the faculty really turned his attention to the legal profession, I cannot say; but having been admitted to the bar, he established himself in Cheswell, a flourishing town in New England.

Here he was introduced to Mary Carlton, the beauty and belle of the place. He wooed and won her; and after a few months, during which she was absent on a visit to a friend at the south, they were married, and quietly settled in a home of their own.

The young lawyer, though not particularly partial to parties and places of amusement, had always been in the habit of attending them as a means of increasing his practice. His young and lovely bride had been the life of every gay circle, and no entertainment was thought complete without her.

About six months after their marriage her attention was called to the subject of religion, when, to the great mortification and chagrin of Mr. Stanwood, his wife became a meek and humble Christian.

Neither Henry nor Mary had been religiously educated; and though respect for her feelings prevented him

from saying so openly, yet Henry felt that his happiness had departed. Instead of a lively, cheerful companion to meet him on his return home, who, by her gayety, would beguile him of all his office trials and cares, he must now look forward to gloom and despondence. His hitherto happy home, and lovely wife were converted, he thought, into a vestry for long prayers, and a pious fanatic.

Poor Mary, on her part, was not less tried. Not having been blessed with Christian parents, or educated amidst the cheerful piety of a truly happy home, she knew not how far she ought to conform to her husband's views and wishes. She heard his covert taunts in silence, and often turned away to conceal a tear; but they drove her, where all our sorrows and trials should drive us, to our Saviour's feet. Here she poured out her whole soul before One who "was in all points tempted like as we are," that he might "succor us when we are tempted."

Day after day did the sweet young wife repair to her closet, and as often were her prayers answered. Light began to dawn upon her path. Her beloved Harry, converted to God, sharing in all her new-born hopes, sympathizing in all her doubts and fears, was the one object of her daily thoughts and nightly meditations. How earnestly did she pray that she might be the humble instrument in the hands of her heavenly Father, of winning him to Jesus, and from the false and fading pleasures of this world to the purer and nobler joys of heaven.

She was well aware of her husband's displeasure at

the change in her feelings, and also of the views he entertained of religion, as making all its associates gloomy and morose, conversing entirely upon death and similar subjects. She well remembered the time when she cherished the same opinion. She therefore determined to show him, what was really the case, that she never before was so happy.

Thus a week had passed away. Henry knew not what to think. Every time he entered his home, Mary appeared more and more cheerful. She rarely allowed any one but herself to open the door to his well-known tap, but sprang forward to throw herself into his arms.

"Dear Harry," she would sometimes say, "I am so glad you have come; I have been watching for you some minutes."

Several times the puzzled husband was on the point of acknowledging that, after all, she wasn't much changed, but he checked himself, "Wait until after the Sabbath," he soliloquized. "It will be a good opportunity for me to test her new views." The Sabbath had been a favorite day with young Stanwood, because he was then free from the duties of his office, and could spend the day with his wife. He had been in the habit of going to church in the afternoon, and then feeling that he had kept the Sabbath, would take a stroll after tea, or visit some neighbor for an hour or two of friendly chat.

Mary was also looking forward to the Sabbath with varied emotions. It would be her first celebration of the rest, peace and joy, which at the close of the last holy day dawned upon her soul. After a weary struggle of

many days, she had retired to her chamber, at the hallowed hour of the setting sun, and there had cast all her burden of sin upon her Saviour. Her spirit fainted for the courts of the Lord, and her soul was filled with emotions like those which inspired the Psalmist when he sung, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." But these emotions were not unmingled with anxiety and sorrow, on account of her dear husband.

She came, however, from her closet on Saturday evening, feeling that her duty was plain, and humbly resting upon an Almighty arm for strength to perform it. Could she fail?

Sabbath morning dawned clear and bright. It had hitherto been their habit to lie in bed much longer than on the morning of other days; and Harry slept so soundly that Mary crept softly from his side without disturbing him. She descended to the kitchen, where Betsey, taking the liberty to follow the example of her master and mistress, had but just lighted the fire. Having taken special pains with the coffee, she prepared, with her own hands, a tempting dish for her dear Harry. She charged the girl to be quiet about her work, and repaired to a room for her morning devotions.

An hour later she heard her husband go down stairs, muttering something to himself in no pleasant tone. She flew to meet him. She folded her arms lovingly about his neck, saying, "Isn't this a delightful day?"

"I should think so," he replied, gazing intently into her face. "Mary, what have you been doing to yourself? I declare! I never saw you look half so handsome."

Mary hid her blushing face in her husband's bosom, as she whispered, "It is because I'm so very happy." Her tone was earnest, but serious; yet he made no reply. He turned at once into the breakfast room. He had little dreamed what an ornament religion is. He could not understand that the pure elevation of her brow, the brightness of her eye, and the heavenly smile on her lips, resulted from a heart at peace with her Maker, from a meek and quiet spirit.

"Really," said Harry, as he sat at table, "Betsey improves rapidly; I never drank better coffee," at the same time passing his cup to be refilled; "and this cream toast tastes just like my mother's, I must praise her for it."

Mary smiled, but made no reply. After breakfast she took her husband's hand and led him to the parlor; though, to tell the truth, she felt somewhat embarrassed about introducing the subject upon which her thoughts were engaged. She led him to a large rocking-chair, near the table, and sat upon his knee.

"What a delightful morning this will be to walk to church."

"Ah! you can't get round me in that way," said Harry to himself.

Mary was a skilful tactician; a look in her husband's eye warned her not to go too far. She reached out her hand and took up an elegantly bound Bible, which he had given her as a wedding present, and which he regarded only as a necessary appendage to the centre table. "What a beautiful Bible! I don't know that

I ever thanked you for it. At any rate I'll do it again," and she kissed her thanks.

Harry unclasped the covers and admired the print, remarking that he had taken great pains to select the best.

"Yes," she returned, "how very plain and clear the type is," and she turned to the beautiful story of Ruth. Before he was aware Harry was listening with absorbing interest, forgetting entirely that this day was the Sabbath, and this book the word of God. He would not allow her to stop until she had finished the narrative, and by that time he was in very good humor with his wife, with himself, and with the world.

Mary started in surprise when the first bell rang, saying, "Please excuse me now, I must dress for church." When she came down, at the ringing of the second bell, almost expecting he would object to her leaving him, Henry stood brushing his hat, as he tried to hide his face from her searching glance.

"Dear Harry, are you going with me?"

"Certainly, you don't think I shall let you tramp off half a mile alone. Beside, 'twould be dull music here without you."

At the close of the day Harry was obliged to acknowledge that something had improved his Mary. "Formerly, though amiable and generally yielding in her disposition, yet she had too long been petted and indulged as an only child, and a favorite in society, not to be disposed at times to have her own way. When thus determined, Harry had found he must yield. Now Mary's

sole object seemed to be to give him proof of her entire love.

A month later, invitations were given out for the largest party of the season; and it was to close with a ball. Poor Mary was sorely tried as to her duty. She had lost all relish for such scenes. She felt that she had wasted far too much time in them. But her husband took it for granted she would accompany him, and expiated largely upon the anticipated pleasures. At length it occurred to the young wife to consult an old lady who was a friend of her mother's, and an eminent Christian. It was fortunate for her that she so wisely chose her confidant.

Mrs. Simons, after listening with great interest to her young friend, advised her to defer her own wishes to those of her husband, in every case where principle was not involved.

"Yes," she eagerly answered, "but in *this* case?"

"Has he expressed his wishes?"

"He never commands me. It is unnecessary; but I presume he will be displeased if I refuse to accompany him, and I am sure he will be disappointed."

"Well, my dear, your own good sense will enable you to decide. If you should tell him frankly you have lost all interest in such scenes, and ask him to excuse you, he will probably do so.

Encouraged by this view of the case, Mary returned home, and taking an early opportunity, begged her husband to allow her to remain at home.

"Pshaw!" was the impatient reply, "don't let me hear any such nonsense. I was just beginning to think

religion was nothing so very terrible after all, when you begin with all this Methodist cant. But I can't say, it is entirely unexpected. Religion spoils a person for every enjoyment. If you go on so," he continued, after a pause, keeping his eyes steadily fixed on his book, "you'll prejudice me against it more than ever."

This was a sad trial to the sweet loving heart, that had begun to pray so earnestly for her husband's conversion. She brushed back the tears which had gathered in her eyes, and said in a low musical voice, "Dear Harry, though I do not enjoy such scenes as I once did, and should much prefer a pleasant evening with you in our own sweet home; yet if you wish it, I will sacrifice my feelings and go with you. But I wish, dear husband, you would excuse me."

Harry happened at that moment to think of something he needed very quickly in the next room. Mary was much disappointed. But her mind was clear that in this case it would be better for her to comply with his wish. As her husband had now left for his office, there was no opportunity for farther conversation upon the subject; and she retired to her room to dress for the evening.

It must be remembered that Mary had for many years been in the habit of frequenting such scenes, having never had their injurious tendency pointed out to her, and now only regarded them as a waste of time which might be more profitably and pleasantly employed, rather than as sinful.

When she was nearly ready, with a low tap Mr. Stanwood entered the room.

She looked at him with a sweet smile. "Does my dress suit you, Harry?"

"You were never more lovely in my eyes." She held out her beautifully rounded arm for him to clasp the bracelet. He did it mechanically, without speaking.

"Is it time to go?" she pleasantly asked, trying to bring a smile to his face.

He walked toward the window. "I fear it is growing damp, and you already have some cold."

"Oh, no! my dear, I am perfectly well," she replied in surprise.

"Well, on the whole, I don't think it will be prudent for you to venture out. You will be sure to have a sore throat." Mary just began to have an inkling of the truth. "And will you excuse me really?" she asked in a gay tone.

Henry walked to the window. *He* appeared to have a very sore throat, for his voice was extremely husky. Mary crossed the room and kissed his forehead, "my own dear Harry," she whispered.

Mr. Stanwood soon retired to make his toilet, and Mary took an interesting book and sat down to read. "How pleasant," she thought, "it would be if Harry didn't care to go, and would read to me, while I sew." Her eye grew dreamy as she gazed into the future, and saw a pleasant fire, a table covered with books, near by which she sat busily engaged with her work, while her husband sat by her, reading and talking by turns. There was a vision too of a cradle standing near, and a sweet babe asleep in it. Her reverie was suddenly interrupted

by her husband who entered, saying, "Don't sit up for me, Mary, I may be late."

She looked up in his face so bright and cheerful that he thought, "how foolish for me to leave her!" But pride said, "go," and he went.

Dear girl! He had no sooner gone, than she laid down her book, and kneeling by the side of her chair, poured out a most earnest prayer for her dear young husband. When she arose, she felt assured that her prayer would be answered.

Not more than half an hour had elapsed when she heard the outer door softly open, (he had taken the night-key,) and a light footstep across the hall. She looked up to see her husband stealing behind her for a surprise.

"Oh!" said she joyfully, "I am so glad you've come back. I was just wishing you were here."

He kissed her tenderly, as he said, "You've conquered, Mary; I found in leaving you, I had left happiness."

Six months passed away; Mary's vision was in part realized. A lovely infant lay by her side, calling forth from her gentle heart such a gush of tenderness, that she was almost too happy. Harry felt a father's pride in gazing at their new and precious treasure; but soon finding the house lonely, now that Mary was confined to her room, he gradually acquired a habit of staying out during the evening. Nor when Mary was again able to go below, did he give up this habit, and sometimes protracted his stay until near midnight.

It needed all the young wife's native cheerfulness, added to her absorbing love for her darling boy, to keep

her from sinking under this new trial. Once or twice when she in the kindest manner begged him to tell her where he had been, he answered her in such an irritable tone and manner, that she determined to question him no more. But her faith was sorely tried; and when she endeavored to pray, the thought of the sad, *sad* change in her husband made her almost despair.

Yet he was not generally, or even often unkind. Sometimes he seemed to feel ashamed of his harshness, and once when he left her in displeasure, and had thrown out some taunt at her religion, he returned, evidently expecting and feeling that he had deserved her anger. But the forgiving wife looked up so cheerfully at his entrance, that he reproached himself bitterly for his conduct.

Then he noticed that she had grown very pale, and the thought, "what if I should lose her?" shot like a dart through his breast. Softened and subdued by it, he confessed his sorrow to her. He told her what she had long suspected was true, that the young men of his acquaintance had formed a club, and while she was sick had induced him to join, for the sake of passing away his lonely evenings. They told him he could leave any time; but when he had repeatedly proposed doing so, they had sneered at his wife's influence, and ridiculed him for being in her leading strings. They said, they supposed since she had become religious, she thought it was wicked for her husband to enjoy himself, or to do anything but pray.

Mary had bowed her head over her babe to conceal

her tears; but when he stopped, she looked up, saying, "Dear Harry, do you call the society of such men enjoyment?" Now for the first time in his presence, she burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

Mr. Stanwood was much distressed, and tried to soothe her by promises of amendment, in which he was, at the time, really sincere.

For several weeks, he passed every evening at home with Mary, except when absolutely engaged in his office. Sometimes he brought his law books, and having interested his wife in the case, looked out his authorities in her presence. Mary's heart was buoyed with hope; and she endeavored by every means in her power to make his home attractive and happy.

But alas, for resolutions of amendment, when the only strength for keeping them is in a depraved heart! Mr. Stanwood one day met a member of the club, who immediately attacked him for leaving them so unceremoniously. They had missed him extremely. Harry muttered something about pressing engagements.

"There! I told them so," exclaimed the young man. "But some of them would have it that you dared not come; that your handsome wife had found you out, and forbidden your being in the society of such ungodly, graceless fellows as she thinks us to be."

Harry's face was crimson as he denied the charge; and he was easily induced to be present the ensuing evening. He meant to prove to them that he was not afraid of wounding the gentle, loving heart which beat so tenderly for him, and which sighed and prayed so earnestly for his best welfare. He meant to show them that he pre-

ferred their coarse songs, and still coarser jokes and sallies of wit, to her pure and chaste affection and society.

As he sat in his office the day following this interview, he found it impossible to confine his attention to his business. In vain he looked over the notes he had made of a case he was to plead at the next term of court; in vain he took down Blackstone, Chitty, and other law books from the shelves to consult the authorities. Wherever he looked, he could only see the image of his lovely wife, pale and sad, bending over her babe to conceal her tears.

"Pshaw!" said he, angrily throwing down his books, "what a fool I am making of myself;" and the crimson again dyed his cheeks, as he remembered the insulting language of his club companion. "I despise them all," said he aloud; "yet, I could n't have them suppose I'm afraid of my wife."

Here he fell into a long reverie, in which his feelings and emotions were so conflicting and varied that he never could accurately describe them. Sometimes he wished that he were free from the whole set (meaning the club); for he never found any real enjoyment in meeting with them. To strengthen this feeling, his thoughts recurred to a remark he overheard from a distinguished citizen, on the street. He had passed two gentlemen who were conversing on the side-walk, when he accidentally stopped to look at a print in the window of a store, and heard one of them say: "When Stanwood first came into town, I prophesied he'd make a capital attorney; he has a shrewd tact for the business;

but his idea of collecting a practice by going to parties and balls is all folly. They may like him for a companion; but, depend upon it, men of sense, when they want their business done, will go to a lawyer who keeps at home, or in his office, studying his profession."

"I hope he will succeed, for the sake of his lovely wife," was the reply.

How well he remembered the surprise of Mary, as he went home, chafed and irritated by these remarks, and abruptly shook her off as she approached him for a caress.

Then the idea flashed through his brain, "Would not Mary be delighted if I should become religious!" But here all was chaos. He had not a single right idea upon the subject. He began by thinking he was a very moral, good man, who had never done any harm,—far better than the generality of young men. But he was suddenly checked in his self-gratulation by an impulse of the Spirit.

Who shall say it was not in answer to the prayers of his Mary? A mirror was held up before him in which he saw a young man, endowed by Providence with talents, yet refusing to acknowledge his indebtedness for them; blessed with a lovely wife and child, yet treating the one with abuse, the other with neglect. Then misspent privileges, broken Sabbaths, violations of God's holy commandments passed before him, until he was obliged to hide his face to shut out the hideous sight presented to his view.

From imagining that he was far above his companions in virtue and goodness, he now loathed himself

as a vile sinner. One point was settled;—he would perform his promise, and meet with the club that evening, and then leave them forever. He no longer cared for their scoffs.

On his way home, he debated the question of announcing his resolution to his wife. He finally concluded not to pain her by doing so, but to leave early, and then she would suppose him to be at his office. Accordingly, he was more than usually tender in his manner toward Mary, who had never volunteered any marks of affection since he had treated her so rudely; and remarking that he should not be long absent, left the house.

The first part of the evening passed quickly away. Mrs. Stanwood had brought out her husband's slippers, wheeled his favorite chair to the table, and having soothed her babe to sleep, sat, awaiting his return.

But hour after hour passed, and he came not. She laid aside her work, and took a book to beguile her anxious thoughts. It would even have been a relief to her if she had thought of the club; but from her husband's remark that he should soon be home, she feared he must have met with some accident. Dreading, she knew not what, she trembled at every sound; and as the clock struck twelve, she could endure it no longer. She ran through the hall, threw open the door, and stood gazing into the darkness. Not a light could be seen; not a sound heard; and after standing until she was thoroughly chilled by the night air, she shut the door, and with a heavy heart returned to her room.

After leaning her head for a few minutes upon the table, she retired into an inner room.

But where was Mr. Stanwood? Alas, *alas!* he was still in the midst of the club, where, by turns, the Bible and the God of the Bible were scoffed at and ridiculed; and where he who had so lately been visited by the influences of the gracious Spirit, laughed louder than any of his companions. At ten o'clock, he proposed to leave, but they earnestly protested that they would not consent, unless his wife had forbidden his being out late.

He immediately resumed his seat, and determined to be the last in the room. At length the members dispersed, and Harry was left to make his way home, with reflections which certainly none would envy.

He hoped and expected to find Mary asleep. But could *he* sleep? An accusing conscience answered "*no!*" He gained the door, and softly applying the night-key, entered the house.

All was silent as the grave. Taking off his hat and boots, he crept up stairs toward his room, where a low, murmuring sound arrested his attention.

He stopped and listened. It was Mary's voice. Who could she be talking with at that hour? He took a few steps forward and gained the room. She was not there. He listened again. What was it which suddenly bowed the knees of this strong man, and caused the tears to gush so freely from his eyes? He heard Mary, his neglected, insulted wife, *alone, and at midnight*, telling Jesus her sorrows, and with tears beseeching Him to comfort and strengthen her fainting heart for the trials which yet awaited her.

He heard her pray that the Holy Spirit might send conviction into his soul, that he might repent of all his sins, and find pardon and peace in believing in Jesus. Mary wept aloud as she prayed that she might exhibit a spirit of meekness and forbearance toward her companion, that she might win back the affection which was estranged from her, and that they might live together in harmony and love.

Jesus, her elder brother, heard and answered. The sword of the Spirit had entered her husband's heart, and was penetrating even to the secret recesses. He groaned aloud.

Mary, in affright, started to her feet. She saw him penitent and humbled in view of his sins. She read passages of Scripture. She pointed him to the bleeding, crucified Saviour. The night was spent by them in earnest, importunate prayer. Mary wrestled like Jacob for a blessing; the language of her heart was, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

When, the next morning, the natural sun arose, the Sun of Righteousness also shone upon the mind of Henry Stanwood; and though its glorious light revealed a heart where sin and iniquity had abounded, it also showed one whose stains had been washed away by atoning blood.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE.

It was a delightful Sabbath morning in October. The first bells were ringing for church, and even at this early hour the villagers began to assemble in the house of God, while their whole appearance indicated a joyful but subdued expectancy of some unusual event. And they are not destined to be disappointed.

As the clock strikes ten, a party are seen emerging from the parsonage, and making their way slowly to the church. There is quite a procession; first, Squire and Mrs. Wells, then Rev. Mr. Warren with his wife and sister; after them follow Henry and Susan, Eleanor and Mr. Norton, Bessie and Mr. Seymour, Thomas and Laura, Gracie, Edward, and George Wells, then the children of Mrs. Gordon under the care of Nora bring up the rear. Mrs. Hammond and Mrs. Hall, with her good husband, are already seated in the house, together with many friends from B——, awaiting the ceremony which is to follow. The Squire, with his family, take seats in the front pew on the right of the pulpit; Mrs. Warren, on the left; while the good pastor occupies one of the chairs before the pulpit. The three couples then presented themselves before him, each to be united in the holy bands of wedlock. After a short prayer, Henry and Susan advanced to the altar, when the minister

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says, "Henry, wilt thou have this woman for thy wedded wife? — etc., to which he responds firmly, "I will."

"Susan, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?" etc.

Susan, who with great difficulty can keep back her tears, for thoughts of a former similar scene crowd her mind, is only able to bow her assent.

"Then, in the presence of God and these witnesses, I pronounce you husband and wife, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

The newly married pair then give place to Eleanor and Edgar Norton, who in turn do the same for Bessie and Walter Seymour, when having received the benediction, the congregation quietly take seats in their own pews, as the second bell has rung, and it is time for the public services to commence.

In the afternoon, Henry preached for his father-in-law, who was much overcome by the services of the morning.

Early the next day, the bridal party, accompanied by Thomas and Laura, and also by Mrs. Hammond, Nora and the children, left for New York, where after leaving the latter in the care of her aunt, they proceeded to Niagara.

On their way to the city, they were unexpectedly detained one day in Cheswell, the residence of Mr. Stanwood. Thomas and Laura eagerly embraced the opportunity to call upon them, when Mary finding the party were staying at the public house, cordially invited them all to pass the day with her. To this they would by no means consent; but leaving Mrs. Hammond who required rest, in the care of Nora, the three brides with

their grooms, passed a pleasant evening under the hospitable roof. After living over in imagination many of their college scenes, the conversation became more general, and Mr. Wells, as well as his brother-in-law, was delighted to find such abundant evidence as this unexpected meeting afforded, that the change in the religious sentiments of their college friend, was genuine. All the party agreed in declaring Mrs. Stanwood a lovely lady and a winning wife.

On the return of the Reverend Mr. Wells and his lady to New York city, the ordination took place; which event was followed by numerous calls from the people.

For the two years during which she had resided with her aunt, Mrs. Wells had chosen to live in a very retired manner, and to devote herself entirely to her family. This mode of life was much more congenial to her taste, than the more active one which she now anticipated; but as while the wife of a country clergyman, she had interested herself in the people of her husband's charge, so here she determined to do the same. Among those who called soon after her return, were many families from whose acquaintance she anticipated great profit as well as pleasure. Of some of them we shall give a more particular account, as illustrating the moral of our story.

The little girls were now seven years old, and as her time would be so much occupied for the winter in receiving and returning calls, their mother determined to place them in a select school. Frederic she preferred should remain under her own influence and that of her husband. During their absence on their wedding tour, Nora at the

suggestion of Mrs. Hammond prepared the children for the change which had taken place, and which on their journey they could hardly realize. She also persuaded them to practise calling Mr. Wells, papa, so that when their parents returned it came quite natural for them to do so, though sometimes Frederic in his enthusiasm or haste to impart some news, exclaimed, "Mr. Wells," before he thought of the new relation.

When he did so, however, he found his father afflicted with a sudden deafness which prevented any attention to what he was saying. But as soon as the boy bethought himself and added, "oh, I forgot, I meant papa!" he found his parent's hearing restored. This practice soon proved an infallible cure.

When Mr. Wells married a widow with children, he intended to be in all respects a father to them. Many and earnest were the conversations between him and his wife in regard to this subject, and if anything could have increased the wife's affection and respect for her new husband, it was the untiring zeal he displayed in regard to the dear objects of her love. Helen and Fanny continued mild and yielding. When they did wrong no punishment was so severe as separation from each other's society, and this was seldom necessary. Frederic as he grew older, proved every day that he needed a firm, steady government.

The passionate bursts of temper which had occasioned his mother so much anxiety, had of late seemed to increase rather than diminish. At the most trifling interference with his wishes on the part of his sisters or his nurse, he flew into a perfect fury of passion, before which

they found it best to give way. This seldom lasted long, and was always succeeded by great grief for the injury he had committed. He was always ready to express this sorrow and beg for forgiveness, and often the impression made upon him by his mother's tears and prayers in his behalf was so great, that for days he was subdued and softened.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE STEP-FATHER.

ONE day about three months after his marriage, Mr. Wells was called from his study by a loud cry from one of the twins. Knowing that their mother was at her brother's, he went below to ascertain the cause of the scream. A scene of confusion met his eye, such as he had never seen or imagined. Every chair in the room was thrown down, the ornaments from the mantel-piece were lying about the apartment, as were also the books from a table in the corner, while master Frederic with a flushed face and a determined air, was tearing into pieces a toy which had been presented him the previous day. In the closet stood Nora, applying a wet cloth to the forehead of Fanny, who had received a violent blow from her infuriated brother, while Helen clung closely to her side, by turns weeping and soothing her distressed sister.

For one instant the father's heart quailed as his eye rested on the scene; but lifting up a petition for guidance, he advanced to the boy, and gently taking him by the hand, raised him to his feet. "Stop, my son," said he, in a low, determined voice, "stop tearing that."

"It's mine," answered the boy fiercely, "and you are not my mother."

"No; but I am your father, and you must obey me. Stop, at once."

Frederic glanced into his father's face, but seeing him to all appearance perfectly calm, little comprehended the deep undercurrent of emotion called forth by his conduct, and replied: "I say you are not my father. He is dead; I loved him, but I do not love you, and you may go away from here as quick as you please."

"Oh! Master Frederic," Nora exclaimed, "don't talk so, it will make your mamma cry."

Mr. Wells, finding there was likely to be a contest, took him in his arms and carried him to his own chamber; though in doing so the struggles of the angry boy required an exertion of all his strength. When there, he placed him in a large chair with the injunction to remain quiet. But finding him determined not to obey, he took half a dozen napkins from the drawer, and tied him in such a manner that he could neither move his hands nor feet.

His voice was so mild, and his whole manner so different from that of his tearful mother, that the boy thought, "I shall conquer yet."

"My son," said he, sitting by his side, "I am sorry that you, by your bad conduct, compel me to take such measures with you. You have severely injured your little sister, who is uniformly kind and obliging to you. I fear the blow she has received will make her ill. From your mother I have heard that you are in the habit of giving way to your passion at the most trivial cause; but I never conceived anything so dreadful as what

has occurred to day. It is by her wish as well as from my affection for you, and the relation you now bear to me, that I shall take you in charge. You must remain here until I see fit to release you. I am now going to attend to your sister, and I hope you will pass the time in reflections upon your conduct."

Not a word had the child spoken while his father addressed him; but as soon as he opened the door to go out, Frederic heard his mother's voice, and began to scream aloud: "Mamma, mamma!"

Mrs. Wells had already been informed, by Nora, of what had occurred. The sympathizing girl also begged her mistress to go herself and attend to her child, saying, "Of course, it can't be expected he'll feel for him, like the one who has the same blood in him; 'tisn't natur."

But Mrs. Wells assured her that no one could be more gentle with the boy than his father; and that, if he ever hoped or expected to gain an influence over his child, he must make him yield now."

When Mr. Wells descended the stairs, he met her leading Fanny up to her room, supposing him to be in the study. After going with her into an adjoining chamber, and attending to the child in a manner which proved to her that he possessed the tender heart of a father, he requested her to give orders that no one should go to Frederic, and then to join him in the study.

"After half an hour passed in earnest conversation about the child, and in prayer by the father that he might be governed solely by a desire for his child's good, he left his wife in tears and proceeded once more to the chamber.

It is unnecessary to relate all that passed during that long day, when Mr. Wells was so much agitated that he could not devote a moment to study, though it was near the close of the week, and his sermons were still unfinished. Suffice it to say, that it was a day of painful solicitude to every member of the family. Indeed, a stranger might have supposed death had entered the habitation, so silent and sad was every countenance. Never before had the boy been known to stand out so long against authority, and the necessity that he should be made to yield was obvious to all. Repeatedly had his father repaired to the chamber, and tenderly inquired if he were ready to submit to him, to confess his sin, and ask forgiveness of his sister, and of his heavenly Father, whom he had greatly offended.

"I don't love you; and I want my mother," was the only reply.

"But I love you, my son. If your own father could speak, he would urge me to persevere in what is so trying to my feelings, and to compel you to obey. I shall do so, whether it takes a longer or a shorter time. I shall certainly do what I know to be my duty." He again represented to him the consequences of giving way to such an ungovernable temper, and the danger his sisters and friends incurred by being in his society. He related instances of children who had deprived their companions of sight while in a rage, or otherwise seriously injured them; but when after being encouraged to hope, from his quiet attention, that the conflict was over, and he repeated the question, "will you obey me?" the answer was either the same as before, or a

decided shake of the head. Mrs. Wells had wept until she had brought on a violent head-ache; but she repeatedly urged her husband to persevere, and encouraged him to hope for the most favorable results, if he once established his authority. Several persons called during the day; but the pastor denied himself to all. With his own hands he carried to the chamber food, such as was eaten at the table, and himself offered to feed the boy; but the obstinate child would not consent.

Mrs. Wells, at her husband's desire, had given orders that no one should go into her chamber; but this order had not extended to the cook, who seldom entered that part of the house. At least, if she understood the injunction, she disobeyed it; for putting a large plum-cake under her apron, she watched an opportunity when Mrs. Wells was below, and carried it to her favorite. But the child honorably refused to take it without his father's permission, and the cook, forgetting that the fact of its being there would betray her, threw it down hastily, and ran away upon hearing a step on the stairs.

"Who has been here, my son?" asked Mr. Wells, picking the rich cake from the floor; for one instant fearing the fondness of the mother had prevailed over her better judgment.

"Bridget," answered the boy, promptly. "She brought the cake to me; but I told her you had forbidden any one to come here, and I would n't take it."

Mr. Wells turned hastily aside to dash a tear from his eye, and then replied in a softened voice: "You did right, my son; just what I should have expected from a

child who has been taught by such a mother. Cannot you throw away your obstinate resistance of my kindness, and allow me to feed you with a piece of this cake?"

"I'll give it to Fanny, sir, because I hurt her, and take some of the bread and butter you brought me."

Oh how earnestly did the father long to press the boy to his heart for this generous reply! But suppressing his emotion, he gently released one of his hands, that he might help himself. Indeed his position was only painful from its long continuance, as his limbs were confined with wide cloth.

"My dear little son," he resumed, when he had eaten all he wished, "must I be compelled to tie this hand again, or will you now be a good boy?"

Frederic's lip quivered and his eyes filled with tears as he said in a low voice, "If you will let me see my mother I will."

"Your mother is longing to see you, my dear child," replied Mr. Wells, with difficulty commanding his voice; "but she cannot do so until you have yielded to my authority."

"I *am* sorry," sobbed the boy, bursting into tears, "I have been sorry a long time, and I do love you dearly."

Mr. Wells's eyes showed that he was far from unmoved, as he quickly released the boy and took him in his arms, when he had rung the bell in order to send for his wife.

Nora quickly obeyed the summons, and to her surprise as well as great joy saw that the long conflict was at an end. Frederic's arms were closely clasped around his

father's neck, and he was expressing his affection in the fondest terms.

Mrs. Wells gladly arose from her couch to witness the scene so vividly portrayed by the warm hearted girl, and great was the rejoicing at the restoration of the dear boy to the family circle. Aunt Hammond was summoned from her chamber and the little girls from their beds to unite in expressing their pleasure. Mr. Wells even requested Nora to ask the cook to join them, as he thought it might be a good opportunity to impress her with the importance and good results of family government. He never regretted the patient, calm decision, perseverance and prayer with which he met and surmounted this difficulty. It effectually established his authority on its only safe foundation, the confidence and affection of his son. From this time there was a gradual improvement in the boy, and though sometimes his eye flashed, and he sprang forward to deal a blow upon whoever came in his way; yet he seldom went beyond this, and soon began to realize the pleasure of having conquered himself. He became exceedingly fond of his father, who in everything consistent with propriety, was very indulgent to him. Once a day he generally accompanied him in a walk, which occasion Mr. Wells took pains to render an agreeable as well as profitable one.

Even the cook was heard to declare that "an own father couldn't make more of the child." Neither she or Nora ever forgot the scene in the chamber.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CITY PARISHIONERS.

IN a breakfast room belonging to an elegant house on the same street, as the residence of the Rev. Mr. Wells, a lady and a gentleman were one morning sitting together at a late repast. She was fashionably attired, and as she sipped her coffee from her cup of Sevres china, she said carelessly, "Mr. Bentley, I wish you would give the final orders for the carriage, I am sure you must by this time have come to the conclusion that scarlet and black are the only proper colors for the trimmings. Melville is really pining for his rides."

Mr. Bentley cast an anxious glance at the pale, but exquisitely beautiful features of the boy who was seated in a high chair by his side, and said quickly, "then why wait for the phaeton; order the carriage, and go out this morning; the air is very fine."

The lady assumed a scornful expression, and without appearing to notice the sweet voice which pleaded "please, mamma, I should like to go," she answered haughtily, "Mr. Bentley, I am really astonished that you have no more regard for what is proper. Perhaps you have forgotten what I have repeated to you every day for a week, that Mrs. Stickney Montague has a new carriage; and that I certainly shall not give her the oppor-

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tunity to triumph over me, with her stylish phaeton and outriders."

"Pshaw!" commenced the husband angrily, but restraining himself, he said, more gently, "Surely, Agnes, you would not allow your pride to prevent you from doing that which you acknowledge the health of your only child demands?"

For a moment Mrs. Bentley made no reply. She felt her anger rising, and she was anxious to keep her temper so as to gain her point; but the beseeching glance of her boy irritated her, conscious as she was of being governed by unworthy motives, and she replied sharply, "Once for all, Mr. Bentley, I will not be seen in that detestable carriage, in which I have rode for two seasons. If you do not care enough for the health of Melville to give up your odious preference for blue and orange trimmings, you surely cannot expect me to resign all pretensions to good taste, which I should do were I to choose anything but scarlet and black. Therefore if the child grows pale and thin for want of air, you have no one but yourself to blame for it."

Though pale with suppressed anger, the millionaire turned to leave the room without making any reply. He had often heard his wife use such words, but there was now a bitterness and contempt in her tone which stung him to the quick. He had his hand on the door, when a soft voice said, "please, papa, kiss Melly good-bye." The father turned, held out his arms to his darling boy, then strained him tightly to his heart.

"I love you," whispered the child, "I love you dearly."

"Melville," called the mother, "come to mamma, I

wouldn't love papa when he is so cruel that he shuts us up like prisoners, and will not let us go out this beautiful day, just to gratify his indomitable will;" but the child clung tightly to his father's neck, and laid his soft cheek against his bearded face.

With lips closely compressed, and a terrible frown upon his brow, Mr. Bentley advanced to his wife, with the child in his arms. He knew that her words, though addressed to the boy, were meant for him, and already irritated by her conduct, he could now hardly control himself. For one instant he stood gazing upon her, as she sat with her head thrown back in conscious beauty. Her features were very lovely. The excitement had added new lustre to her sparkling eyes, and given a richer hue to the bloom upon her cheek. There was also a striking likeness between her and the beautiful boy clinging lovingly to his neck, and the sternness grew less as he gazed. If she had exhibited any symptoms of sorrow for what she had said, he would have tried to forget what had passed; but, alas! she was too conscious of her charms — too sure that the moment she thought proper to do so, she could bring him to her side, forgetful of all but her love, to be willing yet to yield. He perceived this even as he stood before her, and said in a low but impressive voice, "Beware, Agnes! you may press me too far. I tell you now, that though I have borne much because you are the mother of my child, and because I have loved you; yet my temper is by no means invincible. A little farther and all intercourse between us must cease."

Though her countenance turned a shade paler, the

lady looked haughtily in her husband's face, and said, carelessly, "the sooner the better, sir; would it not be well to call in a lawyer at once?"

"Agnes," exclaimed Mr. Bentley in a husky voice, half angry, half sorrowful, "do you mean what you say?"

"Why should you doubt it?" she replied, attempting to speak gayly.

"And do you know that if we separate you will also lose your boy? The law gives him to me." At that moment, Melville, seeing that his father was troubled, clasped his white arms still closer around his neck. The action was not unnoticed by his mother, and it added to the bitterness of her tone, as she said, "If you think to frighten me you will be disappointed," and humming a few notes from a new opera, she left the room.

Mr. Bentley sank into a chair, and hid his face upon the child's shoulder. A dreadful tumult was going on within his breast. His wife had proved herself a worldly, thoughtless, and unfeeling woman. How had he been deceived in her! Her love of gayety and fashion had even swallowed up all her affection for her child, and now she seemed wholly lost to him. Upon her untiring devotion to her boy, he had built many a castle which, alas, was suddenly dashed to the ground. This pure and ardent love which had increased from the moment of his birth, had been a cloak with which he had covered many of her faults. Now she quietly acquiesced in the thought of being separated from him, and he groaned aloud.

"Please, papa, don't cry. Melly sorry papa sick," and the small hand was passed caressingly over his face.

The father could bear it no longer. He started from his seat, and bidding the boy go to his mother, retired to the garden, back of the house, where, for nearly an hour, he continued walking back and forth with rapid steps. Fifty times his mind was made up to take her at her word, call in a lawyer, provide handsomely for her, and separate. But the boy! Could he have the heart to take him from his mother, who, aside from what had just taken place, had been wholly devoted to him? Memory carried him back a year, to the time when their darling lay ill of a severe fever. How gladly had the young mother turned aside from her ceaseless pursuit after pleasure, and devoted herself to his comfort. Night after night she watched by his couch, unconscious of fatigue, unwilling to share the care even with him; nor would she rest until the physician pronounced him convalescent. The more he thought of this, the more he became convinced that she had that morning assumed an indifference that she did not feel; and he determined to do nothing hastily, to watch her closely, and above all things, to guard his own temper. If he could have witnessed the scene which was taking place in the chamber overlooking the garden, he might have been still more convinced that she had not expressed her true feelings.

On leaving her husband Mrs. Bentley retired at once to her own dressing room, which was fitted up with almost regal magnificence. Costly rose-colored curtains were draped from the windows, and also were suspended from a gilded scroll, fastened to the ceiling, and fell gracefully around a child's bed. Tapestry-carpetings,

toilet-tables, above which hung long mirrors, chairs covered with rich damask, ornaments of silver, and china, and glass, proved that wealth, refinement and taste reigned in that apartment. But the occupant thought not of these things. She had been accustomed to them from her birth, and they had no power to move her. She threw herself into a luxurious chair, and with her handkerchief at her eyes sobbed aloud. In this state she continued until the door gently opened, and Melville asked softly: "Please, Mamma, let Melly come?"

"She took the child, and held him so tightly that he was almost frightened. "I will never give you up," she exclaimed passionately. "He may go, and take every thing; yes, *every thing*; but I will not be separated from my boy." She continued in this state of mind for a long time, weeping bitter tears of anger and self-reproach, until she heard the hall-door open and shut, and found that her husband had left the house.

"How foolish I have been," she exclaimed aloud! "He only did it to frighten me. I really wish I had never thought of asking for a new phaeton; and if I had not told Mrs. Montague's sister that I was to have one with trimmings of scarlet and black, I would give it up now, for I really care nothing about it. Oh, dear! What if he has really taken me at my word?" And she sank back in her chair, pale, and trembling at the slightest sound.

During the hour which followed, as she sat with her arms about her boy, who had fallen asleep in her lap, her married life passed in review before her. She started

back at the sight presented by an awakened conscience. Her husband, who, on their first acquaintance, had piqued her by appearing unconscious of the charms of which her numerous admirers never failed to remind her, — her husband, high minded, honorable and generous, with quick impulses, but a warm heart, was now about to be lost to her forever; yes, in that hour of self-examination, she acknowledged it to herself — through her own foolish pride and folly. At first he had yielded in everything to her wishes, however frivolous; but finding, as he yielded, she became more and more exacting in her demands, he had at first gently remonstrated, then finally refused to comply, unless he were convinced of the reasonableness of her desires. Two years before these occurrences, at her earnest request, he had sold a valuable family carriage, and purchased for her use one of a more modern style, fitted and trimmed according to her taste. With this she was very well satisfied until she formed the acquaintance of Mrs. Stickney Montague, who was noted for her desire to surpass all others in the elegance of her dress and equipage. This lady had lately persuaded her husband, who, by means of her extravagance, had several times been nearly bankrupted, to purchase for her a new kind of carriage, very elegant in style, though not very commodious.

Mrs. Bentley no sooner saw her friend's new vehicle, than she suddenly ascertained that her own was old-fashioned and odious. And she did not rest until she had coaxed her husband to gratify her by the purchase of one which would surpass in elegance that of the lady whom she styled her friend. The new phaeton was in process

of building when, unfortunately, there arose a disagreement between them with regard to the color of the trimmings. Mrs. Bentley decided upon scarlet and black, and had confidentially informed Mrs. Duval, sister of Mrs. Montague, that those were the colors; but Mr. Bentley preferred orange and blue. If, however, his wife had exhibited a willingness to consult his taste, he had determined to give her a pleasant surprise by ordering the trimmings according to her wishes.

Unfortunately, the conversation happened at a time when she was vexed and annoyed, and her temper unusually irritable. As she became more exacting, he grew more cold and stern, until her passion was excited, and she uttered words of bitterness and reproach which he could not forget. For two days not a word was said on the subject, when the desire of Mrs. Bentley to excite the envy of Mrs. Montague caused her to recur to it at the breakfast table.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LOST HEIR.

"Lost! lost! sometime between the hours of twelve and three, a child of four years, with brown, curling hair, black eyes and fair complexion! When last seen, he wore a blue velvet sack, and drab pants buckled just below the knee."

This was the continued, monotonous proclamation of the street-crier on the evening of the day mentioned in the former part of this story. Parents ran in alarm to the windows to hear more distinctly, and shuddered as they glanced at their own children. But still, up one street, and down another, the fearful sound, "Lost! lost!!" rang out on the night air, making every mother's heart to quake with fear.

In the princely mansion of Mr. Bentley, the scene of distress was beyond all description, for it was their only child, their darling Melville, who had so mysteriously disappeared. When last we saw him, he lay quietly sleeping in the arms of his weeping mother. At a later hour, she was summoned to the parlor to receive callers, and left him upon his low bed. Since that time no one of the family had seen him. When Mrs. Bentley returned to her room, dressed in the most elaborate manner, but with a faint sickness at her heart as she thought of her husband's parting words, she found Melville had

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arisen, and supposed that without doubt his nurse had him in her care. The time passed slowly away until the hour drew near when her husband usually returned to dinner. Would he come?" she asked herself. Her cheek flushed and her heart beat tumultuously as she feared not. Oh, now she realized more than ever, how her whole soul was bound up in him and in her child! Of what avail were the most costly phaetons with their liveried outriders, if her heart were desolate? The image of her rival Mrs. Stickney Montague, decorated with all that art or money could supply, arrayed in robes of costly magnificence appeared suddenly before her. But she started back as if she loathed the sight. It was stripped of all power to charm, and she could only behold a faded, care-worn figure in whose breast envy, ambition and malice waged a ceaseless war. "And this is the woman whom I have been striving to emulate. This is she for whom I have sacrificed my noble husband and my child." She placed her hands upon her breast to quiet the dreadful conflict awakened there.

It was now four o'clock, the hour for dinner. Mr. Bentley usually so prompt, had not returned. She rang the bell and directed the servant to send Melville to her. In a few moments the door opened and Susan the nurse appeared alone.

"I want Melville," said the lady in a subdued voice.

"Where is he, ma'am?" asked the woman, advancing with an expression of surprise upon her countenance.

"Don't you know where he is?" inquired her mistress, starting to meet her, and speaking with great difficulty.

"No, ma'am, I've not seen the child since I left him

with yees in the morning just as ye were coming up from breakfast, and it's longing I've been after the swate boy through the whole day."

Mrs. Bentley put her hand to her head to see if she were awake. The room seemed whirling around; but making a great effort she walked to her chair and sat down. She knew now that it was no idle threat her husband had made. He had taken her child from her forever. Oh, how the words she had so thoughtlessly uttered, "*the sooner the better*," now rang in her ears! Yes, she had brought this upon herself. She was alone in the world.

She became so very pale that Susan thought she would faint, and began to scream for assistance, but Mrs. Bentley motioned her to be quiet, and after a moment her white lips moved, and she slowly articulated, "Susan, are you sure you have not seen him since morning? Try to remember."

"Indade and I'm sure then; for it's wondering I was, why the precious boy didn't come to his Susy for a walk in the park, as I heard yees tell the master ye'd not be riding the day, and twice I came to the door, and heard a sound of weeping like, so I said to myself, 'sure and it's not Susan McLaughlin that's going to intrude on the mistress when it's in trouble she is.'"

"But Susan, I left him in his bed when I went to the parlor, and when I returned he was gone. Go and send Ann to me, and ask the cook if she has seen any one come in and—stay; ask Thomas too. No one could enter without his knowledge."

In a very short time all the servants of the establish-

ment presented themselves at the door of her room. Consternation was visible upon every countenance, for Melville was the pet and pride of the whole household. All were eager to speak; but alas, none of them had any comfort to impart! The cook indeed had seen a mysterious looking person loitering about the basement-door, but who pretended only to be begging for cold victuals. Thomas was willing to take his oath that no one had come through the front hall, but those he had himself admitted, and as his station was near the door, his statement was probably true. The voice of Susan bewailing the loss of her darling, was the sound which was echoed from all. Mrs. Bentley alone shed not a tear. Impatiently waving her hand to command silence, she said in a husky voice, "Thomas, when did your master come in?"

"Not at all, ma'am, since the morning; but now I think of it, he appeared to be troubled when he went out, and I saw him wipe his eyes."

At this moment the bell rang, Thomas hastened to answer it, admitted Mr. Bentley and in an eager tone asked if he had seen Melville.

One moment sufficed to announce to the father the distressing event.

"Where is his mother?" he inquired, in an agony of grief.

The man motioned up the stairs, and the distracted father flew to her side. At the sight of him the servants wept afresh. Mrs. Bentley was seated in a chair by the bed of her lost boy; her face buried in her hands; the convulsive motion of her whole frame showing the in-

ward struggle to appear calm. When she heard her husband's step, she started to her feet, gave him one look of intense agony, then sprang into his outstretched arms. For one moment all was hushed, the lookers on restrained their loud expressions of grief as they gazed at the silent woe of the stricken parents. Words cannot describe the mingled emotions of the desolate mother as she was tightly clasped in the arms of her husband. In the midst of all her dreadful weight of grief, a thrill of rapture darted through her as she thought, "he has not forsaken me, I am not alone." She laid her pale check upon his shoulder and whispered, "Charles, forgive your poor wife!"

"As I hope to be forgiven," he answered, with intense emotion! "May God forgive us both and restore to us our precious boy!"

He then led her to a couch, placed himself by her side, and with his arm encircling her, said in a voice which he had forced to be calm, "now tell me when was Melville last seen?"

Susan, Ann, and Thomas all attempted to reply at once.

"Stop," said Mr. Bentley, "one at a time, and be quick; there is no time to lose. The police must be put upon the track."

An hour later, and advertisements had been sent to each of the police station houses. Mr. Bentley had seen the chief of police, who detailed a company of special officers to visit suspected places, and all the officers on the beat were put upon the watch. In addition to these vigorous measures, the distracted father had advertise-

ments struck off, containing a minute description of the child, and offering a reward of ten thousand dollars to any one who would restore him to his parents. When this had been done, he directed the coachman to drive home. While actively employed, the poor man bore up bravely against this terrible blow, but now that he must sit down in quiet and await the result, he began to realize it in its fullest extent. He longed to return to his wife, and yet dreaded to do so, with no tidings of their boy. How entirely were all bitter memories of her obliterated from his mind! How fully were they reunited by their overwhelming loss!

Thomas had no sooner answered the impetuous ring of the door bell, than Mrs. Bentley flew down the stairs, exclaiming, "Oh, Melville, my own darling, where have you been?" But seeing her husband turn quickly aside and enter the parlor *alone*, she burst into a passionate fit of weeping. During his absence the tidings of the lost child had spread far and wide. Neighbors and friends had gathered around, some of whom, in their kind attempt to allay the present distress of the almost frantic mother, had unwisely endeavored to persuade her that her husband would not fail to be successful in his search, that it was certain he would not return without her boy. Alas! she was too ready to believe this, and thus her disappointment had overwhelmed her.

Though his heart seemed ready to break, Mr. Bentley forced himself to appear hopeful. He drew his wife tenderly to his side, laid her head upon his shoulder, and in a low, soothing voice, whispered words of comfort and hope. For hours they sat thus, the faithful and sym-

thizing Thomas considerably detaining any visitors or servants who wished to join them. Sometimes a sound in the distance would cause their hearts to beat painfully. Each time the listening mother was sure her child was found, and even heard his voice calling aloud, "mamma," so that it was with difficulty he restrained her from rushing out to meet him. But as one company after another passed by, and still the child came not, she sank beneath the weight of her grief. She now scarcely spoke except to utter some passionate exclamation, "Oh where, where is my boy? It would be far, far better to know he were dead."

Poor Mr. Bentley! It was the truest token of his self-sacrificing affection for his wife that he remained by her side, for with his whole soul he longed to be engaged in the vigorous search which was taking place through all the by-lanes of that great city. He tried in vain to reason with himself that he should only impede their progress, that he was wholly unaccustomed to such duty; he had an inward feeling that instinct would lead him to his boy. The father's heart ached as it was thus torn by conflicting ties. Once the feelings which led him forth were so strong, that he unconsciously drew his hand from hers, and started from his seat, but with a piteous exclamation of utter helplessness, Agnes cried out, "Charles, *you* will not leave me!" and he immediately resumed his seat.

"No, no," he whispered, "I will not leave you," and he pressed her convulsively to his heart. "Agnes," he said more calmly, "be patient. This is a work of time. Every officer which can possibly be spared from the beat

is actively engaged in searching for our poor boy; but it may be unsuccessful for a time, I know, yes I feel God will in mercy restore him to us; but it may not be for days or even weeks. Let us endeavor, my dear wife, to be calm, that we may be better prepared for whatever suffering is before us."

The tears poured like rain down the pale cheeks of Mrs. Bentley; but she presently replied, "Oh, Charles, if I could only forget that I am the one who has brought this terrible affliction upon us! I, by my own wickedness, have made you suffer, and my poor boy!—I know that I deserve it; but I feel that it will kill me!" She bowed her head in agony of spirit.

The whole frame of the husband trembled with emotion, as he listened to the words of his wife. "Yes, Agnes," he said after a pause, "In these long, sad hours, I, too, have reviewed the past; and God helping me, I will, hereafter, live a better life,—will prove myself a more affectionate husband, and if Melville is restored, which God in mercy grant, a more devoted father. We have both sinned, my darling, I feel it now, I see where I have erred. We have lived too much for the world of fashion, too little for each other, and alas, not at all for the service of Him who made us. I can remember, when a boy not much older than our Melly, that my only sister lay dangerously ill with the scarlet fever. I was almost beside myself with grief at the thought that she would soon be laid in the cold grave. I remember as if it were but yesterday my mother leaving the sick room where night and day she had watched by the little sufferer and coming with her pale, wan face to take me

by the hand to her chamber. There was a large closet within, and to this we at once retired, where motioning me toward a low cricket, she knelt at a chair by my side. Oh, how earnestly did she plead for the life of her little Anna! Yet she oft repeated the words, 'Oh, heavenly Father, if it be thy will, restore her to us even from the border of the grave!' I arose from that prayer soothed and comforted with an assurance, though not then understood by myself, that God heard and answered. After that, I wept no more, but waited patiently for the time when she would know me, and run about as of old."

"And did she?" asked Mrs. Bentley, breathless with interest.

"Yes, she did. Not for an instant had I doubted it."

"Charles," almost gasped the poor wife, starting and looking around the room, as if in search of that God who is a Spirit, and cannot be seen by mortal eyes, "Charles, why can't we pray too? Perhaps he would —"

"Oh, Agnes," he faltered, bowing his head upon his hands, "my mother was a Christian!" The words were spoken in a tone of utter despondency; and the heart of the wife, which had begun to rest upon divine help, sank again. Alas! they little knew that their heavenly Father was watching them with eyes beaming with tenderness, that this was his chosen way to bring them to himself.

As the watch, passing the house, sang out, "one o'clock," a ring was heard at the door. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bentley flew to answer it; but Thomas had been before them, and was receiving a message from Mr.

Noyes, the chief of police. The search had, so far, been unsuccessful, and must be suspended until morning. Sad, sad indeed, and weary, were the hearts the poor father and mother carried to their chamber that night. They thought not of sleep. Drawing a lounge near the bed, Mr. Bentley endeavored to persuade his wife to lay her head upon the pillow; but she turned from it, and sought the support of his shoulder — his, who was now all she had in the world. Here, for some time she lay so quietly, that he hoped she had forgotten her sorrows in sleep. At length she spoke softly, as if almost afraid of the sound of her own voice, "Charles, I do want to pray, and I want to be a Christian, as your mother was; but I don't know how." As if actuated by the same impulse, the young pair arose and knelt by the couch. Entirely unused even to the form and attitude of prayer, at first they could only express their thoughts to God by "an upward lifting of the eye, and by the silent tear," but the divine Lord put words into their mouths; and they were enabled to draw close to the mercy-seat, and to sue humbly but earnestly for a blessing. Almost in the very words with which years before the pious mother had begged for the life of her child, the desolate father now besought that the child who was lost might be found. And then they prayed for themselves. Yes, this gay couple, whose knees had never before knelt together in prayer, whose lips had never formed words of supplication or of gratitude, now bowed themselves before their Maker, and asked for the forgiveness of their sins, and light to direct them in the new life which they were determined to live.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DISCOVERY.

EARLY the next morning Mr. Bentley explained to his wife that if she would consent to have him leave her, he might be personally engaged in searching for their child, and was glad to see that she yielded at once to his wishes. He then sent a servant a few miles out of town for her married sister, and left her to begin his disheartening labor,—*disheartening*, I say, because already every place where suspicion could rest had been examined, and even the most hopeful began to fear that the lost one was beyond their reach. But gold is powerful, and Mr. Bentley poured it out like water. A more thorough and extensive examination commenced. It was considered probable that the child had been taken away for the very purpose of demanding money for his restoration, and therefore the father added another thousand for his immediate recovery.

But notwithstanding all this, the day passed wearily away: the night came, but no tidings of the poor boy. The alternation of hope and fear had worn fearfully upon the frame of the poor mother. She was no longer able to rise from her bed, but lay like a drooping lily, pallid and trembling upon her silken couch. Alas, what mattered it to her that her damask and lace curtains were the most costly which could be procured; that the fur-

niture of her room had been imported for her use from Paris, that the gold and silver ornaments even, would be considered by many a young man, a handsome capital, one glance of love from her dear child, the whispered words, "mamma, I love you," were worth more than all.

Every few hours her husband returned, if only for a moment. He could not endure to be long absent from her, who in her silent, tearless woe, with lustreless eyes and sunken cheeks was far more beautiful to him than in her days of richest bloom and pride. How ardently did this afflicted pair, who but a few days gone by, were on the verge of separation, now strive to repress their own grief, and to impart hope to the other. As the sound of her husband's footsteps met her ear, and the sight of his pallid, ghastly countenance passed before her view, how earnestly did the now loving wife strive to appear cheerful! But alas, nothing cut so deeply to his heart as that sickly attempt to smile! He turned hastily away in bitterness of spirit. Near the close of the second day, as Mr. Bentley, with Mr. Mansfield, his brother-in-law, had returned from a place where they had been strongly tempted to hope they might find the poor boy, the father sank down perfectly exhausted. Not once since the dreadful loss, had he closed his eyes in sleep; and only by making a great exertion had he forced himself to eat. He could not swallow when his only son might be starving. Having bathed his head and administered a cordial, Mr. Mansfield prevailed upon him to lie down, and try to sleep, urging the absolute necessity of his doing so, if he wished to continue the search.

But it was with the greatest reluctance that the afflicted father consented to their wishes to abandon, even for an hour, his personal efforts for the discovery of his lost boy. Mr. Mansfield at length prevailed and having darkened the room, he left them to seek rest.

No sooner were they alone than Mrs. Bentley caught her husband's hand and pressed it to her lips. "Charles," she said, in a subdued voice, "I have been thinking about your mother, and I can say as she did, 'If it is thy will, restore to us our boy!' Oh, my dear husband, it is sweet to feel thus! He knows what is best for us. If this dreadful event had not taken place, I might have gone on in sin. I shudder to think of the precipice near which I stood. Now, I feel that I have a Father in heaven, and that he, for the sake of my Saviour, will make me his child."

"Agnes," asked Mr. Bentley, in astonishment, "where did you learn this?"

"Do you remember the old lady, in the block opposite, at whom I have so often laughed for her quaint, old-fashioned ways as she sat sewing at the window; but whom I always liked because she bestowed such kind glances on Melville? She is aunt to the lady who has married the new minister; the mother of those beautiful twins. Well, she has been with me nearly all the time you have been out; and Charles, she too is a Christian; and she asked God just as if she knew he was directly before her, to bless us, and to make this dreadful affliction work out for us a great blessing, even eternal life. When she had done I asked her what she meant; and Charles, she really cried when she found how ignorant

we were; she said, 'Poor, poor child!' I told her no one had ever taught me such things; that my mother died when I was an infant; but that your mother was a Christian, and knew how to pray."

"And what else did she say?" groaned he aloud.

"She told me that the Son of God died for just such sinners as we are, and that he would give us pardon and peace, if we would pray to him; and she read such soothing words out of a little pocket Bible. She left it with me, and I will read to you after you have been to sleep. 'Then, I hope you will feel the same peace here,' putting her hand to her heart.

In the mean time where was little Melville? It would perhaps have essentially changed the mode of prosecuting the search, if more attention had been paid to the eager communication of the twins, Helen and Fanny. Soon after his mother left him to go to the parlor he awoke, and finding himself alone, arose from the low couch, and went softly down the stairs. The sun was shining very brightly, and passing through a French window which opened on the balcony leading to the garden, he descended the steps, and walked slowly to the end of the enclosure. Attracted by the sound of voices in the street, he wandered to the fence separating the garden from the side-walk, and stood for some time looking through the iron railing. At length he perceived that the gate was unfastened, and with a slight exertion of strength pushed it open. Here he stood for nearly half an hour watching groups of children as they passed, until becoming interested in a party who were not en

tirely strangers, as they lived just opposite, and he had often nodded to them from the windows,—and who were skipping along in great glee,—he ventured timidly to join them; and thus, without a cap, or any outer garment, he took his first steps from home. The little girls, who were on their way to school, and more accustomed to take care of themselves, were delighted with the beautiful child, and taking his hand led him gayly on until he was entirely at a loss how to return. This, however, he at length insisted upon doing; but when he left them became more and more involved until, wearied and sad, he sat upon a step, and, leaning his head upon his hand, began to weep.

His forlorn attitude attracted the attention of a little girl who was hurriedly returning home after performing an errand for her sick mother. She took the child by the hand, and led him with her to the house which was situated in a retired but respectable street, where the better class of emigrants resided. Passing up one flight of stairs after another, the girl whose name was Meta, at length entered a room on the fourth floor,—meagrely and scantily furnished indeed, but scrupulously neat and clean. The family were Norwegians, and had been in the country but a year. In that time, death had made sad ravages in their little group, and with merciless grasp had taken two beautiful twin boys from the loving arms of their mother. Herman and Evan were as dear to her as the lovely child who gazed so beseechingly in her face, was to his fond mother. Her husband had gone to the West, and was to send for them when he could obtain employment.

When the poor woman heard from Meta where she had found the child, she considered it a special provision of Heaven in her behalf. She caught him to her warm, honest heart, and wept over him tears of joy. Melville was tenderly washed and fed, and lay that night in the bosom of his new mother who little dreamed that, while her heart beat so wildly with joy and gratitude for the precious treasure God had sent her, his mother was weeping tears of anguish at his loss, or that the whole city was alive with the search for the son and heir of one of her wealthiest citizens.

Her quiet life and unobtrusive conduct had rendered her respected by all her neighbors, and when the police entered and searched a house not ten doors distant, he dreamed not of inquiring of her. On the day Melville was found by Meta, her mother was not well, and in consequence did not, for two days, go out to her work which was washing for families in high life. On the morning of the third day, however, she was so much better that, leaving Melly with his new and affectionate sister, she went to wash in the family of Mrs. Wells. About an hour after her arrival, and when she was fairly at work at the tub, Nora, the chamber-maid came in, and began to tell her of the dreadful loss sustained by one of their neighbors. At first the poor woman paid little attention; but at length her interest was aroused by a description of the child, and soon the unwelcome conviction was forced upon her that her boy must be given up. She eagerly inquired the day when the child was lost, and finding the time corresponded exactly with that when he was found by Meta, she grew very pale,

and at length with a passionate burst of tears, said she could not stay, she must go home. In vain Mrs. Wells, who had been called to the kitchen by Nora, urged to know the reason. She could only weep and beg in her broken language not to be delayed. But she promised to come again the next morning. Upon leaving the house she lost not a moment in hastening to her home. Conscience told her plainly there was no other course for her to pursue, but to deliver the child to his parents. For the two preceding days, Melville had so endeared himself to her desolated heart that the struggle was dreadful. When she suddenly flew up the stairs and burst into the room, Melville was shouting with delight at his success in blowing a larger bubble than Meta, but was stopped short in his glee, by seeing her who had taught him to call her mother, come rushing into the room, catch him in her arms, and give way to the most passionate grief.

Let us return to the princely mansion of Mr. Bentley in ——— Park. The marble steps with their broad balustrade of iron, and the ponderous mahogany entrance are unchanged. The door opens; Thomas occupies his station of porter as of old. We pass through the immense halls, up the broad staircase whose niches are filled with marble statues, executed to order in Rome. Nothing is missing; and yet all is different. A solemn silence and awe fasten themselves upon one which in vain they try to shake off. Softly entering a door at the head of the staircase, the darkened room, the sickening smell of cordials warn us of sickness. Alas, it is worse than sick-

ness! It is hopeless sorrow of heart. The figure of a man is extended upon the bed. By his side, with her hand pressed upon his throbbing temples, is a delicate female, dressed in a loose robe of white. Standing near them with a goblet in her hand, is an old lady who says in a low, sweet voice, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be. Wait upon God, my son. He will send thee no more sorrow than he gives thee strength to endure."

The man made an impatient gesture as if he could bear no more, when the lady urged, "Oh, Charles! if you could only be willing to submit to his will, I know that he orders all things for our good."

He shook his head despondingly.

At this moment a low knock was heard at the door, and Susan entered hastily. Her eyes were red and swollen with weeping, and hitherto she had been unwilling to appear before her mistress; but now she seemed struggling with some violent emotion. Mrs. Bentley looked at her in surprise and said kindly, "my good Susan, you must try to restrain your feelings."

"Oh, what will I do! what will I say! The sorrow quite killed me, and now my heart's broken entirely with the joy that's in store for yeas," and Susan put her apron to her face and sobbed aloud.

Mrs. Bentley arose and caught the girl by the arm; but in vain she tried to articulate.

"Oh, ma'am!" exclaimed Susan, "Indade and if the shock kills yeas, I can keep it no longer, the swate, precious darling is found!"

The change from grief to overwhelming joy was too

great. The lady staggered back and but for the arms of Mrs. Hammond, would have fallen to the floor. When she awoke to consciousness, her blessed boy was kissing her pale cheeks and calling her by the sweetest of names, her husband had arisen from the bed, and was kneeling by her side, while the words, "O God, I bless thee, for thy undeserved mercy! Be thou henceforth my God and father," burst forth as the expression of his grateful heart.

After expressing her heartfelt sympathy with their joy at the restoration of their child, as she had previously done in their sorrow, Mrs. Hammond returned home, that the now united family might be under no restraint in their new and delightful emotions. She obtained leave, however, to invite her nephew, Mr. Wells, to call upon them as neighbors on the following day.

Early the next morning, Mr. Bentley rang at Mr. Wells's door, and requested an early interview. Upon being admitted to the study, the pastor found he wished to consult him about some measures to be taken with regard to the Norwegian family who had befriended his child. He had already been to see the kind washer-woman, and found from her account that she attended Mr. Wells's church, and had worked in his family for nearly a year.

Mr. Wells called his wife and Mrs. Hammond, and from them Mr. Bentley learned of the grief of the kind woman when she first ascertained that she must give up her adopted child. After Mrs. Wells had expressed herself warmly in praise of the family, Mr. Bentley having learned that the husband was a farmer, was confirmed in

his resolution to expend half the money which he had offered as a reward, in the purchase of a farm at the West, and place the other at interest for their future use. Until this could be accomplished, he undertook the support of the family, and wished to place Meta at school.

The gratitude of the good woman when Mr. Bentley in company with her kind friend, Mr. Wells, called upon her, and made known his intentions, can hardly be described. She could at once go to her husband who was disheartened at the prospect of the long separation which would be necessary before he could support them in their new home; but she was earnest in her endeavor to convince him that when she gave up the child, she had never heard of the promised reward. She was very grateful also for the opportunity afforded Meta of learning to read and write; but respectfully declined Mr. Bentley's generous proposal to provide her a better tenement, and support her without work until arrangements could be made for her to join her husband. In the course of a few months the farm was purchased in Ohio, and the grateful, happy wife with her daughter took leave of their friends, laden with everything which affection could suggest, to make her new home comfortable, and in a neat pocket-book, put into her hand just before she started, by her little friend Melville, was a deed of the property which had been presented her in his name.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BRIDE OF THE MILLIONNAIRE.

THE spacious parlors belonging to the princely mansion of Mr. Russel Clinton, were brilliantly lighted, for on the afternoon of the day in question, the owner had arrived with his bride from their wedding tour, to take possession of their new abode. The house whose free-stone walls rose to the height of five stories, the iron balcony and marble steps, indeed everything about it proved to the passer by that the residents were among the proudest of the aristocracy of that great city.

Mr. Russel Clinton was one of the merchant princes of New York. The large business house with which he was connected, sent ships to every sea, from which they returned laden with the most rare and valuable products. Silks and teas from China, rice and laquered ware from Japan, muslins and shawls from India, all were procured that could be turned into money, and for years this house had been considered one of the most prosperous and flourishing in the city.

Mr. Clinton married the daughter of his senior partner, and the public journals had hardly ceased speaking of the beauty of the bride, the magnificence of the bridal trousseau, the splendor which attended the nuptials, before they returned from their trip to Niagara, and settled down in their own home.

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In an ante-room leading from the back parlor, Mr. Clinton with his wife and three young ladies who officiated as bridesmaids on the late occasion, are gathered about a table upon which are placed almost every variety of plate that could be found in a jeweller's shop, together with many articles of bijouterie, which it would be difficult to describe. These were the bride's wedding gifts, and had called forth from her lips many exclamations of delight.

"Did you notice this casket, Josy?" asked her husband, gazing with admiration at her brilliant beauty to which excitement had lent an additional charm.

"Oh, no, Russel!" she answered, catching it from his hand. "Your mother only gave it to me an hour before we left;" and she held up to the light a magnificent bandeau of pearls of the purest water.

"Oh, how lovely! How charming! How becoming they are!" were echoed on every side, as Miss Le Row twined them in the owner's black hair.

Josephine advanced and stood proudly before one of the long mirrors, then catching in the glass before her the gratified expression of her husband, she said with enthusiasm, "Russel, your mother is a darling, and my first expression of thanks shall be to her."

"Josy, what's this? who can this be from?" asked Miss Glover, a laughing, black eyed Miss of eighteen, holding up to view a small rosewood box to which a curiously formed key was attached.

Josephine advanced quickly, and had no sooner taken it than she exclaimed, "There! I knew she would send something. That is aunt Sarah's box, and I have

wondered and wondered what they would give me; but I looked over all the cards two or three times, and could find nothing from her or from uncle James. It is something handsome, I know. Come, girls, guess; you know they're rich as Jews, though they live in such old-fashioned style."

"I shouldn't be at all surprised if it was a diamond necklace or ear-rings," answered Miss Le Row, with a half-sigh, as she hoped her turn to receive presents would soon come.

"Well, I can't wait any longer," called out the bride, actually trembling with impatience to see the contents; "I have seen this box standing on aunt Sarah's bureau ever since I can remember;" and as she spoke the cover flew open, revealing to the astonished eyes of the eager group, not pink cotton surrounding diamonds, not even pearls, but a plain folded paper underneath which was a letter addressed, "To my dear niece, Josephine Talbot."

The disappointment was too great. Poor Josephine whose fancy had gone even beyond the imagination of her companion, and had led her to expect to see a full set of brilliants, could not restrain her tears. She scornfully pushed the box from her, without even perusing the letter. "There!" she exclaimed, passionately, "I don't care now for all the rest, I'm so provoked at the meanness of aunt Sarah and uncle James," — and her beautiful features were distorted with anger.

Mr. Clinton gazed for one moment as if he could hardly credit his senses; but the thought, "she is young, and has not been taught to restrain herself" darted thro'

his mind, and he said, soothingly, "but you care for me, dearest; and you shall have whatever you desire."

Josephine snatched away her hand which he had taken and said, "No, I care for nobody; it's always just so; when I set my heart upon anything I'm sure to be disappointed."

The feelings of the husband were so outraged, that she should place her jewelry in comparison with his affection, that his first impulse was to turn from his wife, and leave the room; but a moment's reflection restrained him.

"Josephine," said he, more firmly; "tell me, what did you want? what did you expect?"

But the weeping bride would make no reply. Already she began to feel ashamed of this first exhibition of temper in the presence of her husband, but was too proud to confess her folly. An awkward silence followed, and soon the bridesmaids took their departure.

As soon as Josephine was left alone, she retired to her own room. She had not yet found time to examine and admire the taste and elegance of the costly furniture which everywhere met her eye, and now she was too unhappy to do so. She leaned her head upon her hands, and shed tears of mortification and regret. She cared not for her companions. They had often witnessed these bursts of temper which the slightest annoyance would call forth; but she could not forget the expression of contempt with which her husband had regarded her as he left the room to accompany her companions to their residence in the next street. Once the thought occurred, "I will tell him I am sorry and ashamed of my

conduct;" but the moment she heard his step mounting the stairs, she flew into the adjoining boudoir, and hastily commenced undressing herself.

Mr. Clinton made no attempt to follow her, but went quietly to bed.

The next morning Mrs. Clinton, having laid awake half the night deciding what course to pursue, appeared at breakfast in the most bewitching of French morning caps, and really exerted herself to be agreeable; and though, at first, the gentleman answered only by monosyllables, he could not long resist the influence of her smiles, and their first breakfast was on the whole a charming repast.

"What shall we do with ourselves till dinner?" she asked, as they arose from the table.

"I think," returned Mr. Clinton, "it would be well to call a servant and put the articles in the next room in their proper places. I cannot say I admire the fashion of exhibiting such gifts."

"Why, Russel," she answered with enthusiasm, "that is just what they are given for. Do you suppose Mrs. Brace or Mrs. Ames or Mrs. Gray would have purchased that elegant urn or salver or set of forks if they had not known that they would be talked about and praised as presenting the most expensive gifts?"

"I cannot say what their motives were; but I had supposed," he added with a slight degree of sarcasm in his tone, "that they intended them as expressions of affection for you. I know my mother had no such expectation in her humble gift, but presented it to her new daughter in the sincere desire to give her pleasure."

As the lady made no reply, Mr. Clinton, after a moment's hesitation whether or not to break through the rules of etiquette and go to his store, took a paper and sat down to its perusal.

"Oh, Russel, do come here!" called Mrs. Clinton, before he had had time to glance down one column: "Did you ever hear anything so spiteful?" And she read aloud:—

"Dear Josy,—

"I suppose you have been expecting a present from me; and have hoped for something which would reflect honor upon the taste of your maiden aunt; but to tell you the truth, I am an old-fashioned spinster, and I do not approve of many of the new-fangled notions which obtain such favor at the present day. In particular I disapprove of the manner of presenting bridal gifts. I think it is ostentation which prompts them, and ostentation which is cultivated by them, and as your uncle agrees with me, we have concluded not to follow the fashion but leave baubles to others, and unite in presenting you the enclosed.

"Your loving Aunt and Uncle."

"Shameful! isn't it?" she added, glancing at her husband, as she unfolded the paper, and handed it to him. "Only an old paper of advice."

"Shameful, Josy? It is noble; it is generous; you don't understand. This is a deed."

"What is a deed, Russel?" she asked, as his eyes were fixed intently on the paper.

Her husband soon succeeded in making her understand that her kind friends had presented her with the beautiful suburban cottage where her uncle always resided in summer. The property had been secured to her, together with an annual income of five hundred dollars. The house was to be occupied, as at present, by Mr. James Wallace, he paying three hundred dollars rent, which was to be added to the principal. One clause at the close, however, excited a merry peal of laughter from the bride, and even a smile from her husband; and this was, that she could never have the use of the cottage or the money, until some misfortune or change in her circumstances, should render it necessary for her support.

The morning was fine, and Josephine easily persuaded her husband to ride with her to Oakland Cottage, and present her thanks in person to uncle James.

Mr. Wallace, the gentleman in question, was at work in the garden, when his niece arrived. He was delighted to see her, and accompanied her around the grounds, which were in fine order, under his own superintendence. They then returned to the cottage where he ordered luncheon, and they prepared to take leave in high spirits. Josephine said gayly, "This present is just like aunt Sarah, but the prospect of the possession is so far in the distance that I think I should have preferred something in my hand, as I used to say when I was a child."

"You are nothing but a child now, Miss, and a wilful one too," responded uncle James, playfully patting her cheek; you will have to hold a pretty tight rein," he added, turning to the husband.

"Oh, I think we shall get along charmingly!" he re-

plied, forgetting for the moment everything but her surpassing beauty as she gazed lovingly in his face.

Four years of uninterrupted prosperity to the young merchant passed away; but at the end of that time shrewd business men began to see that a crisis in the commercial world was fast approaching; and some, by wisely reducing their sales, began to make preparations for it. Of this class, however, was not Mr. Clinton. He had always been successful, and he could not understand why he should not always be so. Everything which he touched seemed to turn to gold, and he had acquired the reputation of an exceedingly fortunate man.

This was true only in his mercantile life, for his home was anything but pleasant. Two children had been born to him, a noble, warm hearted boy, now three years old, and a beautiful girl of eighteen months.

During the years which had passed since her marriage, Mrs. Clinton, by her variable temper, and the frequency of her complaints of her husband, had gradually alienated his affections from herself. A story had of late reached her ears, of his devotion to Miss Hobart, a young lady who was visiting in New York, and, indeed, there appeared to be some truth in the report, though when accused by his wife of unfaithfulness to her, of having forgotten his oft-repeated vows of never dying affection, he neither confirmed nor denied the charge, but usually began to hum a tune or take up a newspaper, to show her that he treated the subject with the utmost contempt.

Little did Mrs. Clinton realize the danger of the course

she was pursuing, both with regard to her own happiness and that of her husband and children. He was more and more estranged from her, passed more and more time at his counting room, and his evenings in places of amusement, often, alas! in the society of those with whom he would have blushed to meet his wife, or any one of his acquaintance whose good opinion he prized; and less and less in the company of those whom it was his duty to love and cherish.

Sometimes he sighed as he remembered the fond anticipations of happiness he had indulged before his marriage, and tried to retrace his steps and to pay his wife the attentions which, now that she had lost them, she coveted; but, generally, one evening at home was as much as his patience would endure, for Josephine, not at all understanding his motives, or endeavoring to assist him in his good resolutions by rendering the occasion so pleasant that he would be induced to repeat it, eagerly embraced the opportunity to upbraid him for his cruel desertion of her and her children, and expressed her wonder that he dared show his face at home.

On one occasion Mr. Clinton happened to meet at the house of a mutual friend, the aunt Sarah who was spoken of at the beginning of this chapter. The kind lady, spinster though she was, drew her nephew into a retired corner and inquired for his family.

"They are well, I presume," was the reply; "that is, I know nothing to the contrary," and he endeavored to turn the subject into another channel; but she had a noble motive in pursuing it, and she said pleasantly, "but, Russel, you do not feel as indifferent as you appear. I re-

member you as a most devoted lover, indeed I confess to some longings for one who would so unselfishly yield to all my wishes, be blind to my faults, and adore my virtues as you did Josy's."

Mr. Clinton smiled as his aunt was speaking; but the smile was quickly succeeded by a look of bitterness as he replied, "Years ago I discovered the folly of expecting happiness in being united to one who is not contented with thinking herself a saint, but must make out that every one with whom she is connected is a sinner of the deepest dye.

"Why aunt," he added, breaking out with indignation, "I can take my oath that for a year Josephine has never spoken to me kindly or pleasantly, or in a wife-like manner; not once, as you did just now."

Aunt Sarah sighed, as she feared this was too true. "But have you done your duty, my dear nephew? I acknowledge she has a high temper; that was her infirmity when a child; and I never could persuade my sister that she was wrong in not subduing it. Josephine has many fine traits. I believe she really loves you and her children."

"She gives astonishing evidence of it, certainly," responded the incensed husband.

"But the children, Russel?"

"Yes, the children," repeated he, with a heavy sigh, "I love Albert I suppose as well as any father loves his child; but when my mere speaking to him is made an occasion for reproach, and I am called hard names in his presence, I think it best to keep out of his way. As for

Emma, I have not seen the child for a month, except as I sometimes pass her in the carriage with her mother."

"That is wrong, all wrong, I know you will pardon me for saying so, as I have no motive but your good."

"You cannot be more painfully aware of it than I am; and I presume, Josephine would give you quite a tragical story of my mis-doing in that particular; but the truth of the case is just this. I am actively employed all day in my business, and am often wearied and perplexed with a multiplicity of cares; I return home at night, and instead of finding a wife who will cheer me by her enlivening conversation, and soothe me by her affection, I am received with reproaches that I did not come before, charged with ill-treating my wife, having no natural affection for my children, and with the grossest crimes, which if I have committed I have been driven to do so by her treatment. If I am deaf to all this, and ring to have the nurse bring in the children, then the tune is changed, and I am accused of only coming into the house to be an annoyance and a bore; and nine times out of ten the order is countermanded, and I am forbidden the sight of them. Now this is all dreadful; but it is true, and I confess I am heartily sick of the life I lead."

The conversation was here suddenly interrupted by the appearance of Miss Hobart, the lady before mentioned, who with a very sweet smile, begged to know if she were an intruder, or if she might be allowed to rest in that retreat where all seemed to be peaceful and happy.

Miss Wallace only fanned herself, but her nephew made up for her want of cordiality by a complimentary assurance that she never could be considered an intruder. Her presence was always welcome.

Miss Hobart tapped him playfully with her fan, exclaiming, "oh, you flatterer! But to return to what I was saying, I am really sick of all this heartless show. I do love quiet, or rather the society of a few congenial souls with whom in the retirement and bliss of the home-circle I can have sweet communion."

The speaker was a celebrated beauty, the lips which uttered the truly refined sentiment, were of the richest ruby, and at the close she cast a regretful glance at her admirer, and then raised them to heaven. Ah, Miss Hobart had often been told her best attitude was that of a Madonna! No wonder then that though Miss Wallace pursed her mouth to its smallest compass, and heartily wished the lady who was thus weaving a snare around the husband of her niece any where but in New York; yet Mr. Clinton was almost bewildered with the idea that here then was one lady who possessed not only great beauty and varied accomplishments, but a warm, affectionate heart, yearning for the delightful joys of home.

"Oh!" he thought, "would it had been my fate to have married her! I should have been a far better and happier man. Starting up suddenly he offered the lady his arm, and bowing to his aunt, soon forgot the existence of every body but himself and her who was by his side.

A few weeks after this the attentions of Mr. Clinton to the fair lady were brought to an abrupt termination by the sudden failure of one of the largest houses in the city, a firm so intimately connected with his own that Mr. Clinton for the first time began to realize the danger which others had for months foreseen. But even now he was opposed to retrenchment. They were doing an enormous business and had credit at the banks to any amount. He persuaded his father-in-law to hold on a little longer, encouraging him with the assertion that they need have no fears. But while he would not confess it even to himself, Mr. Clinton did tremble at the bare idea of a failure, though he knew that if their bills were paid, they could dollar by dollar meet all their liabilities. These apprehensions so disturbed him that he could neither eat nor sleep. His business had been his god, he had been envied for his superior shrewdness and good fortune. What would be said of him if what he dreaded should ever come to pass? He made up his mind to one course; he would leave the country. He had no ties here to keep him, and he actually shrank from the torrent of reproach he knew he should be called upon to endure from his wife. Then he believed she would rejoice at his absence, and sometimes the thought of taking another lady as his companion, darted through his mind. Would she consent? He had no doubt on that point.

One morning when about to rise from his bed, he found himself wholly unable. He had passed a sleepless night, and awoke when the sun was high in the heavens

from an unrefreshing nap after daylight. His wife had joined a party to the springs, leaving the children in the care of the nurse. He rang the bell and ordered the servant to bring a cup of coffee to his bed, and to send word to the store that he was ill.

In the course of an hour his father-in-law visited him, and found him suffering from an attack of fever. A physician was immediately summoned, and forbid his leaving the house for the day.

"Better send for Josy," said her father as he was leaving the room.

"Oh, no, that is not necessary!" he eagerly replied, for he dreaded the idea of being obliged to stay and endure her angry reproaches.

"Well, do as you please, but get well as fast as you can. There was never a worse time for you to be absent from the counting-room."

"I dare say I shall be well to-morrow."

But neither to-morrow nor for a week did he leave his chamber. Mr. Talbot visited him every day, and sometimes two or three times a day for consultation respecting business, but all in vain, the crisis was fast approaching, and one morning the papers announced the fact of the suspension of the great house of Talbot and Clinton.

This was in 1837, and this great failure caused the hearts of many to quake with fear, in some instances not without reason, for it was followed by the ruin of many smaller houses, until public confidence seemed to be destroyed.

The day before this sad event, Mr. Clinton, closely wrapped from the damp air, for it was raining violently,

was carried to the counting-room. His partners had become so accustomed to depending upon him to meet coming payments that they thought if he were only there for half an hour he could advise what course to pursue. He returned to his house with the certainty that he was a bankrupt.

For the ten days he had been at home he had seen more of his children than in all their previous lives. A father's love had been strongly called into exercise to the exclusion of every other affection. Perfumed notes from Miss Hobart were read and returned unanswered to the drawer, with one exception; when he penned the few words: "I am ill, and cannot comply with your invitation."

Albert was a child well calculated to call forth a parent's tenderness. He was a noble, affectionate boy, and rapidly won his way, by his endearing words and soothing attentions, to his sick father's heart.

"Don't it feel a little better, papa?" he asked again and again, after gently smoothing back the jetty waves of hair until assured that his patient was much relieved.

Emma was for a day or two timid in approaching one who was so much of a stranger; but seeing the fearlessness of her brother, she soon became willing to sit on the bed by his side, and even to take her nap with her curly head lying upon his breast.

Mr. Clinton was surprised at the strength of the affection which had so suddenly sprung up for these loved ones. "I will bear poverty and trial, everything but dishonor for their sake," he exclaimed, as he looked forward to a change in his circumstances, and remembered the

resolution he had formed to leave home: "I could bear it manfully if I had a good wife."

The night before the failure was announced was such a night as he had never before passed. Visions of a man at whom his fellows would point in derision, for he had fallen from a high place, and knew enough of human nature to be sure that many would exult in his fall; and also of an incensed woman upbraiding him as the cause of her ruin, were constantly floating before his excited imagination. Then came the thought of a sweet face, and lips which had tremblingly answered to an avowal of his unholy love, and an evil spirit tempted him to flee to her in his distress. But then he must give up his children; and now arose a dreadful tumult in his breast. The good spirit struggled manfully, and at length gained the victory. The gentle voice of his lovely babes sounded in his ears, "Papa, I love you," and he resolved for their sake to resist the solicitations of his corrupt heart.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SEPARATION.

News of the fall of the great house of Talbot & Clinton quickly reached Saratoga, and Mrs. Clinton took a hurried leave of her friends and returned home.

Little realizing with what intensity of emotion her husband was waiting to receive her, the young wife reached her elegant abode, and proceeded at once to her chamber. In the presence of her friends, on board the boat as she came down the river, she had been obliged to restrain all outward manifestation of her chagrin, and she longed to be alone that she might give vent to her feelings of keen mortification and anger. To be sure she could not understand all the changes which must necessarily follow; but she realized enough to know that it would be considered a dreadful disgrace.

As soon as her husband knew she was in the house he proceeded to her room. His heart was softened, and he was conscious of strong emotions of pity toward her in these trying circumstances. When he entered she had thrown off her bonnet, and was leaning her head on her arm indulging the most passionate grief.

"Josephine, my dear wife," said he, approaching her; "do not give way in this manner. To be sure our property is gone; but we still have a pleasant home in the cottage your aunt gave you, and I will work man

fully for you and the children if you will only love me as you once did."

At first she did not reply; but when he went on endeavoring to soothe her, she started to her feet, and with her countenance blazing with indignation, asked: "How dare you ask my love?—You, who have outraged every law of propriety, and made yourself so notorious in your shame that I must be pointed at as a deserted wife; and, in addition to all this, by neglect of your proper business, reduced your family to poverty and disgrace."

"Stop, Josephine!" he exclaimed catching hold of her arm. "When you can talk in a less excited strain, I will hear you; but I will not listen to such charges. You know them to be untrue."

"Deny them, if you dare," she answered, with a sneer. "Deny that you have been guilty of improper intimacy with Miss Hobart, and I will forgive you everything else."

"I do deny it; that is, I deny that anything criminal has taken place between us; but I cannot deny that she has interested me more than any lady with whom I am acquainted. When I have been driven from home, I have taken refuge in her society. There, at least, I am received with smiles, never with reproaches. But now, Josephine, I am ready to take my oath that I will never voluntarily see her again; that I will become to you an affectionate husband, and try to perform my duty toward my children, if you will be to me what you were before our marriage. We may yet be happy; perhaps happier than ever. Though our fortune has gone; yet my name as a man of business is not dishonored. Many gentle-

men have assured me that there has not been such a crisis in the commercial world, within their remembrance; and that a failure now is to be looked upon in an entirely different light from what it would be at another time. I have already received offers to go into a new business. In the meantime we might live with uncle James, and probably enjoy ourselves more rationally than we ever did."

While her husband was speaking in an impassioned manner, Josephine's better nature was aroused, and she was strongly tempted to throw herself into her husband's arms, confess her own folly in having driven him from home, and promise to become to him a true and loving wife; but alas, pride forbade! Confession was what had never passed her lips; and she could not humble herself to begin now.

Mr. Clinton watched every variation in her countenance, and as she began a fresh stream of abuse, he interrupted her.

"Josephine, this is too serious a subject to decide hastily. It involves my happiness for life, perhaps your own. If you are not willing to do your part to make home happy, how can you expect that I shall do so. If you still are determined to pursue the course with regard to me, which has alienated my affections, I shall leave the country forever. I have the right to take the children; but I will not do so cruel a thing as to tear them from their mother, and condemn them to the wandering life I shall be obliged to lead. Therefore I wish you to take time, say till to-morrow morning, and then tell me what you mean to do."

Fully assured that this was only a threat to reduce her to terms, Mrs. Clinton retorted, "you are very considerate; but I am quite as ready to decide now as then."

"And what is your decision?" he asked eagerly, advancing a step toward her.

"That it would be better for us to part; that I should feel no security in the honor of a man who has been unfaithful to his wife, and as I repeat with reason has deprived her of her patrimony by his vices and neglect."

Mr. Clinton staggered under the weight of this blow. It was wholly unexpected. Could he give up his children? "Cruel, cruel woman!" he exclaimed, "you have spoken the words which condemn me to be an exile from country and home; but I will not receive this decision as final. I will give you until to-morrow morning to reverse it," and he suddenly left the room, and went immediately to the nursery.

The children flew to meet him, little suspecting what changes were before them; and he clasped them again and again to his heart.

"Papa hurt Emma," lisped the child almost frightened at the ardor of his embrace. He sat down, talked and played with them until a ring from his wife's room, and an order for the children to be brought to her.

He passed the day in making arrangements for his departure, and for the support of his wife during his absence. As the firm had given up all their property to meet their demands, not reserving a farthing for themselves, the creditors who were in the city, were disposed to act in an honorable and creditable manner with regard to them. It was proposed that Mr. Clinton should go to

Calcutta, and adjust the business there, and the creditors gave him unlimited power to manage for them. In the course of the day he also drove out to see uncle James, and made arrangements for his wife and children to move to Oakland at once, if it should be her wish to do so. He gave himself no time for thought or reflection. One call which he made in the evening, it is painful to record. This was upon Miss Hobart; he had not seen her since his sickness, and the sad change in his prospects; but judging from the beautiful sentiments he had heard from her lips, he supposed she would be more friendly than before. He was shown into the parlor of the house where she was visiting, and giving the servant his card, requested her to inform the lady that he wished to see her. The girl soon returned with a message that Miss Hobart was engaged. He immediately tore a piece of paper from a letter in his hat, and wrote upon it, that he expected to leave the country in the morning, and wished to see her once more before his departure.

In a few moments she made her appearance, when, in a hurried manner, he informed her of what had taken place; that he should probably never return to America, and invited her to accompany him.

With a great show of virtuous indignation, the lady declined the honor of his proposal, and wondered he could have so mistaken her character.

"I have indeed mistaken it," he added, "if it is a regard for virtue which prevents you. When last I saw you I was Mr. Clinton, a millionaire. To-day, I am Mr. Clinton, a beggar. From the millionaire you have

received costly presents and attentions such as you knew I had no right to pay you. To the beggar you denied even the pleasure of seeing you when I call; but I am satisfied, and hereafter I shall thank you for saving me from the sin I was about to commit. Yes, I shall esteem this as the most fortunate call I ever made." They parted with mutual recriminations.

It seemed to Josephine as if that long day would never close, for to her it was far more trying than to her husband. She found it impossible to believe that he would ever leave her and the children, who were now constantly calling for him; and yet the bare possibility of it made her heart almost cease to beat. By every possible excuse she tried to justify her own conduct and to criminate him; but amidst all this she sometimes stopped in her rapid walk across her chamber, as conscience whispered, "His sin lieth at thy door." If she could have been assured that he was making arrangements to leave for India, under the apprehension of the course she intended to pursue, she would have forced her lips to the simple words, "I have erred;" but alas! when they were spoken it was too late.

I will not delay on this painful scene. It is sufficient to say that Mr. Clinton reached home at eleven o'clock, and retired immediately to a room by himself, where he passed the night in writing letters, and preparing some business to be left.

In the morning he rang for a servant to bring breakfast to his room, for he had determined not to see his wife until the moment he were ready to start, if she did not retract what she had said. About ten o'clock he sent to

her room to know if she was ready to give him her final decision; and soon proceeded to her chamber, where the children were both with her.

Mr. Clinton was excessively pale, and was obliged to control his feelings to appear with any degree of composure.

Mrs. Clinton was dressing as he entered, and with her face averted went on in the making of her toilet.

Suppressing his indignation at her indifference, he asked: "Have you anything to say to me, Josephine?"

Taking a rich bracelet from the drawer, she proceeded to clasp it around her arm, as she answered: "Nothing different from what I have already said."

Covering his face with his hands, Mr. Clinton wept aloud, and Josephine, whose pride was fast giving way needed little more to make her yield, when he suddenly started, and catching his children in his arms darted from the room. The door opened again, and, with a countenance of such suffering as she had never witnessed, he said: "Farewell, I do not upbraid you. Your own conscience will do that when I am gone;" and pausing only a moment for one last embrace of his son and daughter, bidding them remember their father, he rushed from the house.

As soon as his wife heard the hall door shut, and realized that it was no vain threat, but that he had really left her, she flew like a distracted creature to the window, and shrieked after him to come back; but he was already beyond the sound of her voice.

The servants soon learned from her what she feared, and assured her that if he were really intending to leave

the country, he must return or send for his baggage; and with this poor comfort the distressed wife was obliged to content herself. But the day passed, and no messenger appeared; and at last one of the servants informed her that all his baggage had been carried from the house the previous day.

The now conscience-stricken wife was perfectly wild with grief, which was not lessened by the appearance of her father with an open letter in his hand which he had just received from his son-in-law.

"What have you done, Josephine?" he asked sternly, — his face flushed with indignation.

She burst into tears.

"Read this," he continued, putting the letter into her hand. "It is now too late for tears."

"My Dear Father, —

"It is with great pain that I am compelled to inform you that a separation has taken place between your daughter and myself. I leave the country in an hour. Josephine is firm in thinking it better for me to go. Do not blame her, but rather cherish and comfort her; for I have no doubt, when it is too late, she will keenly regret the decision which has exiled me from home. I freely acknowledge that I have been greatly in fault, and that I ought to have exhibited more tenderness for her and more affection for my children. My heart fondly yearns for them; would that I could enfold them once more in my arms for a parting embrace.

"Your afflicted Son,

"RUSSEL CLINTON."

"P. S. If I should live to reach India, you will hear from me."

The letter fell from Josephine's hand, and she sank to the floor in a death-like swoon. For several hours the physician who had been summoned by her father stood leaning over her, applying every remedy in his power; and, at length with a low gasp, she feebly opened her eyes.

It was several days before she was able to be removed out of town, when she had abundant evidence of the care her husband had taken for her in the midst of the preparations for his own departure. She manifested no interest in what was passing around her, and had not her friends acted for her, much personal property would have been sacrificed. Her father informed her that the creditors desired her to reserve for herself any articles she might wish, before the furniture was sold. Her jewels and wardrobe, of course, she still retained. Aunt Sarah proved herself very efficient on this occasion, and with the assistance of the servants, in a few hours removed to Oakland all she cared to take from the house.

The nurse who had been with Mrs. Clinton for four years, was persuaded to accompany her; and now all was done, and she had only to think of what had passed.

A few months subsequent to the settlement of Mr. Wells in New York, a gentleman was one morning shown into his study in whom he recognized his most respected parishioner, Mr. James Wallace. At this time, however, he appeared in deep affliction, and

informed his pastor that he had called to request him to attend the funeral of his niece at Oakland.

Upon inquiring the particulars of her death, the pastor ascertained that the child was daughter to Mrs. Clinton who resided with him, and that it had died suddenly of brain fever. The father was supposed to be in India, and the mother was overpowered by her multiplied afflictions. As the former residence of Mrs. Clinton was in the same block as their own, Mr. Wells remembered the circumstances rumor had connected with his sudden departure. He readily promised to be at Oakland at the time specified.

It would have been impossible to recognize in the heart-broken mother weeping over the body of her deceased child, the proud woman whose haughty spirit had refused to confess her faults, even though such refusal would separate her from her husband forever. Mr. Wells was deeply affected at the sight of her grief, but his endeavors to soothe her were in vain. It was not until his third visit at the house of mourning, that Mrs. Clinton would listen to the voice of prayer. "I have deserved this affliction; I have brought it upon myself. God intends this as a righteous judgment upon me," were words which continually fell from her lips.

Mr. Wells endeavored to convince her that God had sent the affliction also in mercy, to bring her to himself; but for a long time she could not realize the truth of this blessed doctrine. The devoted pastor continued to visit her, and begged leave to carry his wife with him, and at length had the unspeakable satisfaction of feeling that out of death had sprung eternal life in the soul of his afflicted friend.

Mrs. Hammond's nephew Mr. William Whitney lived scarcely half a mile from Oakland, and between his wife, who was a lovely Christian, and Mrs. Clinton, there gradually grew up an intimacy which resulted in the rapid growth of the Christian graces, in the heart of the latter.

The year following the marriage and settlement of Rev. Mr. Wells, the family were made very happy by the arrival of a little stranger among them. But their happiness was of short duration, for at the end of three weeks of suffering, it closed its eyes forever upon this world of sin, and rose to join the blessed throng of infants before the throne, who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

To the good clergyman and his wife this was an exceedingly afflictive event. But they knew whose hand held the chastening rod, and they endeavored to bow submissively to his holy will, fully believing that though they knew not now, why this was best for them, they should know hereafter.

It was more difficult to reconcile Frederic who was now six years of age, to the loss of his baby brother. The generous boy had already made over to him all right and title to his rocking-horse, wagon and sled, reserving only the privilege to use them sometimes when brother did not want them. When at the end of three short weeks, so full of plans for the amusement of his darling, he was called one morning to his mother's room, and led to the crib where lay the lifeless body of the sweet cherub, his grief was so violent that his father was obliged to

take him from the room. Helen and Fanny stood with tearful eyes and quivering lips, and gazed upon the fair white brow, so peaceful in its marble coldness, and Fanny asked, "Mamma won't he be our brother again when we go to heaven?"

Mrs. Wells wept as she endeavored to impress upon their minds the importance of being prepared to meet their dear brother in a world where parting is unknown. Though she endeavored to be cheerful, yet the death of her babe operated so unfavorably upon her health, that during the winter which followed, she was scarcely able to leave the house. For the sake of her husband and children, she struggled against her sorrow; but there was a dimness in her eye, and a languor in her step, which showed that her thoughts were elsewhere. If anything could have served to strengthen the bond between her and her husband, this affliction did so. Mrs. Wells was ever on the watch to avert any sudden allusions to the afflictive subject which nevertheless was ever in their thoughts, and by his soothing remarks to direct her mind to the blessedness they enjoyed of having their little one in the immediate presence of his Saviour. For many months she was subjected to a return of her old complaint, the nervous headache, and at such times nothing could exceed the tenderness of her husband. His step was as light and his hand as gentle as a woman's in administering to her, and often when all other remedies failed, he took her throbbing head between his hands and held it firmly until she fell asleep.

During the sickness of her mistress, Nora who was now released from the nursery, was elevated to the posi-

tion of house-keeper, and under the direction of Mrs. Hammond, she well fulfilled the trust reposed in her.

In June the whole family removed for the summer to C——, the society having generously volunteered to supply the pulpit until October. Their time was divided between the two families, and in the bracing air of her native place, together with frequent bathing in the sea which was only four miles distant, the invalid was fully restored.

The sea-bathing also proved very beneficial to her husband and children, and altogether the summer passed delightfully. For the first time since she left B——, Mrs. Wells, in company with her husband, made calls upon her old people. She found them as enthusiastic as ever in their love for their deceased pastor, and though at first some of them were rather reserved in expressing their sentiments of affection for her first husband in the presence of her second, yet they soon found by the freedom with which she spoke of him, and the heartiness with which her husband joined in her remarks, that it was not a subject which was interdicted between them.

The New Year following the absence of Mr. Wells from his people, was improved by the church and congregation, connected with the —— Street Church, by a visit to their pastor, in which they presented him with many valuable tokens of their affection for him, and their appreciation of his labors.

Mrs. Thomas Warren was called early the following spring to the bed-side of her aunt, who had lingered much beyond their anticipations, but who was now fast

approaching her latter end. The mind of Mrs. Norton was calm, and filled with glorious anticipations of the rest, provided for the people of God. Laura remained with her until the closing scene, which did not occur until she had been in Charleston nearly three weeks. Immediately after the funeral solemnities, she, in company with her husband and her uncle Russel, departed for the North, as the young mother was anxious to embrace her dear little Mary, now nearly two years old, and from whom she had never before been separated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RE-UNION.

IN the grounds belonging to the tasteful residence of Mr. William Whitney, was a pleasant pond, which being walled around, presented a very pleasing view from the back windows. On one side was a miniature boat-house, containing a tiny canoe, kept for the accommodation of those who wished to fish.

This pond was constantly replenished by a spring, the overflowing waters passing off in a deep gurgling brook, which ran along, sometimes widening and sometimes through a narrow channel, which one might easily pass over, until it reached the grounds back of Oakland, where it formed the dividing line, between the estate of Mrs. Clinton and that of her neighbor.

Upon the bank of this pond, under the shade of a large elm, was the grave of little Emma, and here during all the pleasant seasons of summer and autumn, Mrs. Clinton with her only child passed many hours of every day. Uncle James had placed a circular seat around the trunk of the venerable tree, and here Mrs. Clinton brought her work and books, and here also Albert conveyed his toys. In the warm weather when the water was low, his mother sometimes allowed him to bathe his feet, or launch his miniature vessels in the cool brook; but this was only when she was near, for the bottom of the brook

was rough and stony, and at certain seasons after a heavy rain, the waters were so much swollen as to render it unsafe for a child to approach its steep banks.

To Albert there was nothing of gloom about this spot, for with it was associated many delightful conversations with his mother, not only of the lovely sister who was resting there so peacefully, but of his long absent father. The few days which he passed in the society of his father before he left home, had made an indelible impression upon his mind. Every word of love, every token of affection, however slight, had been repeated almost daily. Probably, if he had been in the habit of receiving them all his life, the recollection would not have been as vivid. But those days when he learned the depth of a father's love were a distinct era in his young life.

His mother had been his sole instructor, and by her careful teachings he was far in advance of his years. Geography was his favorite study, for he loved to trace upon the globe in uncle James's library the path his father travelled in going to India, and the route he would take to come home; for, long after hope had died out in the heart of his mother, the boy insisted that he would return.

"As soon as I am a man," he said one day, "I shall take a vessel and go round the world until I can find my father. Who knows but he is just like Robinson Crusoe living alone on an island, because no vessel has been to take him away?"

A sharp pang seized the heart of the mother as she listened to his artless appeals, wholly unconscious of the pain they caused her.

Albert was now nine years of age, and Mr. Clinton had been absent nearly six, during which time no intelligence had been received from him.

In the second year after his departure, letters had been received by Mr. Talbot from Calcutta, reporting favorably of the business there, and from time to time the creditors had received large payments upon their former demands against the firm. After waiting a sufficient time for news which was expected by the way of Liverpool, Mr. Talbot wrote to his son-in-law, urging him to hasten his business and return. Mrs. Clinton also wrote an account of the death of their child. These letters he enclosed to the address of their agent, with a request to forward them to Mr. Clinton. The returning vessel brought an answer from the agent that no such person had reached Calcutta. That he had made inquiries of ship masters; but no one had brought out a passenger by that name. Still, Mrs. Clinton did not wholly despair. She remembered the words of her husband, that he would not condemn the children to the wandering life he should be obliged to lead; but as year after year passed away, hope grew fainter and fainter, until scarcely a spark remained. Sometimes, as Frederic indulged his childish prattle about what might have occurred to prevent the return he so much wished, her courage revived for a moment, but only to plunge her in deeper gloom. Through the day she was generally calm, though her face had assumed a pensive expression, very different from the brilliant beauty she possessed, when first introduced to the reader. But during the night her couch was often a sleepless one and her pillow wet with tears of bitter

repentance. In the education of her child, she avoided everything which would lead to the indulgence of a querulous or impatient temper, such as had embittered her whole life.

Perhaps her character at this time cannot be better described than by giving an extract from the diary of Mrs. Wells:—

“Yesterday I passed a delightful day with Mrs. Clinton, in her charming retreat at Oakland. I was unwilling to tax her kindness by taking the older children; but Mr. Wallace insisted that she wished to see them all. The carriage came for us soon after nine o'clock in the morning, so that we might reach there before the heat became intense; and we, six in number, started. Mr. Wells being unable to leave his study until afternoon.

“My little Laura enjoyed the ride much, and, after her nap, was kept out by Nora most of the day.

“Mrs. Clinton received us very cordially, and after we were rested conducted us to the arbor in the garden near the grave of little Emma, where we had a delicious lunch. She remarked that it might seem strange to us that she chose this spot; but that it had become to her the most delightful in the world. I saw she wished to say more, but as the whole family were present, she restrained herself. Yet, after the young group under the direction of Master Albert had dispersed about the grounds, she continued: ‘When at times I am borne to the earth with sorrow, I come here and fix my thoughts upon the world of purity and love where my dear child has gone, and endeavor to claim the promise

of my Saviour, he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Sometimes, I can by faith lay hold of the precious hopes of the gospel, but there are seasons when I think my sins have been so aggravated that there can be no mercy for me.'

"I was deeply affected at the tone in which she spoke, and my eyes bore witness to my deep interest as I endeavored to assure her that Jesus knew all our grief, and sympathized with us; that if she would cast her care upon him, he would support her. Of course, I could speak only in general terms, as she had never alluded to her own particular trials. But now her heart was apparently moved by my tears, and she exclaimed, 'Oh, my dear Mrs. Wells, you can never know the bitterness of my sorrow! You have lost a husband; and as I have often heard, a tender, loving one; but he died in your presence after blessing you and bidding you farewell. I, too, had a husband, whose noble heart would have been devoted to his family, who was capable by his ardent affections of rendering home happy; but I drove him from me, I drove him into sin, which he abhorred, and then heaped reproaches upon him, such as no honorable man could endure. If he had ever in one instance returned my unkindness, I could have something with which to vindicate the course I pursued; but on the contrary, his life was one succession of efforts to win me from the selfishness and disregard of all but my own happiness, which was my only aim in life, and to assist me in the performance of my duties as a wife and mother. Even to the last, when, in consequence of my abuse, he was driven from his country, he did not up-

braid me. He said, truly, your conscience will do that when I am gone!

"Oh, that I had only confessed my sin against him, and received forgiveness! For years, the hope of doing this sustained me. Soon after the death of my child, I wrote him that God had visited me in judgment, on account of my treatment of him, and I humbly begged him to forgive my long catalogue of offences. I dared not ask him to return to me. I knew I had no right to expect that; but for a long time I hoped he would answer, and with one word assure me that I was forgiven. But the suspense is dreadful. I think I could be thankful to hear that he was dead, if I could be assured that he died a Christian, rather than live such a life of agonizing suspense.

"My child, and even my kind uncle and aunt, know little of the grief which is shortening my days, for when with them I strive to appear cheerful and even resigned to the sorrow which my own sinfulness has brought upon me; but in the silent watches of the night, when no eye but that which never sleeps is resting upon me, I mourn in bitterness of spirit over my past life, and beseech my Father, who is in heaven, to forgive me. But my happiest hours are passed in prayer for the lonely wanderer, if he be indeed a subject of prayer; and there are moments when I believe that my earnest desires for him will be granted."

As she said this, a faint flush beautified her colorless cheek, and her eyes were raised to heaven in a glance of sincere gratitude and fervent devotion.

It was a warm and pleasant day in October. For nearly a week there had been incessant rain, and neither Mrs. Clinton nor her son had been able to visit their favorite retreat under the elm tree.

The morning lessons of Albert were concluded, and he stood before his mother, with his cap in his hand, begging her to take her work and accompany him to the arbor. She was still undecided on account of the fear of dampness in the ground, when her uncle James presented himself from the garden and assured her that the sun had dried the walks, and that the clear, bracing air would do her good.

Mrs. Clinton smilingly collected her work, and taking from the rack in the hall a large hat and shawl, she was soon seated in the pleasant shade, uncle James having thoughtfully placed a cricket under her feet. The sound of the brook dashing along as if impatient to reach its destination, attracted the attention of the boy, and taking his uncle's hand he led him toward it. The waters were much swollen and had overflowed their banks, forcing for themselves channels aside from their natural ones. Albert was delighted at the miniature rivers, as he called the little streams, and ran eagerly to his mother to ask permission to sail his new boat in one of them. After being assured by her uncle that there could be no danger, Mrs. Clinton gave her consent, and taking a book from her basket was soon wholly absorbed in its contents. She was suddenly startled by a loud scream from Albert, who was calling her name. She flew toward the house, as he was nowhere in sight, when another and another shriek quickly followed; and, this time it seemed to

come from behind her. With a sudden thought of the deep water, the distracted mother fled down the walk, and soon reached the brook. Here all was still, and with trembling limbs she was turning to leave the spot, when two small hands rose to the surface of the water, and a faint call of "mother," almost turned her heart to stone. Without one thought of her own danger, for the water was very deep, she prepared to jump into the rapid current, when a strong arm held her back, and in one moment a stranger laid the nearly insensible boy at her feet. With a countenance pale as death, Mrs. Clinton caught his limpid form to her heart, as she murmured, "oh, my blessed boy! My God, accept a mother's thanks for the life of her only child!"

"He is still in danger," said the gentleman, seeing that the boy did not arouse himself. "Measures must instantly be taken to resuscitate him. Tell me where to carry him, and I will go instantly."

For one instant the mother's heart bounded wildly, as she gazed at the stranger of whose presence until he spoke, she had been wholly unmindful, and then speaking with difficulty, she said, "Oh, sir, let us proceed at once to the house!" And she pointed to the cottage, which could just be seen among the trees. The gentleman took the child from her arms, and conveyed him tenderly to his chamber, Mrs. Clinton running on before to send for a physician.

Having placed him in bed, the stranger asked how soon the Doctor would probably arrive, and hearing that they were obliged to send to the city, immediately ordered a warm bath, saying in an apologizing tone to Mr.

Wallace, "I am something of a doctor, and in the present case, it will not do to defer some measures for his relief." All the time he had been speaking, he occupied himself in gently unloosing the boy's clothes, and commenced a vigorous rubbing of the limpid figure, while the mother tearfully called him by name.

Before the bath was prepared, Albert feebly opened his eyes, and faintly smiled.

"Oh, my precious, darling boy!" exclaimed his mother lifting his head from the pillow, and laying it upon her breast, when her over-excited feelings found relief in a natural burst of tears.

It was not until the boy was placed in the bath, and was able to answer questions, that Mr. Wallace noticed that the stranger's clothes were still dripping. "I fear, sir, that you are exposing yourself," he said quickly, while he rang the bell.

There was a slight tone of bitterness in the stranger's voice, as he replied, "for three days and nights I have lain in the water lashed to the fragments of a vessel, and I hardly think a slight wetting on such a day as this can harm me."

"Notwithstanding," replied Mr. Wallace with a smile, as the servant appeared, "I shall do all in my power to prevent it, and if you will follow Hannah to a chamber, you will find a dry suit of clothes at your service."

Mrs. Clinton was kneeling by the side of the bathing tub, and when the gentleman spoke, she trembled in every limb. She fixed her piercing eyes on his face as if she would read his very soul; but after one glance he turned from her, and soon left the room.

Forgetful even of her restored treasure, the poor woman sprang to the door as if to recall him, but he was already out of sight, and she sank into a chair pale and agitated. When Mr. Wallace returned from his attentions to his guest, he found his niece with her hands clasped to her breast, and her eyes fixed immovably upon the door.

"Where is he? oh, don't let him leave!" she gasped out.

"Mamma won't answer me," cried the restored child, speaking to his uncle, "and she looks so strange."

Mr. Wallace turned from one to the other, but was entirely at a loss to understand the cause of the agitation he witnessed. "He will soon be down to attend to his little patient," he answered, supposing at length it must be the fear of having the gentleman leave before the boy was fully restored.

Making a great effort to control herself, she arose and assisted the nurse, who was taking him out of the bath, and the little fellow was soon lying comfortably in bed, wrapped in blankets, and wondering that his mother did not come to caress him.

But her heart was full, almost to bursting, not with the danger which her only child had so narrowly escaped; no, her thoughts were not of him; but of one who was far dearer than her only son, or even the memory of the lovely bud, broken from its stem and mouldering to dust. Something in the voice of the stranger had caused her poor desolate heart to throb so painfully that she could hardly breathe, and though she had failed to recognize one feature of her husband in the white-haired man,

whose heavy beard so thickly covered the lower part of his face; yet the thought of his departure could not be endured for a moment. She left the room to find her uncle, who had just been to the stranger's apartment.

"I am sorry," said he, as she met him, "that I cannot prevail upon the gentleman to remain, and pass the night with us, but he says he must instantly return to the city."

"He must not leave," exclaimed Mrs. Clinton with something of her former decision of tone and manner.

Mr. Wallace smiled and was about to reply, but perceived that their guest had entered the room.

Mrs. Clinton advanced to him, and taking both his hands, tried to speak; but the words died away, and she fell almost fainting into his arms.

"My niece is much overcome by the excitement she has passed through," said Mr. Wallace, as the stranger laid her gently upon the sofa. "She is not able to bear such a fright. I do not at all wonder she is unable to thank you as she desires," and the good man really started, as he caught the expression of agony in her countenance, fearing lest the shock had dethroned her reason. The stranger seemed also agitated by the same thought, and muttering indistinctly that he must return to the city, approached the lady to take leave, saying, however, as he did so, that he would call on the morrow and inquire for his little friend.

Mrs. Clinton started up, and in an almost inarticulate voice, whispered, "oh, do not fail to return!"

The conduct of his niece was so unaccountable, that Mr. Wallace thought it necessary to apologize for her as

he followed his guest to the hall, by saying, "Mrs. Clinton is in a declining state of health, and seems quite unnerved by the scenes of the afternoon. I trust to-morrow she will be better able to render her thanks for the service you have been to us."

"I want no thanks. I deserve none," murmured the stranger. "I was passing the street and was attracted to the spot by the scream of the child, which it would have been less than human to hear unmoved," and with a warm pressure of Mr. Wallace's hand, he hastily left the house.

"How very thoughtless of me not to ask his name," remarked the kind man, re-entering the room where his niece still sat motionless as he had left her.

Mrs. Clinton covered her face with her hands, while the hot tears forced their way through her fingers, then with a sound nearly resembling a groan, she arose and left the room. After ascertaining that Albert was busily occupied in talking with his good nurse, she hastened to her own chamber, and having fastened the door, threw herself upon her knees.

"Father in heaven," she cried in agony, "sustain me in this new trial. It is, it must be he; but he has cast me off. Yes, as I did him! Oh, I never thought of this! But can I wonder that his affections are wholly weaned from me. Have I not deserved it?" Bitter tears poured down her cheeks like water. Then doubts of his identity with her husband, suggested themselves. But they were instantly banished; "that voice," she cried, "oh, no other voice could move me thus! and he will be here again to-morrow; what shall I say? What can I

say to him? Will he believe me when I tell him for six years I have been a repentant wife, mourning for the loss of my noble husband?"

After a sleepless night to Mrs. Clinton, the morrow came; but not the stranger. For three successive days she waited and watched, but still he came not. Albert, now fully restored, was continually running from the gate to the house, to announce to his mother that a carriage was approaching, but alas! they always passed by without stopping. This continual suspense so wore upon the feeble frame of the poor mother, that she was obliged to keep her bed. Every sound caused her heart to palpitate with renewed hope, which as often was changed to despondence. Her uncle, though entirely ignorant of the hopes and fears which alternated in quick succession through her breast, yet participated in her anxiety to see once more the preserver of her child. Without imparting his intention to her, he rode twice to the city, and called at the principal hotels, but could nowhere hear of a gentleman answering to his description.

Toward the close of the fourth day, which was the Sabbath, Mrs. Clinton descended from her chamber, and feebly bent her steps toward the grave of her child. It was the season designated as the Indian summer, and the air was as balmy as June. The sun was just sinking to rest, and the whole western sky was lighted up to witness the departure of the king of day. The bereaved mother bent over the grave, and tears such as the sight of it had not called forth for many a year, now fell thickly upon the green sods before her. How often had

she knelt there in prayer for her husband, and thought if she could see him once more, how earnestly would she seek his forgiveness. Now how different had been their meeting. It was plain he intended to leave her forever.

"Mr. Wallace directed me here to find you," said a low voice at her side. Mrs. Clinton sprang to her feet, and made a motion as if she would have thrown herself into his arms, but he gently took her hand and led her to a seat under the tree, where he seated himself by her. Her heart beat almost to suffocation as she witnessed the change which a few days had wrought in him.

"You are ill," she said suddenly.

"I have not been quite well," he answered evasively, "or I should have fulfilled my promise to my little friend. Indeed this is the first time I have left my chamber since the evening I was last here."

"Oh, my husband! my husband!!" were words which struggled for utterance, while her heart yearned over him, but there was a dignity in his manner which repelled her, and strange to say, doubts whether he were her husband, began to intrude themselves upon her mind. She tried to calm her agitated feelings, and pointing to the gorgeous scene before them, sought to divert his attention from herself. He gazed a few moments in silence, and then arose as if to depart.

At this movement her pent up emotions would be repressed no longer, and with a cry of agony, she caught his arm, as she gasped, "oh, you will not leave me again!"

The whole frame of the strong man shook with suppressed emotion, as he resumed his seat by her side.

"Josephine," he said, in a husky voice, "I see that you have recognized me; you are the first who has penetrated my disguise, and he took from his head the silvery locks which had served so effectually to screen from view his own curly hair, which was indeed thickly sprinkled with gray. You must once more pronounce my doom. Shall I again embark for India, and pass my life with wild beasts in their jungles, or shall I remain with you?" The last words were spoken so hoarsely that it was only by bending toward him that she could distinguish them; but when she did so, she fell on her knees at his feet, exclaiming, "oh, my God, I thank thee for this hour!"

Mr. Clinton raised her from her humble position, and strained her to his heart. In that peaceful retreat close by the grave of their little one, this re-united pair poured forth to each other, the confessions, hopes and fears which had alike agitated them during their long separation. Tightly clasped in the arms of her husband, the grateful, happy wife forgot her recent illness, or the lateness of the hour, until startled by the voice of uncle James calling her to come in. The good man could hardly believe his sight, when, after waiting what appeared to him a long time for his niece to return to the cottage with the stranger, he ventured out to remind her that the dew had begun to fall, and saw her head lying gently on his breast.

"Josephine," said he, rather peremptorily, "you forget yourself; you will take cold; the dew is falling, and the air is chilly."

"Oh, uncle James," she exclaimed, joyfully, "do you not recognize my husband?"

The good man wiped his eyes, coughed and hemmed;

but somehow the surprise deprived him of his speech. Mr. Clinton cordially grasped his hands, and tried to express his joy at the meeting, when they all adjourned to the house to find Albert.

The boy could hardly control himself when told that the kind stranger was his own father, though he could scarcely reconcile the idea of a white haired man with the recollection of a broad brow and black curly locks.

Uncle James also observed that his eyes must have grown very dim, for he should never have imagined that the gray-headed man could turn out to be the husband of his dear niece. But the next morning when Mr. Clinton made his appearance at table with a smooth face, and bereft of his white wig, there was a start of joyful surprise, which was many times repeated by different persons through the day, as Mr. Clinton in company with his wife, returned to the city and called upon his father-in-law and other family friends, aunt Sarah Wallace among the number.

Reverend Mr. Wells and his lady sympathized most cordially in the deep joy of their friend in the return of her husband, and the new affection which appeared to exist between them. During their call the good pastor introduced subjects calculated to test the character of their new friend, and to ascertain whether the separation had been blessed to him as to his companion, but was grieved to see that they were skilfully evaded, until he rose as if to depart, when taking the hand of his wife, he led her before the clergyman, where with a choking voice he said, "From what Mrs. Clinton has related to me of your kindness to her during our long separation, I can-

not doubt but you will rejoice to re-unite us and implore for us the grace of God in our new union; that we may cherish and support one another, bear patiently with each other's faults, and do all in our power to promote mutual joy in this life, and to fit for the blessedness of the life to come."

These words were uttered with so much earnestness and such deep emotion, that all present were moved to tears. Mr. Wells with moistened eyes, stepped forward, and holding a hand of each, bestowed upon them the usual marriage benediction, when all joined him in prayer, that religion might refine all their joys, and render their home a paradise of conjugal love.

One morning early in December, Mr. Clinton announced to uncle James that he intended to take his wife into town for the winter, "where," he added, "we hope you will accompany us, otherwise we could hardly feel it right to claim your hospitality another summer."

Mr. Wallace glanced in dismay at his niece, who answered pleasantly, "this is the first intimation I have had of such a movement, so I can give you no explanation."

"The fact is," resumed Mr. Clinton, clearing his throat, "I am intending to go into business again in New York, and it will not be convenient to live so far out of town during the cold weather. I have been to look at a house, and find it will accommodate us. We can easily carry in Josephine's furniture, and be quite comfortable there for a few months. She will go in with me this morning and make arrangements to be settled in our new home by Christmas."

His eyes were fastened upon his plate, or he would have seen that his wife turned exceedingly pale, and with difficulty restrained her tears. The few weeks which had passed since his return home had been so quiet and peaceful that the thought of returning to the city, and having her husband exposed to the temptations of his former life was dreadful to her. To be sure she knew he would not long be contented to be dependent upon her uncle, and had supposed that he would at a future time seek some kind of business; but for this sudden announcement she was wholly unprepared.

Uncle James witnessed the quivering of her lip, and determined to speak in private with his nephew, and beg of him to do nothing rashly, as his friends would gladly render him assistance. This he did, soon after breakfast, and received the cordial thanks of Mr. Clinton, with the assurance that he would not be detained from applying to so generous a friend if he was in need.

When they returned to the breakfast-room Mrs. Clinton was washing the cups, and taking a paper from the sideboard, her husband sat down to read, but she started as she glanced at him to see signs of agitation upon his countenance which he was evidently making a great effort to conceal. Two or three times she met a glance so full of meaning, that she was determined to seek an explanation as soon as they were alone.

At length he laid down the paper, and with affected indifference inquired, "How soon, Josy, can you be ready to go into town? Your uncle has offered me the use of his carriage, and Albert may go with us,"

Though she would have preferred leaving the child at home that she might converse more freely with him, she answered cheerfully, "If you are in a hurry to go I can be ready in half an hour, or even in less time."

"That will do," he answered abruptly as he left the room.

On reaching the city Mr. Clinton remarked: "I have an engagement at twelve, and therefore we must not tarry too long. There are two or three houses vacant, in either of which I think we could be comfortable for a few months. He drove into a back street, and at length stopped at the door of a three-story brick house of respectable appearance. Having rung at the next door, procured the key, and assisted her from the carriage, he said hurriedly: "You can just run over the house, and I will remain near the door. The air is so cold in those shut up rooms I don't like to take Albert from the carriage."

Mrs. Clinton sighed as she ran up and down stairs taking a cursory survey of the size and convenience of the apartments. Not a ray of sun ever shone into the damp rooms which were closely shut in by the higher buildings with which the house was surrounded; but she bravely determined to make the best of the choice if it met with her husband's approbation, "for after all," she whispered to herself, "what are the inconveniences of a cold house compared with the blessing of having my husband with me?"

"Well, Josy," inquired Mr. Clinton, anxiously, "how do you think it will do? Can you manage to be happy here, or to make it look like home?"

She smiled as she replied, "I can be happy anywhere with you and our dear child."

Mr. Clinton was seized at this moment with a severe fit of coughing, and turned abruptly to the carriage. When they were seated she said, "There is one objection to this house; it is so far from our church, that I suppose it would be difficult for Albert to walk."

"Perhaps one of the others would suit you better in that respect," was the reply.

"Are you intending to call upon Mr. Wells this morning?" she asked in surprise as he stopped at her pastor's door.

"No," he replied, "but I was seized with a sudden desire to visit our old home; and thought, if you did not care to go in, I could leave you here."

Mrs. Clinton grew very pale, and put her hand suddenly to her heart as she answered: "It would be painful in the extreme, but I will do so if you wish it."

"Thank you," said he, driving on.

She sighed heavily, but drew down her veil, and prepared to alight from the carriage. Albert was in an ecstasy at the idea of going into so fine a house.

Having fastened the horse to the ring in the marble pavement, Mr. Clinton was obliged to put his arm around his wife to assist her up the steps, so much distressed was she at the idea of meeting strangers at such a time and in such a place.

"Can we have the liberty of going over the house?" asked the gentleman of the servant who answered the bell.

"Walk in, sir, and I will inquire," she answered hesitatingly.

Mr. Clinton stepped forward toward the parlor; but his wife stopped in the hall wholly unable to control her feelings.

"It will not be necessary for us to go over every part of it," said he, as she reappeared; "I should like to visit the rooms on the next floor."

Josephine caught his arm. "Oh, Russel, I cannot, — indeed, I cannot go up there!"

"I will assist you," he replied, putting his arm around her, while Albert readily followed the smiling servant.

A cheerful fire was blazing in the grate, but neither of the party seemed to notice it, or anything which the room contained; for, upon entering, the gentleman gave way to a burst of emotion, the nature of which his wife found it impossible to divine. But making a great effort he soon conquered this, and taking his astonished wife in his arms, he said tenderly: "Oh, my precious wife, — forgive me for having caused you such suffering, which I was tempted to do that I might prove whether your repentance was sincere. This, dearest, is once more our home, — and here we will again begin life; not as we once did, in our own strength, but as our good neighbor says, with religion to govern and guide us. Here we will daily implore strength of our heavenly Father to fulfil aright all our duties to each other, and to our only child. If we ever weary in well-doing, we will visit the retired grave of our dear little Emma, or call to mind the agony of the long years when we were separated.

That was a blissful hour which followed; and those were blissful tears, which the happy wife shed as she laid

her head upon the breast of her husband, and listened to the trial it had been to him to take her to that cold, desolate house, and the delight which thrilled his soul at her reply, that 'with him she could be happy any where.' "It was with difficulty," he added, "that I could refrain from catching you in my arms, and telling you all; but I had imposed this test upon you, and I determined to carry it out. Now you are all my own, and hereafter there shall be no want of confidence between us."

"But how could you afford to buy so expensive a house?" she asked, smiling through her tears.

"Your husband is richer than ever," he replied, pressing her closely to his heart. "I have purposed to go into business with your father. I furnishing the capital, and he giving his time and experience. We have already engaged our old store. On Christmas evening I propose to invite our friends to a family party, and give them an account of my tour. But I cannot wait until that time to say to you, that whatever you may have observed in me, since my return, which appeared like a want of affection, you must attribute entirely to my desire to know if the change in you, which appeared too great for me to conceive, was real, and would stand trial; or, whether it had been caused by the quiet life you had led in the society of your kind uncle. The restraint I put upon myself at our first meeting was the cause of terrible suffering to me for three days, during which I was a hundred times upon the point of sending for you to come to my sick room. In your presence I could only disguise my agitation by an abruptness which

I noticed often caused you surprise, and perhaps pain; but nobly have you stood the trial, and now all necessity for it has passed, and I am convinced that God has dealt with me, a penitent husband, in great mercy, and has given me such a wife as, except in Oakland, I might search for in vain all over the world."

CHAPTER XXX.

TABLE-TALK AND ENTERTAINMENT.

THAT was a pleasant party which assembled in the mansion of Mr. Clinton on Christmas day. When the guests were all seated around the dinner-table the hostess pleasantly remarked, that, for the first time in her experience of party-giving, every one was present who had been "bidden."

"Another fact is worthy of notice," remarked the host, with an impressive manner; "we know that all present are true friends, because we are united, not by the ephemeral ties which the loss of a few dollars will sunder, neither by party politics which, at present, are so violently agitating the public mind, but by the enduring bond of christian friendship."

"I am happy to respond to that sentiment," continued Mr. Bentley, who with his wife and son were among the guests; "but, until within a few months, I was ignorant of the nature and strength of such a bond."

Mrs. Bentley, who was seated next her friend, Mrs. Hammond, grasped her hand, and with dewy eyes, whispered: "You, dear madam, first taught me to understand and value christian sympathy and love. Oh, how different from my fashionable friends, who fled from the sight of my distress!"

"Thank you, my dear," replied Mrs. Hammond, in a

low voice, and returning warmly the pressure of her hand.

But it is high time that I should name the honored guests. There was the good pastor on the right hand of the host; opposite him was Mr. Thomas Warren; then followed Mrs. Warren, and her cousin Helen Russel, who was passing the winter with her; and opposite them Mr. and Mrs. Bentley, Mrs. Hammond, Mr. and Mrs. Whitney, Mr. and Mrs. Talbot; then uncle James and aunt Sarah, with Mrs. Wells next to the hostess.

After the numerous courses had been served, and the servants having placed the dessert of fruit upon the table had retired from the room, Mr. Clinton called for sentiments, — Mr. Warren, Mr. Bentley, and Mr. Talbot having responded, the host with a meaning smile upon his countenance, called out his good pastor. "I have one sentiment," returned Mr. Wells, "but I have repeated it to my neighbor so often of late, that I see he expects a repetition of it now, and I will not disappoint him: *"Religion — the best refiner of our domestic enjoyments."*

This sentiment was received, not with a round of applause, but with delight by many who, in their own experience, had proved its beauty, and who, with grateful hearts, eagerly responded to its truthfulness.

The guests then adjourned to the parlor, until summoned back to the pleasant sight of Master Albert, presiding at a table filled with his guests. Here were the twins, occupying seats of honor opposite their host, and next them Master Melville and Frederic Wells, Mary Carlton Warren, and little Laura, in the arms of her

nurse Nora, then a timid little girl, whose attention was wholly diverted from the gratification of her appetite, by the number of strange faces about her, and who answered to the name of Lily or Elizabeth Whitney. A very merry group was this, who needed no wine to raise their spirits, as their frequent shouts during the discussion of their fruit well testified, they having partaken of their more substantial repast, under the superintendence of their mothers, some hours previous.

The latter part of the afternoon was devoted exclusively to the children, during which Mr. Wells and Mr. Warren proved that they had not forgotten the games of their childhood.

Helen excited quite a laugh by the remark, "why, father, I didn't know you could play blind man's buff; and you can catch quicker than any one of us."

"It will take you some time, my dear, to learn all your father's accomplishments," replied her mother, laughing heartily at the astonishment exhibited by the child.

When the guests were called to supper after the children with the exception of the twins had been sent home, the conversation turned upon the subject, so often discussed, of amusements for children.

What amusement ought Christian parents to allow their children?

"That is a grave subject, remarked Mr. Wells, and has puzzled many parents who were truly desirous of knowing their duty. One point is very plain, children need amusement of some kind. It is as necessary to the healthy development of all their powers, as the exercise

of their voice in reading is to proper modulation. But in what shall this consist?"

"I must confess," said Mr. Bentley, "that I shared considerably in your little daughter's astonishment, at seeing you engage personally in such a game as blind man's buff, or even to sanction it with your presence. I was taught that clergymen of your sect were very much opposed to such sport. But I hope you will excuse me for saying that it is in this respect as in many others in which I have had reason to change my opinion, the more I see of truly christian people, the more I am convinced that they have been belied, and that they only know how to extract real happiness from social enjoyments."

Mr. Wells smiled as he replied, "the surprise of Helen was not that I joined in childish games; she, as well as her sisters and lively brother have had almost daily experience of my skill in them, but simply that blind man's buff was in the list of my accomplishments. Before I took upon myself the responsibilities of a father, I reflected much upon the subject of family government; and I believe the more parents interest themselves in all that pertains to the wants of their children, the more influence they will have over them. I have good authority for such a belief in the training of the family of my good Professor, Dr. Chalmers. Never was a father more familiar with his children, and at certain hours, enjoyed a lively game with them, as heartily as any child I ever saw. I have often called at his house during his hour of relaxation, and seen him chasing them around the room, or rolling upon the floor, while the house rang with their merry peals, and yet his authority was never dis-

puted. His uncommon regard to the welfare of his daughters, and his desire to provide for their amusement were also seen in the eagerness with which when he was away from home, he noted everything in his journal which could give them pleasure, and the remark was often appended when he related a good anecdote, "read that to Annie and Elcanor; or Gracie will be pleased with that."

"The fact is well established, I believe," remarked Mr. Warren, after a short pause, "that children need amusements of some kind. As I have a little Miss who will presently be coming on the stage, I should like to be informed what are admissible and what are inadmissible."

"You have introduced an extensive subject for discussion," replied his brother-in-law, "and one which as Christian parents interests us deeply; but as we hope this evening to hear an account of our host's adventures during his long absence, about which I confess to no small share of curiosity, I propose that we postpone the discussion of it until some future time."

After a few words in a low voice to his wife, Mr. Warren replied, "we will defer it until New Year's day, when I am requested by my good wife to invite you all to our house, not excepting the babies, and their nurses."

This informal invitation being cheerfully accepted, the party adjourned from the tea-table to the parlors, where they requested Mr. Clinton to gratify their curiosity.

"That will not take long," remarked the host, seating himself near his wife, while master Albert who had been permitted to be present, occupied a chair near him. "When I have stated one fact, and pointed your atten-

tion to a trifling circumstance which seems to have escaped the attention of my good father-in-law and some of his friends, you will have the clue to my history. My dear Josephine," he asked, turning to his wife, "did the thought never occur to you that I had changed my name during my absence?"

Mrs. Clinton shook her head thoughtfully, while her father started suddenly from his chair, and exclaimed as he grasped him by the hand, "you are Mr. Manners, the skilful accountant, to whom I owe all that I have received from India. You are Mr. Manners who has made such an immense fortune by exporting from India to this country, and to all parts of the world, the hides you bought of the natives."

Mr. Clinton smiled assent; but his wife shuddered as she realized the dangers, and hair-breadth escapes through which he had passed, for with the history of Mr. Manners she was perfectly familiar.

"Yes, that is the fact I wished to mention; now for the other point. In the rendering of the accounts to our creditors at home, it often occurred to me as remarkable that the fact of my portion of the proceeds as a member of the firm, being withheld, and no notice taken of it by the agent, did not excite from my friends here some inquiry or remark; but I must explain as I go on, which I shall do very briefly.

"When I left home, it appeared to me exceedingly doubtful whether I should ever return. I had been suffering from an attack of fever, and the excitement and press of business attending my departure, brought on a relapse on board ship, so that for many days my life was

despaired of. One of my fellow-passengers, a young man whose care, under God, probably saved my life, told me when I recovered that I was continually in my delirium, calling "Josephine," and imploring her not to leave me; and he asked me who she was.

"At the end of six months from the time I parted from my wife and children I landed in Calcutta, and immediately sought employment in our own firm, under the assumed name of Manners. I gradually won upon their confidence, and at length the whole of the counting-room business fell into my hands. I was able yearly to remit large sums for dues to our creditors, and at length, of profit to the firm. My own share I retained, as I knew my wife was in good hands and I had other projects. Soon after the reception of a letter from her informing me of the death of our daughter, which," he added, slowly opening his pocket-book, and unfolding a worn and yellow paper, "being the only one I received from her during my absence of six years, you can easily imagine was a very precious epistle,—I conceived the idea of recovering my position as a man of property, and of returning home.

"To do this, I needed capital; and as I received a good salary, and lived almost penuriously, I succeeded in laying by something; and when I found that quite a considerable sum fell to my share of the profits, I determined to commence operations without delay.

"To avoid suspicion from the agent, I invariably made up the account, and myself wrote Mr. Talbot, and each one of the firm, myself among the number, enclosing the amount due, and then of course retaining that which

belonged to me. But I did wonder, not a little, that no letters were addressed to the agent demanding, in the name of my family, the part which I thus kept back. In such event I had made up my mind, at once to make myself known to him, and thus prove my right to it; but the necessity for this never occurred; and not until the day previous to my leaving India did I impart to the house, which I had served in the capacity of accountant, the secret I had so carefully guarded.

"I made rather a hazardous experiment when I expended every cent I could call my own in hiring a company of natives to hunt for me among the jungles of Hindostan; but the very first return yielded so enormous a profit, that I hired twice the number the next year. Except the hours when I was devoted to the business of the firm, I bent my whole energies to the task of making money; and I succeeded far beyond my expectations.

"During the best seasons I myself became a hunter, and sometimes was so engaged and excited in the fearful chase after game that for a few hours I was free from the dreadful weight of sorrow which, waking or sleeping, the unfortunate separation from my family caused me. I even became notorious as a marksman, and a hunter, among those who had been trained to it from their youth; and accounts of my daring exploits were published and spread all over England."

"Yes, and America too," exclaimed his father-in-law, interrupting him.

"Well," continued Mr. Clinton, pressing his lips upon the paper he held in his hand, and carefully returning it

to his pocket-book, "I believe I have communicated all that will interest you."

"Oh, go on! go on!" was repeated again and again; while the tearful wife, in answer to a whispered remark of her husband, bowed her assent.

"As Josephine gives her consent," he resumed, "I will merely add that, though I became rich, I was not happy. There was a dreadful void in my heart; and at the commencement of this year I determined to return to America, whether permanently or not, remained to be proved when I should arrive at home. But it took some time to arrange my business so that I could leave without considerable sacrifice, and I began to doubt whether I could get away for another year, when I was startled by a vivid dream, in which I returned home and found my wife married again. You will not wonder at it, when I tell you that this thought, which had never once before occurred to me, took such full possession of my mind that I determined to sail for America in the next vessel at *whatever* sacrifice.

"By a fortunate circumstance, the necessity for this was obviated by my meeting a gentleman of large capital, who wished to take my business. I made a good bargain, reserving the right to return and enter into partnership with him at any time in the course of four years."

"Never!" exclaimed Mrs. Clinton, with decision.

"If that is your settled determination, my dear, I will write him at once; for I suppose now I am living in your house, I must obey orders," remarked he with an arch smile.

"I do not understand you," she began.

"Well, I will explain that by and by; now, I must finish my long story. Of course, living as I had done would hardly be promotive of piety or refinement. Indeed, I had almost forgotten the rules of civilized society. When on board ship I met an honest tar, than whom, I venture to say, a more godly man never piloted a vessel. He had a pocket in his round-a-bout where he kept a small book to wile away his leisure hours. I had often noticed the good old tar reading and wiping his eyes, — and one day I approached him determining to see what the book contained. As soon as he perceived me he shut it up, and put it again in his breast pocket. 'What's that you have there?' I asked.

"'Only my law book,' he replied, turning away.

"'Law book,' I repeated, in surprise. "I had no idea that law books would make the tears stream down a man's cheeks as they have down yours all the time you have been reading."

"'Only illustrating the laws,' said he, rising.

"My curiosity was now thoroughly excited, and I asked to see the book.

"'Sorry I can't oblige you, sir,' he replied; 'but my sister, that's dead and gone, give it to me, and I set a power by it.'

"Two days after this was the Sabbath; and as I was leaning over the side of the ship, and thinking of home, Michael passed me in the prosecution of his duties. When I looked up I suppose he saw tears in my eyes, and quick as thought he thrust his hand in his pocket, and brought out his law book.

"'Here, Mister Manners,' he said quickly; 'may be you'd like to read this 'ere a few minutes; I calculate you'd be careful on it, for the sake of my sister.'

"I held out my hand eagerly, and took the book; and, truly, the laws it contained caused all my bones to shake, while its glorious illustrations, to which the owner had referred, caused my eyes to pour forth rivers of water, until I was forced, in anguish of spirit, to call upon my ignorant friend to expound them for me. Truly, never man rejoiced over another as he did over me in my hours of groaning over those broken laws. The more I cried out in agony of spirit, the more he thanked God; until at last he pointed me to a way of escape, of which, though I had often heard, — yet I never realized its fullness until I tried it, and found it satisfied my heart. And now, good Michael, instead of rejoicing over me, rejoiced with me, and many delightful hours we passed in reading the illustrations in his divine law book, which, by the help of its Author I also had adopted as the rule of my life.

"When I reached New York, and was about to take leave of my good friend, I offered him money if he would leave the sea, and live where I could see him occasionally. But this he refused, and all I could persuade him to accept was an order, *carte blanche*, upon a certain house in New York for as many law-books as he could distribute, either here or abroad.

Leaving my baggage in his care, to be sent to me at the hotel, I took pains to ascertain whether my good uncle was still living at Oakland, and proceeded thither without a moment's delay. The good Providence which

has watched over me in all my wanderings, led me to the spot just in time to save the life of my child. But the restraint I there put upon my heart, in accordance with a plan I had formed of trying to disguise myself from my wife, brought on a severe sickness; and for three days I did not leave my bed.

"I then returned to Oakland, found Josephine had recognized me; and in short," he added, catching a supplicating glance from her, "after subjecting her to some pretty severe tests, out of which she came triumphant, I brought her here, and made over to her half my fortune, so that she never again need be subject to reverses. Of this latter fact, however, she was entirely ignorant; and I am happy in the belief that with her, it is of no account compared with the restoration of her husband."

The ardor with which the happy wife caught the hand of her husband, and pressed it in her own, was the only answer he wished; and soon after, the guests having expressed their great pleasure at the interview withdrew to their own homes.

On New-years-day the same party assembled at Mr. Warren's, where, after a bountiful repast, the afternoon was spent in amusing and instructive games with the children.

When at an early hour the young people returned home, the conversation was renewed upon the subject of amusements.

"I have anticipated listening to the discussion with great pleasure," remarked Mr. Bentley, "and as it progresses shall wish to ask some questions."

"The subject proposed by my brother," said Mr. Wells,

"was this: 'What amusements ought Christian parents to allow their children?'"

"There are some entertainments, perfectly innocent in themselves, which have fallen into disfavor with Christians on account of the company into which they lead; for instance, dancing. No one, I presume, will say that the mere physical exercise of dancing and whirling in time and tune, required by this amusement, is in itself sinful; it is surely no more so, than trundling a hoop or jumping a rope. But when children go to a dancing school, they are thus brought into company with many others who are interested in the same sport. The consequence is, they are invited out together to balls and parties, where the heated rooms and late suppers are as injurious to their bodily health as the lessons of detraction, envy and jealousy are to their mental cultivation."

"What do you say of theatres and whist parties?" asked Miss Sarah Wallace, leaning forward, and listening with great interest?

"In the esteem of many, and among them are some of the wise and good, these belong to nearly the same class," replied the pastor; "while I cheerfully admit, that there are both entertainment and instruction in many of the dramas of the old masters read in private or by the fireside, I have yet to learn any advantages to be derived from their performance on a degenerate stage, which at all compensate for the expense and exposure."

"Place a child at the whist or faro table, and put cards into his hands. At first, he has no interest in the games; but you encourage him, by saying that he will soon be interested in it. He is excited. The simple desire to be

the victor is sufficient at first; but soon that seems tame; a small stake must be laid down, just enough to add excitement; and thus it goes on, until his whole soul is burning with a desire to win. Then, his parents become alarmed; he is no longer content to play a quiet game at home, but must go to some gambling saloon, where the brilliantly illuminated apartments, and the choicest of wines add to the already over-excited frame, — and for the time he is insane! Entreaty and warning are alike unavailing; a passion has been acquired which, now, he cannot master.

“As to the theatre, the child at first only enjoys the excitement of the crowded house, — the loud applause of the audience as a favorite actress appears on the stage. He cannot understand or appreciate what is really the interest of the play, and it is often well that he cannot, since so many of them are decidedly immoral in their tendency. But the habit of going to the theatre is formed, pleasant associations are connected with it; and, as the youth advances in life, he attends two or three times in a week. This, to say nothing of the expense, is certainly placing him just so often in the way of temptation. I do not say that a man *cannot* be moral, and be a constant attendant at the theatre; but I should look upon such a man just as I should upon a youth, who had repeatedly passed through the fire without being burned. He would be the exception to the general rule. He mixes with all classes of society. For instance, take a youth who is a stranger in the city; he visits a theatre for the first time; he is seated in close proximity with a woman who has beauty of person, and

is gayly attired, but in whose heart vile passion reigns, and who is described by inspiration as the one ‘whose lips drop as an honeycomb, whose mouth is smoother than oil, but whose end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell.’

“I shudder as I think of his danger! The excitement of the scene, the half-dressed actresses, the subject of the play are so many aids to the vile being who has fastened on him as her prey. There is no escape for him and he returns home, in all probability, not the susceptible and virtuous youth he was when he went; for his baser passions have been excited, his unhallowed desires stimulated. His feet have strayed from the only safe path, and he is already on the road to ruin.

“Few parents would deliberately put the wine cup to the lips of their child if they realized that, in so doing, they were cultivating a taste which might lead him to a drunkard’s grave; and so with the class of amusements of which we have been speaking. The parents allow them, with the vain hope that they will be indulged to moderation; but this will not be likely soon to be the case in Young America.”

“What, then, is there left?” asked Mr. Bentley, seriously.

“I should be sorry to think there were not many sources of healthful and profitable amusements for youth, even in our cities.” Mr. Wells answered, cheerfully, “For young children, I am much in favor of outdoor exercises and sports, such as playing ball, driving

the hoop, skipping the rope or flying the kite. You and I, Thomas, never found any lack of variety in our games. Then, for little girls, there is the never-ending pleasure of dressing and undressing their dolls, playing 'Come and See,' which my little ones act out by the hour together. Sometimes they have a store, and arrange all their toys in order for purchasers, which proves useful to them in many respects. Indeed, there is no end to the fertility of their imaginations in striving to act out, in miniature, the scenes they witness in real life.

"I imagine, after all, the difficulty lies in another direction. All these things cause some trouble in the house; some disarrangement of the furniture; so that, if the mother does not make it a point of duty, she will discourage in-door games. Then if the parents wish their children to be interested at home, they must take pains to render home agreeable. They must enter with zest into their pursuits, give them aid and advice, and encourage them by their presence. I must allude again to my good teacher, Doctor Chalmers.

"One day, his deacon and elder called to see him upon business. They were ushered into the sitting-room where the family were assembled, and found their minister upon the floor, playing marbles with his children. Without rising from his humble position, the Doctor called out to them to join in the play. They did so, and entered heartily into the game. At length, the deacon said: 'This is not the way I used to play it in Galloway.' 'Come along, then,' said the Doctor, 'let us try the Galloway plan,' which they did, until Mrs.

Chalmers said, pleasantly: 'What a fine article it would make for the Chronicle were it stated that Doctor Chalmers, with his elder and deacon, played at marbles, for an hour, upon the floor, with the children!'" *

* Memoirs of Chalmers.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MELVILLE AND UNCLE GORDON.

I HAVE been this morning with my husband to call upon Mr. William Russel and his bride, cousins of my sister Laura. She is a lovely young lady, and fully answers to the description her lively cousin Helen gave me of her. I was happy to learn that he has taken an office in Cheswell in partnership with Mr. Stanwood. I wrote a hasty note of introduction for her to my friend Mary. Laura is delighted with their prospects. She presented the bride with a magnificent set of plate, though they are not at present intending to go to house-keeping.

On our return home, we found a letter from father, in which he says he is again disappointed in the hope of educating a son for the ministry. Edward, who is nearly through his Junior year in college, has expressed his decided preference for mercantile life; and father and mother have reluctantly consented to allow him to leave college. When brother Thomas was last at home, they had some anxieties with reference to his course, as he had all along declared that he was not suited for a clergyman, a profession which he knew they had in view when they sent him to college; and at that time Thomas offered to procure him a place in a counting-room. The object of father's letter was to ask us to take the subject

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into consideration, and let him know what we think is best for the boy.

Our neighbors across the street manifest a great desire to be friendly. Mr. Bentley came in a week ago, having learned from the little girls that their school was about to commence a new session,—to make inquiries whether it would be a suitable one for Melville. I was happy to recommend it to him. He says he was greatly surprised to hear from Frederic that he was the same age as his little son; that they have been in the habit of thinking he was still a baby, and treating him as such. I told him Frederic had a firm constitution, and was uncommonly fearless for a boy of his age. He sighed as he replied, that he feared years would be necessary to undo the sad effects of their neglect of Melville's education, that he had been pampered with sweetmeats, and rich cake, until his appetite was so perverted that he could not relish food which he ought to take; and then as to general knowledge, or the ability to think and act for himself, he was as ignorant and helpless as an infant.

I begged him to lose no time in making an entire change in the boy's diet. "My children," I added, "make their breakfast and supper of bread and milk, which we engage of a farmer in the country. For dinner, they eat heartily of one course of meat and vegetables, and seldom care for puddings or pastry. If I were his mother, I should refuse him sweetmeats and cake as I should poison. Let his stomach rest. It will do him no harm to go without food for a whole day until he really craves it; then he will eat bread and

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milk with a relish. I wish," I added, smiling, "that you would give me the care of him for a week."

"Are you in earnest?" he asked eagerly.

"Certainly I am. If his mother will consent to give him up wholly to me during his meals, I will promise that in a week he will eat as heartily of bread and milk as Frederic does."

"I do not hesitate to promise for her; I know she will consider it a great favor, because she really cannot resist the child when he pleads for food."

"If that is the case, I shall be obliged to keep him here throughout the day; and I am ready to begin tomorrow morning. Let him come here to breakfast, and then he can accompany the children to school, if you conclude to send him there."

After this conversation, Mr. Bentley hastened away to talk over the subject with his wife; and returned in an hour to tell me that she thankfully accepted my kind offer.

Yesterday my husband carried father's letter to Thomas; and they agreed to invite the whole family to come to New York for a month, and then we could have time to arrange everything. Father has not taken so long a vacation for many years; but I think he will find no difficulty in obtaining a supply; and Thomas inclosed a hundred dollar bill to cover all expenses. Henry wished to join equally in this gift; but brother was peremptory in refusing. It will be a great undertaking for them; but I think on Edward's account they will come. I am sure Gracie will urge them to do so.

I had no idea yesterday, when I proposed to take Melville, what a trial it would be to my feelings. Dear little fellow! It is certain he has been greatly neglected; but his parents are now earnestly striving to atone for their neglect. His temporary absence from home, though so afflictive at the time, has wrought a great and happy change in their family.

Melville came in just as we were sitting down to breakfast, his hair nicely curled, and he looking as sweet and delicate as a lily of the valley. I could not avoid contrasting him by a glance with my bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked boy in whose untiring activity one could easily discover the full vigor of a healthy frame. His father who brought him in, noticed the glance, and sighed as he asked, "Do you think we shall ever have him looking as healthy as this little fellow?"

Frederic appeared quite indignant. "I am not little, sir; I'm as tall as Helen and Fanny, and I am growing to be a man." We all laughed at his pompous air, as he swelled himself out.

"Here, Melville," he continued, "you can have my high chair; I can sit in another one."

To this the sweet boy replied softly, "Thank you, Frederic." After seeing his son seated at the table with a bowl of boiled milk before him Mr. Bentley left, as he said his wife was waiting breakfast for him. Before he went he whispered to Melville to be a very good boy.

My husband and I were quite amused at the surprise of the little fellow at Master Frederic's appetite. He had been running on the side-walk, trundling his hoop, for nearly an hour, beside going to the grocery for the

cook; and after a blessing had been implored, he put the bowl to his mouth, and did not stop until he had drained it, and then he held it out for more. Helen and Fanny crumbed their bread into the milk, and ate with an equally voracious appetite, while Melville played with his spoon, occasionally sipping a few drops of the milk or eating a small piece of bread.

"Don't you like your breakfast, my dear?" I asked.

"I an't hungry, ma'am," he replied in a whisper; "but I'll eat it, if you will please to put in some sugar."

"Sugar in bread and milk!" shouted Frederic; "I never heard of such a thing," while the twins stopped eating to see if he were in earnest.

"I would n't try to eat it if you are not hungry; you can wait until dinner," I replied; though the children stared wildly at my treatment of an invited guest.

After prayers, Frederic took his little friend to his play-room, after a caution from me to be very gentle with him.

"I'll take good care of him, mamma," was the quick reply. The twins accompanied me to the nursery to play with Laura, while she took her bath; a pleasure they would not willingly lose, and which they often say is the pleasantest part of the play. After this, they read to aunt Hammond for half an hour, until school time.

When they started for school, I am ashamed to say that I slipped a cracker into the hand of Melville, as he had hardly tasted his breakfast, and looked so delicate I was really afraid he would faint.

"I don't like cracker, ma'am," he replied, gazing sadly in my face. After they had left the house Fanny ran

back, and, in a whisper, asked me if she might go to the cook for a piece of cake, Melville was hungry.

"No, my dear; he is not well, and cannot have cake." I had no idea so simple a refusal could cause me so much pain. I followed them to the door, when Fanny ran toward him, and I saw him put out his hand, not imagining he could be refused. His eyes filled with tears, and his lip quivered, but he said nothing. "Frederic," I called out, "take good care of Melville, and don't let the scholars trouble him. If he is not contented, you may ask the teacher to excuse you while you come home with him."

When they were out of sight, his mother rang at the door to tell me that she was going out of town for the day, so that if her little boy were homesick and called for her, I could say she was not at home. I told her I was glad of this, for I had anticipated some trouble in that way. They had not been gone more than an hour when I heard Frederic's voice in the entry, and he soon came to the nursery, leading his companion.

"I want to see my mother," said the child, bursting into tears.

The remainder of the forenoon, I was obliged to devote myself wholly to the little fellow. I gave him a pair of reins, and I was the horse and ran round the room, and when he was tired I held him in my lap and showed him pictures, explaining them in almost the same language that I should to my little Laura. I was really glad when the children returned from school to relieve me. As the child had yet eaten nothing, I looked forward to dinner with some little anxiety. As usual,

Frederic's first question was, "Is not dinner most ready, mamma? I'm so hungry!" I assured him it would soon be brought upon the table.

Mr. Wells cut a nice piece of tender meat for our young guest, and with it passed him vegetables and bread; but they shared a similar fate to the milk in the morning. His stomach seemed to turn from them in disgust. I began to fear I had promised more than I could perform, and that medicine would be necessary for the child. To the astonishment of the children there was no dessert, as I had purposely omitted it on Melville's account. Not that they wished any; but they thought I treated their company strangely.

In the afternoon he wished to accompany the children to school again, and I wrote a note to the teacher stating the circumstances, and that his parents hoped he would be contented to go regularly. He carried Helen's new porcelain slate, to amuse himself while they were reciting; and I gave her a cracker for him, at recess, if he wished it.

I was so busy this afternoon, I was not aware it was time for school to be dismissed until I heard the twins crying at the door. This was so unusual a circumstance that I ran hastily down stairs to inquire the cause, when I was really frightened at the sight before me. Helen was leading her brother into the house, Fanny held Melville by the hand, while great tears were running down his cheeks.

Frederic was wiping the blood from his nose, and there was a swelling on his forehead nearly the size of a

small egg. His face was flushed, and he was evidently under the influence of some strong excitement.

"Oh, mamma!" the little girls exclaimed; "a great boy has been fighting brother, and has hurt him dreadfully."

Their father came from the study, and seeing how much excited they all were, requested them to wait until he had attended to Frederic's head, when he would be glad to hear the whole account.

It seems that on their way home from school a boy, considerably larger than either of them, began to use insulting language, saying to Melville, "Ho, little chalk-face," and uttering other words of the same kind.

"Don't you say that again!" replied Frederic, angrily.

This was the beginning of the quarrel. The boy, finding it annoyed him, taunted him with not daring to fight.

"I don't want to fight you," said Frederic, "for you're a bad and dirty boy, and my father don't let me associate with such boys; but if you call Melville any more names I'll whip you."

"Will! hey?" sneered the boy; "I should like to see you!" and he stepped up to Melville, and pulled his long ringlets so as to make him scream. "There, cry-baby!" said he, "go home, and tell your ma!"

This was more than Frederic could endure; he had promised to take good care of the child, who clung to him like a helpless girl; and he flew at the boy, and dealt him a violent blow with his fist.

But the boy was an old hand at the business; and the pain making him furious, he returned the blow so

rudely that it completely stunned Frederic. The other was just going to run off, when a police officer caught him and walked off with him to the station-house, saying: "I have had trouble enough with your brawls!"

Though the pain in his head must have been severe, yet Frederic was too proud to complain, and bore it with the fortitude of a martyr, while his sisters hovered around him, and waited upon him as if he had been a prince. He lay on the sofa with a bandage of cold water on his forehead while we were at the table which, in spite of his tears in the afternoon proved to Melville at least a hearty meal. He even held out his bowl with the little girls a second time, and when I smilingly replied to his request, he said softly, "I like milk now." How I wished his mother could have seen and heard him.

"You will come again to-morrow and get more, won't you," I said.

"Yes, ma'am, I'll come every day."

Father, mother and Gracie have been with us nearly a week. Edward was here until yesterday, when he entered upon his duties as book-keeper in brother's store. We are all much pleased with the plan, and are very hopeful of his success. In person, Edward resembles father much more than either of his children. I hope he may also be like him in character. A great intimacy has sprung up between Helen Russel and sister Gracie. I think they will find much pleasure in each other's society. Laura has proved herself a kind and generous sister, as well as a dutiful daughter. She consulted me in private about Gracie's wardrobe which she

thinks hardly suitable for the city, though very proper for a country girl, and asked as a favor if she might purchase some articles for her. I told her I presumed sister would gratefully receive any little articles, but as she would remain so short a time it would not be desirable to obtain many.

"But," urged Laura, archly, "I have almost obtained a promise from mother to let her remain with me for some months. It will be so desirable for Edward, you know, to have her here to go out with him. There is no influence more salutary for a young man than that of a sister, and then Helen would be so pleased."

We agreed to leave the subject to mother, and Laura, sitting on a taboret at her feet, made known her wishes in such a delicate manner that mother really felt that she was granting a favor when she gave the whole care and fashioning of sister's wardrobe into her hands with an understanding that for Edward's sake she would try to obtain father's consent to let her stay and make a long visit. "Ah!" said I, "for Edward's sake you will even give up your baby."

"Susan," resumed Laura, "has already so many cares, that I shall be happy in this way to relieve her, and I really shall be glad of something to do."

"Dear girl! she is never idle a moment. There are several by-lanes where she goes weekly, and distributes bounty. And others come regularly to her house, for whom she is always at work. Little dresses, aprons and stockings, are made there, by the dozens. No longer ago than last week I found little Mary trying to sew upon an

apron which she informed me in a whisper was for "one of mamma's poor little girls."

I am happy to see that Mrs. Bentley appreciated Laura's lovely christian character. During the week that Melville passed with me, she spent much time in my nursery, trying as she said to learn something of my way of managing. She remarked that her husband would give half he was worth if he could find a boy like our Frederic whom he could adopt as a companion to his son.

Frederic's courage in defence of his little companion has rendered him quite a hero with his partial friends. Mrs. Bentley repeated her husband's remark that he had read of such boys, but was not aware that they existed in these days. I told her Frederic had caused me more anxiety than all my other children, and I repeated the scene which took place with his father soon after my marriage, and which has resulted in great good to the boy. She said the more we could allow him to be with Melville the more grateful they should be, and that his father hoped much from the influence of a bright, intelligent boy to rouse his ambition.

"I think," said I, "the salutary effect will be mutual; Melville is obliging, kind and truthful, and I hope Frederic may imitate him in those respects."

By firmness, and some little help from the children to whom I explained my project, I was enabled to perform my promise to Mr. Bentley, and had the satisfaction of inviting him and his wife to tea with their son on the last evening of his stay; and to witness their surprise at my success. To be sure, it will as I told them be a

long time before they can conquer his appetite for sweets; but when they saw how heartily he ate his bread and drank his milk they were encouraged to persevere. I was quite amused the next day as we sat at dinner at a message from Mrs. Bentley, whether we allowed Melville vegetables with his meat, or only bread. I sent word that he was to have as many vegetables as he wished, but at present no rich puddings or pastry. My husband pleasantly suggested my setting up an infirmary for feeble children as I had been so successful in my first attempt, which I told him I should like to do if I could command the time.

As father will preach for my husband next Sabbath, we have been able to accompany our friend to many places of interest which otherwise we should have had to postpone, as at this time Thomas is unusually occupied with business. Indeed, I often wonder how he accomplishes so much. He has the whole care of Laura's property, besides his appropriate duties in the firm. Then he is on a great many committees for benevolent objects, which consume some time and a good share of Laura's ready money. Mrs. Wells made the remark to father that perhaps brother was in a situation to do as much good as if he were a clergyman.

As the children were returning from the park to-day with Nora and Melville, an incident occurred which led to a recognition that has given us much pleasure. Nora was drawing the baby in the wagon, while the little girls walked by her side. Frederic and his dog were as usual running this way, sometimes in advance

of them and sometimes in the rear. Fanny was for a moment walking backward, while she talked to baby, when she stumbled at a crossing and fell. A youth who was passing, stepped forward hastily, assisted her to rise, and with his handkerchief wiped the dirt from her arm, where she had grazed the skin. Frederic soon ran up and the young man asked him his name. "Frederic Gordon, sir," he replied frankly, and these are my sisters.

"My name is Gordon, too," said the youth, "Charles Gordon."

"That was my father's name," the children exclaimed.

"Where did he live?" he inquired earnestly of Nora.

"He was a minister in B——, sir; and one of the best men the sun ever shone on."

"Then you are my cousins," he responded, and he promised to call and see them after tea.

This evening he called, and we were all delighted with him. He is the son of my dear husband's elder brother, living in New Jersey, and has been in a book-store in the city, for nearly four months. He knew that his uncle's family resided in New York, but was diffident about presenting himself to our notice. There is really a striking likeness between him and his cousin Frederic, — the same large, full black eyes and red lips. The children as well as their mother, are much pleased at the new cousin. I did not ask his age, but should judge him to be about eighteen. We invited him to come and see us very often, which he says he shall be glad to do, as he has formed no acquaintances in the city. I think from what he said, and did not say, that he has been homesick.

Since our first introduction to our new cousin some months ago, we have seen much of him. My husband appears really attached to the young man, and often speaks to him freely, and in the highest terms of his uncle. A few days since I heard the bell ring, and Nora waited upon some one into the parlor. In one moment there was a knock at the nursery door, and Charles asked in a low voice, "aunt Susan, may I come in?"

"My father is down stairs," he exclaimed joyfully, "and wishes to thank you personally for all your kindness to me. Will you come down? Let me show him the baby, too," and he caught her up from the floor.

I smiled at his impetuosity. His face was flushed and his eyes sparkling with pleasure. "How much he is like Frederic," I thought, as I turned to the mirror to smooth my hair, and add a worked collar to my simple toilet.

"Don't stop to dress, aunty," he said pleasantly, "you look handsome enough. Father knows all about you;" and I soon found that from some source, he had heard what prepared him to receive with open arms, the widow of his deceased brother, though now again a wife. I was actually startled by the resemblance to my dear lamented husband. It seemed to bring him right before me. I don't know what he thought of me, for as soon as he had released my hands from his cordial grasp, I burst into tears. He held out his hands to Laura, who went to him willingly, and walked to the window to give me time to recover myself.

Mr. Wells now came in, and Charles introduced him. Mr. Gordon's voice, and almost every motion is like his

brother's;—the same precision which was so obvious to me at first, but which I so soon ceased to notice, and also the same warm impulsive heart. Henry insisted upon sending for his baggage, and that he should make his home with us while in the city. He also told Charles, he must be here as much of the time as he could be spared from his store. I have heard from my brother-in-law in the course of two days, more of my deceased husband's early life, than all I knew before. Every day he says Frederic reminds him of his father when he was a boy. I was astonished to learn that in youth he was very passionate; but governed by a high sense of honor, and as he grew older, religion restrained and guided this warm temperament, until he arrived at the perfect equanimity of temper, which he possessed when I knew him.

Mr. Gordon leaves us the first of the week. We shall all deeply regret his departure. The little twins especially are exceedingly fond of their uncle, who with the exception of his son, is the first relative on their father's side, whom they have ever seen. Mr. Gordon expresses in the most grateful terms his appreciation of our kindness to his boy. He says it was with great reluctance that he and his wife consented to the wish of Charles, to come to New York, and live alone amid so many temptations and exposures; but that he has become so much attached to uncle Henry and his family, that he seems to have no desire to go elsewhere.

My heart swelled with pleasure, as I thought that perhaps I and my dear Henry had been the means of sav-

ing this beloved relative from the seductions of vice which are of so varied, and specious a character in this great city.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOME AMUSEMENTS.

WE must now pass over a period of ten years, and once more visit the family of the Rev. *Dr.* Wells. One place at the hospitable board had been vacated. Mrs. Hammond for more than four years has been, as her bereaved friends humbly hope, in the immediate presence of her Saviour. Time has passed lightly over the good clergyman and his wife. To be sure, she every now and then reminds him of the few gray hairs which in her opinion are helping to form his "crown of glory;" but his eye is still bright, his step firm and elastic.

It is now the season of the Christmas holidays, and the family have gathered together to celebrate them. The twin sisters have returned from a long visit to their uncle Gordon, and with their cousin Charles who went to accompany them home, are now seated at the breakfast table. Next him is a handsome youth in whom were it not for his flashing eye it would be difficult to recognize Master Frederic Gordon, now a Sophomore in Yale College. Laura, whom we left in the arms of the faithful Nora, is a tall, graceful girl of twelve, but her place in the nursery has been since occupied by a lad who answers to the address of Henry Cyrus Wells, being named for his father and grandfather. Master

Henry is nine, and in person bids fair to resemble his father.

"Mamma," says the youth to the fair-faced matron behind the urn, "We boys are going to have a grand court this evening, and Horace Bentley wanted me to ask you whether we should have it here or at his house. Mrs. Bentley says it must be just as you say."

Mrs. Wells turned to her daughter before she replied, and asked: "Did you engage to go to your uncle Edward's this evening?"

"Yes, mamma," replied Helen; "aunt Ada has invited a number of young people to meet us there. Henry," she continued, eagerly, "if you will have it this afternoon, I will help you dress."

"And I'll be the attorney," added Frederic, laughing. "Oh what fun I used to have! If you are willing, mother, I'll invite Albert and Melville just for the joke of it. It will carry us back so to old times."

"Very well, my son, only in that case you must defer it until to-morrow evening."

"Cousin Charles," exclaimed Helen, "would make the best judge; he can put on such a solemn air!"

"I hope you don't mean to insinuate that it is only 'put on,'" responded Mr. Gordon, with an arch smile.

"Oh, no, we acknowledge that you are a model of propriety; at least Fanny does!" At this remark, both the gentleman and the lady referred to assumed a really serious expression, and Mrs. Wells cast a quick and anxious glance at her husband.

"What shall I be?" asked Laura.

"You shall be your own dear self," replied Frederic,

tapping the cheek of his favorite sister; "and you may assume for the occasion the character of a witness. Let me think, — father, what would be a good crime?"

A roguish smile played around the mouth of Dr. Wells as he answered, "I have never heard of a *good* crime, my son."

A flush passed over the countenance of the Sophomore as he said: "I meant one which would be simple enough for the children to understand, for I remember you always explained every part to us so accurately that we were able to get great profit as well as amusement from our games."

"Let us take a case of defamation or of theft," suggested cousin Charles, "like the one which has of late so occupied the public mind. The full reports in the papers will give us great assistance."

This was at length decided upon; and Frederic consented to his brother's wish that he would arrange the parts and write out what they were to say. Dr. Wells had in his library a valuable collection of law books, which were put in requisition on this important occasion, and the young collegian who had entered into the game with his whole soul, soon found that it was no slight business, to draw up the indictment, and write out the testimony and pleas, especially as he found the spectators had increased from the members of his own family to the whole circle of their acquaintance. It was a very fortunate circumstance for the young man, that just at this time his uncle Seymour arrived in the city, who, by his knowledge of the detail of courts, soon put all parts in a right train.

Then the place for the court was changed from the dining-room at Dr. Wells's to the large double parlors of Mr. Clinton's mansion, and the time to New Year's eve.

When the company were deciding which of the numerous invitations they had received should be accepted as to the place of holding their court, Horace excited a great laugh by the remark: "Oh, wouldn't it be nice if we could get leave to have it in the City Hall! The idea of Squire Seymour who had consented to preside as Judge sitting on the bench upon the elevated platform, and examining Helen, Fanny, Mary Warren, and Elizabeth Whitney as witnesses, was altogether too ludicrous, and led to many merry jokes.

While these preparations were going on, the children passed many pleasant hours in simpler games. One afternoon tickets were sent to all the families to whom they were related to a grand concert at Mr. Bentley's, when Helen and Fanny played the piano as the accompaniment to the singing of the tunes the young people had learned at school. The evening was closed by a simple entertainment. On the next evening, Mr. Thomas Warren's large dining-hall was fitted up as a store. Here was a desk behind which sat a clerk with the cash-book, and there a gentleman, the owner of the store, at his desk writing letters, then the clerks behind the counters, and the little cash boys and girls with the constant cry of "cash!" made the scene a very lively one. Mrs. Wells with her sister Mrs. Seymour, Mrs. Bentley, and Mrs. Clinton; with the young wife of Mr. Edward Warren were continually passing up and down the hall,

purchasing articles of wearing apparel. Dr. Wells paused often before a large library where Mr. Gordon kept a book-store; but he was principally engaged in explaining to the children, for whose benefit and amusement they had assembled, the nature and importance of their several posts. To Henry this was a new era. His father and mother exchanged glances of merriment, not altogether unmingled with anxiety, as they saw his cheek flush and his brow knit, when his aunt Laura told him pleasantly, he had not made the right change. "The shawl, I think, sir," she added, "was \$10, the gloves \$2.25, and the thread 9 cents, I gave you two bills, a ten and a five; and I ought to have — A quick glance from his mother restrained her.

"How much, ma'am, do you want?" asked the boy, eagerly. But the lady had turned to speak with a gentleman behind her, and he was reduced to the necessity of counting upon his fingers, taking care to turn his back to the company.

That was a lesson which Henry never forgot. Arithmetic had been his abhorrence; but finding the absolute necessity of knowing how to add and subtract, if he would be a merchant, he commenced the study in earnest, and became in time an accomplished accountant.

At length the day arrived for the sitting of "the grand Jury," as Fanny Wells laughingly called it. The great difficulty had been to find persons who would consent to be indicted. At last Albert Clinton consented to personate a young clerk, charged with having purloined money from the drawers of his employer; and Mr. Gordon, the prosecuting officer.

The argument of Fanny in persuading Albert, probably had some weight with him. She said uncle Walter will be sure to clear you, and then you will be quite a hero. In his eagerness to please his cousin, Mr. Gordon quite lost sight of the fact, that if the young man was discharged, he would not appear in a very favorable light, having brought a false accusation. Probably also she forgot that circumstance, or her regard for the honor of her cousin would have induced her to dissuade him from such a part.

The trial, however, was conducted skilfully, and when the evidence was brought forward, so many circumstances tended to fix the guilt upon the prisoner, that Mr. Gordon's course could not have been considered honorable or just to his employers, had he not given them an intimation of what he feared was true. In the course of the trial it was proved that Mr. Gordon, who was book-keeper and private clerk of the firm, had at several different times, found that his books did not agree, nor his accounts balance. On going out from the counting-room late one night, when all the clerks had retired, he saw young Clinton standing before one of the safes with a roll of bills in his hand. He represented himself as greatly shocked, and that he conversed faithfully with him upon the certain ruin which would follow such a course.

The young clerk, however, indignantly repelled the idea that he was there for any criminal purpose. "Carelessness," he said, "was all the fault with which he was chargeable." He then stated with every appearance of honesty, that the money he held in his hand, was the

amount of a check from the bank; that when he reached his boarding-house, he suddenly remembered that he still had it in his pocket-book, and started to carry it back.

"But surely," asked his friend, "you could not have been detained by supper until this late hour?"

This question so embarrassed the young man, that Mr. Gordon at the time was forced to the conclusion that the whole excuse was a fabricated one.

Mr. Thomas Warren and Mr. Bentley, who personated the owners of the store, were called as witnesses to what passed between them and their private clerk, which in brief, was the fact (stated with great reluctance by Mr. Gordon, and as he confessed, not until the subject had caused him many sleepless nights,) that he feared Clinton was in danger, and that it might be well to place him in another position in the store, where he would not be subjected to so much temptation. This had not been done, however, without repeated conversations on Mr. Gordon's part, with the young man.

When the evidence for his guilt was all in, the younger part of the audience forgetting it was a *mock* trial, began to open their eyes very wide, and to wonder what would be done to the prisoner. His little sister, Sarah Wallace, began to cry from sympathy with the accused, until her brother James assured her that Albert was only making believe, and feigning to look sober.

Frederic Gordon now called in witnesses for his own defence. First, Horace Bentley, the teller at the bank, stated that the prisoner brought a check, as he was almost daily in the habit of doing,—that after glancing at it, he cashed it at once. There was nothing at all

peculiar in his appearance, nothing like a consciousness of guilt.

The next witness was Fanny Wells, who in her mother's morning cap, personated the matron with whom the prisoner boarded. Notwithstanding the serious nature of her testimony, her appearance as she blushing took her place upon the stand, was greeted with a perfect shout of merriment.

"What is your name?" asked the attorney.

"Mrs. Gordon."

Poor Fanny! She had only intended to say *Mrs.* instead of *Miss*, because she thought it would not be proper for Miss Gordon to keep a boarding-house for young men; but the instant she had spoken, another shout accompanied by an arch glance from her brother at Mr. Gordon, quite discomposed her, but in one moment she added, "Mrs. Gordon Holmes, at your service."

"State what you know in regard to the prisoner."

"Your reverence will understand that I keep boarders, and this young man among the number. He is the likeliest youth I am acquainted with, my husband always excepted. One night he came home as usual to tea, I passed him his cup, but he had scarcely tasted it, when he exclaimed, 'there now!' and clapped his hand on his coat-pocket. 'Mrs. Gordon Holmes,' said he, 'I must ask to be excused, I have forgotten some money I ought to have left in the safe; I must go back at once, or the store will be locked.'"

"I urged him to finish his supper; but he said 'no,' and hastily drinking his tea, he left the table."

"Your testimony is very much to the point, Mrs. Gordon Holmes," said Squire Seymour, archly.

Next came Laura Wells, who testified that she had met Mr. Clinton walking hastily to the store, that she told him her sister wished to see him, and urged him to go with her at once if only for a few moments. He objected on account of haste; but she replied that Mary would detain him but a short time.

Mary Warren was called, and with a very rosy face, confessed that she was engaged to be married to Mr. Clinton; that she had received some important news relative to their future prospects, and was much pleased when he accompanied her sister home. He stated on entering the room, that he could stop but one moment, "but," she added, with a very natural hesitation of manner, "we soon became interested in reading the letter, and didn't know how the time was passing away. When he found how late it was, he started up, saying, 'Oh! I can't return this to the safe to-night, I'm sorry I stopped so long.'"

Helen Wells testified that she was the mother of Mary Warren, that the next evening he called and requested to see her alone, when he confided to her his trouble, and the charge of Mr. Gordon. "I felt worse," he added, "to have him suspect me, than to have any one else in the store, for he is the best friend I have." "But I told him," she said, "to go on as if nothing of the kind had occurred, and assured him that we had entire confidence in him."

After the closing speech by the lawyer, and a charge to the Jury, by Squire Seymour, the jurors retired, and shortly brought in a verdict of "*not guilty*."

The merry shout of the children at this joyful issue was responded to more quietly by the parents, who hoped much profit as well as amusement might be derived from the exercise. "I am glad he did n't take it;" "I never would steal money;" "I would have acted just as he did;" and many other remarks from the children proved that the scene had made a deep impression upon their tender minds.

Mr. Bentley touched the arm of his pastor to draw his attention to what Horace was saying: "If Mark Andrews or Joseph Woodward laugh at me again, because my father don't allow me to go to the theatre, I'll tell them I don't want to go. We have a great deal better fun at home, and our fathers explain it all to us so we can learn ever so much by it.

"Joseph himself confessed that half the time he didn't know the meaning of what the actors said. He liked to go and see the crowds of people and hear the shouting, but he was always glad when it was done, because his father let him go with him into the saloon and eat oysters and drink wine. Sometimes, he says, he stays there a whole hour, and calls for whatever he wants, while his father goes off with people that he is acquainted with. But he never does so when his mother is with them, because she always goes right home."

Dr. Wells sighed as he listened to the animated speaker, and thought of the probable fate of such a lad. When the boys had turned away unconscious that they had been heard, he said: "We certainly, my dear sir, have encouragement to persevere."

"Encouragement!" repeated Mr. Bentley; "there is

not a day that I do not bless God that I learned the importance of parents interesting their own children, and providing them suitable amusements before it is too late; before their young minds become corrupted by such scenes as those to which my son just referred. It is to you, sir, under God, and to my good friend Mr. Warren, that I am indebted for the hopeful character of my boys."

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Warren now joined the group, and Mr. Bentley repeated the remarks of his son.

"I often think of it," suggested Mr. Clinton,—"we live in the very midst of temptation to vice of all kinds. Some of us, at least, have children old enough to be carried into the whirlpool of dissipation which is destroying so many of our most promising youth; and yet ours have as yet manifested no disposition to engage in these forbidden amusements and pleasures. I am often asked by fathers, 'what is the secret of our management?' and I invariably reply: 'It is very simple; our aim is to render home so agreeable that our sons and daughters may find their enjoyment here.'"

"Do you remember, Mr. Bentley?" asked Mr. Warren pleasantly, "the game of blind-man's buff we played in these parlors near a dozen years ago."

"I shall never forget it, neither will my wife; for that occasion, together with the sentiment of our good pastor, threw a world of light upon my path. Yes," he continued, thoughtfully, "he said: 'Make much of family entertainments and amusements; those in which parents and children can mingle; associate them as much as possible with home and the home circle, and

you save them from the least desire to go abroad in search of pleasure. Then let religion be the ruling principle to refine and purify these joys, and there will be but little danger to their morals; we have the divine promise, 'train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

"I should be encouraged to hope that my preaching would do great good," replied the Doctor, "if I thought my hearers remembered it, and practised upon it as well as you have done."

"Well, sir," resumed Mr. Bentley, "my wife will say as I do, that not only with regard to our children, but in our views of the matrimonial relation these simple remarks have been as it were our text-book, to which we have referred in every doubtful case. I should rejoice to see it adopted, as such, in every family in our city."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"MARRYING AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE."

It was a calm and quiet evening in June, three years later, that the family of Dr. Wells were assembled in the spacious front chamber of his father's mansion in C. The white-haired grandfather was seated in a large arm-chair, and his faithful companion by his side. Upon a low couch which was drawn toward the window lay a young girl, in whose transparent fairness of complexion, and the attenuation of her form it was easy to perceive the ravages of disease. But there was a calm contentment beaming from her eye which, as well as the hushed but eager look of expectation on the countenances of all present betokened the anticipation of some interesting event.

Leaving Fanny Wells, for it was she, reclining on the breast of her mother while her twin-sister passed her hand caressingly over her full, white brow, we will take the liberty to go back a year, and explain the event to which they were looking forward.

When Mr. Charles Gordon had been established in business about two years, and by the aid of his father was in a fair way to rise to eminence and wealth as a bookseller and publisher, he made known to his uncle and aunt, what indeed they had long suspected, his strong attachment to his cousin Fanny.

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"Both Dr. Wells and his wife had a general feeling of disapprobation of the marriage of cousins, and had noticed with anxiety that their daughter's affections were becoming interested, though — aside from the relation — they knew of no one whom they preferred as a husband for Fanny. In the hope of breaking up this incipient attachment they had sacrificed the pleasure of the society of herself and of her sister, and consented that they should pass nearly a year with their grandparents in C—. It was soon after their return to the city that Mr. Gordon made known his desires.

It is easy to believe what one wishes to be true, and earnestly hoping from Fanny's quiet reception of her relative that she felt for him nothing more than a cousin's regard, Dr. Wells explained to his young friend their strong objection to the alliance. The young man was greatly agitated, as he had not anticipated a refusal from his partial friends. After a few moments of vain attempt to control himself, he suddenly departed, having obtained permission to see Fanny in the evening.

It was with real pain that Mrs. Wells communicated the same to her daughter who, though she grew very pale, yet said nothing to indicate the strength of her attachment. The interview with her lover did not pass without many tears on the part of the gentle girl, or of strong emotion from her cousin; but neither of them once dreamed of doing that which would be displeasing to those who they knew acted for their best good. They endeavored to comfort each other in the painful disappointment, though Charles assured her again and again that, for her sake, he should never marry.

"I shall always love you," said Fanny tearfully, arising and putting her hand in his, to bid him adieu; and if ever you need sympathy"—she could say no more, but turned from him abruptly and sought her chamber. For the first time in her life she refused to admit her twin sister to share her grief. She must be alone with her Maker.

As weeks passed into months, not a murmur escaped her lips at the decision of her parents, though it had suddenly quenched the light of her young life. But her eye grew dim and her step languid, until the hearts of her fond parents were filled with anxiety and alarm.

Then the absence of Charles cast a gloom over the whole circle, for never, since their first accidental meeting when he assisted Fanny from the pavement, had he failed to pass the Sabbath with them, and accompany the family to church. Dr. Wells called often at the bookstore, but the sight of him always seemed painful to the young man, and when invited to the house, he briefly replied: "At present I cannot bear it." Once or twice when he had accidentally met Fanny and her sister in their daily walk, they were both so much agitated that they shrank from the recurrence of such a meeting.

Fanny at length became so feeble, and it was with such difficulty she discharged her simple duties in the family, that her father called in medical advice. But the physician who had known her from childhood, said she was free from disease, but was suffering from a general prostration of strength, which he said probably affected also her spirits. He recommended a change of

scene, and advised that she should return to her grandfather's, and as far as she was able make use of salt water baths.

Leaving her husband and younger children, Mrs. Wells accompanied them at once to C——, where for a time the change seemed beneficial. In a confidential talk with her daughter before she left her to return home, she enforced upon her the importance of striving to be cheerful, in order to regain her health.

In an affecting tone of humility, Fanny replied: "I do, mamma, I never allow myself to think of Charles; but I dream of him every night, and in my dreams he is so wretched that I cannot help weeping."

A sharp pang seized the heart of the mother, and she asked herself, can it be right to separate them? Having consented to leave her children at her father's for the winter, she returned home, where she found that her nephew was preparing to leave for the south, to be absent several months. He found his own health failing under the pressure of anxiety with regard to Fanny, and the constant struggle which was necessary to maintain self-control sufficient to manage his business and thought that by travelling he could perhaps divert his mind to other scenes.

His uncle and aunt parted from him with great regret. Mrs. Wells, especially, was reluctant to have him go to such a distance, as she had a feeling hardly yet acknowledged to herself that to save the life of her child, it would be necessary to retract their decision.

For a few months, the letters from C——, rather encouraged the hopes of the parents, that Fanny would

soon be better. The change in her was so gradual, that those constantly with her, did not notice it as a stranger would have done, and the young girl was so quiet and unobtrusive in her grief, that scarcely her sister perceived how rapidly her strength was wasting away. She was obliged to lie down upon the sofa more and more frequently; but she always made some excuse, and seemed so reluctant to confess herself ill, that her friends experienced no particular alarm. At length one day in the latter part of February, she rode over to her grandfather Wells's to pass a few hours, where she became so faint and exhausted by the exertion, that she was obliged to keep her bed.

Mr. Warren lost no time in writing to her mother, and more than hinted that he considered Fanny in a decline. In three days, Dr. Wells with his wife arrived, having left home in the next boat after receiving the alarming intelligence.

They were pained beyond expression at the change in their daughter's appearance, though she met them with a smile that cut them to the heart.

"Henry," said Mrs. Wells, drawing her husband aside, and addressing him by name as she always did when laboring under excitement, "We have sacrificed our child. God grant it may not be too late to repair the evil. Fanny is dying with a broken heart."

Dr. Wells walked the room with uneven steps, but with his eyes concealed by his handkerchief. "Would that we had known of this sooner!" said he, in a hoarse voice. "I will see the physician at once. Do not reproach yourself, my dear Susan," he added, seeing her

whole form was convulsed with weeping. "We did what we thought was for the best."

"I know she will die," sobbed the distressed mother, "and I shall have been the cause. Yes, she will die a martyr to her desire to obey her mother."

A low knock was heard at the door, and Helen entered, saying, "Fanny is impatient to see her mother."

"I will come in a minute, my dear," she replied, putting a violent restraint upon her feelings.

When she entered the room where the invalid lay bolstered up in bed, she came near having another burst of grief. The sick girl raised her thin arms, and drew her mother affectionately to her, kissing her tenderly. "Do you think me so much changed, mamma," she asked softly? "There, don't weep," she said, as she felt the hot tears falling thickly upon her face. "I am reconciled to death. For a long time I have known that I could not live; but for your sake and Helen's, I have tried to seem well. It will be better for him too," she added, after a moment, seeing her mother was too much affected to reply. "We shall meet there," raising her eyes to heaven. "Don't you think, mamma, he is a Christian?"

Mrs. Wells could only motion her assent.

"Then I hope we shall spend an eternity together in loving the Saviour who suffered so much for us. It will not be wrong for us to love each other there!" she asked with an earnest inquiry.

"Oh, my love, forgive your mother! If Charles loves you still, you shall not wait until you go to heaven to love him."

Mrs. Wells sprang back at the sudden gasp for breath from her enfeebled child. She had not realized the danger of so sudden a relief. For a long time Fanny lay with her eyes closed, and nearly resembling death.

Her mother was almost frantic, and sent Helen for her father and the physician. But by the aid of wine and water, she again revived. When she opened her eyes she gazed around her as if she feared she were dreaming, and then feebly beckoning her mother to approach, said softly, "Did I hear you aright, mamma? May I love him?"

"Yes, darling, I said so; but don't think of it now, your father will write to Charles to come home."

A beautiful smile of gratitude lighted up her pale face as she replied, "oh, mamma, how happy you have made me! Please leave me alone for awhile with Helen, I can hardly realize it yet!"

After a free conversation with the physician, the anxious parents concluded to write at once to Charles, and to direct to him at several places. This they did and only waited to add a message from Fanny before they sent the letter. After an hour, when Helen again summoned her mother, Mrs. Wells read the letter aloud, and asked what she should add from her.

"Tell him," said she, with a heavenly smile, "that the hope of seeing him once more, has called me back to earth."

Much as the mother suffered in writing this affecting message, it was trifling compared with that of the young man who received it in Washington as he was travelling

slowly homeward. He tortured himself with the thought that he was called home to see her die; and this thought so agitated him that when after travelling day and night he reached C——, he appeared as if he would not be detained long from following her to the world of spirits. I must draw a veil over the meeting of these pure souls and the bliss of the days and weeks which intervened before Mr. Gordon returned to the city betrothed to his lovely cousin. For the first time in their lives the twin-sisters were separated, and Helen accompanied him to New York to make preparation for the removal of the family to C—— early in May, as Mrs. Wells had determined not to leave her daughter until June, when a husband would claim her.

In the mean time Fanny gained but slowly, and her parents often sighed as they thought that perhaps years would pass before she would recover from the shock her constitution had received. She was now able to sit up the greater part of the day, and to ride slowly for a few miles. After her marriage she was to reside for a month in the family of her mother's friend, Mrs. Hall, as the physician earnestly recommended surf-bathing.

Charles had visited her once in two or three weeks and passed the Sabbath, and to-night he was expected for the last time. Yes! To-morrow was the bridal day; and it was the arrival of the bridegroom who was now momentarily expected.

Brother and sisters are eagerly watching from the window, and Fanny's eyes often wander in the same direction, for she is sitting so that she can see far down the street. At length, Helen shouts: "There he is,"

and soon two gentlemen closely resembling each other rapidly approach the house. Mr. Frederic Gordon catches his companion's hat which he was throwing hastily upon the table, while the ardent, happy lover springs lightly up the stairs, and soon folds his dearly loved one to his heart.

"I wonder," thought Frederic, who was to graduate in a month from college, as he stood at the door and surveyed the scene, "if I shall ever love or be loved like that!" By some strange association the sister of his classmate and dearest friend, Albert Clinton, appeared suddenly before him, and turning for a moment to the window he was soon far advanced in dream-land.

To Mrs. Wells the marriage, under such circumstances, of her beloved daughter to the nephew of her husband was one of the most affecting scenes of her life. To give her up to the keeping of another would at any time have been a trial to her loving heart, and she realized now, as she had never done before, the anxiety of her own mother at her first nuptials. But Fanny was still an invalid, and needed the most tender nursing if she ever regained her wonted health. This, she was sure, the bride would receive from Charles, who every day exhibited traits reminding her more and more of her beloved husband. Then Helen was to remain with her, and Mrs. Hall would be a mother to them until their return to her own family in the fall.

The wedding ceremony was necessarily a very simple one, as the bride was unable to bear excitement, and was to ride directly after it to her native place. At the appointed time Mr. and Mrs. Warren came over from the

parsonage, Gracie being already there to dress the bride; the families, with no guests but the father of the groom, and their kind friends Mr. and Mrs. Hall, gathered in the large parlor which Helen had decorated with roses and narcissus. When all were seated, Fanny entered slowly, leaning for support upon the arm of her lover. As they reached the sofa, Charles whispered that she had better be seated, but she shook her head, when he put his arm tenderly about her waist, and thus supported her until the mystic knot was tied which united them for life. The bride was very pale as she took her seat; but she returned her husband's look of anxiety with a glance of the most confiding affection. He bent over her as he whispered: "Dearest Fanny, my head is actually giddy with excess of happiness. You, now, are all mine!"

After waiting a moment to give her time to rest, her father and mother went quietly up to salute her by her new title, and they were followed by other friends. When her new father approached she stood up to receive his blessing; but he took her hands in his and gently re-seating her, said solemnly: "May God, your father's God, grant you restored health, and much happiness, my daughter;" then, affectionately kissing her, he withdrew. His manner and voice so much resembled his deceased brother's that Mrs. Wells could not keep back her tears. Fanny leaned her head upon her husband's shoulder and wept silently, while all present were greatly affected.

After the cake had been passed and, by order of the physician who rode up in time to bid her farewell, a tum-

bler of porter given to his patient, her father and mother accompanied the newly married pair to B——, while Helen returned in the carriage with Mrs. Hall. Here they left her in the care of one of her oldest friends, and with many charges to their new son to write often, they bid the gentle bride, her husband and sister adieu, and returned to C—— to make hasty preparation for going to New York.

In concluding, I will say, Frederic having an unconquerable desire to follow in the footsteps of his father, joined, a few months after his graduation, the theological school in New York, where he entered with the ardor and enthusiasm which was a part of his nature, into the preparation for his chosen profession. In due time, he finished his course, and was called to fill a post of usefulness and honor, in a church in Baltimore.

Soon after his settlement, there was a double marriage in his father's church, when he was united to Sarah Wallace Clinton, and Albert Clinton to his sister Helen. Young Bentley, who was also a licentiate, having pursued the same course as his friend, begged earnestly that his nuptials with Laura might be celebrated at the same time, but Dr. Wells pleasantly replied, that he hoped there would not be another flood, though of late, people were marrying and giving in marriage, as they were before Noah entered into the ark.

The winter following the marriage of Fanny at her grandfather's, in accordance with the request of Mr. Warren, the church voted to call a young man as col-

league with their aged pastor. Their choice fell upon Mr. Wainwright, a young licentiate who had studied theology in C——, and thus Gracie saw at length that the paths of duty and of inclination were happily united. For nearly three years she had been betrothed to her father's student, having become acquainted with him while he was in College, but had positively refused to leave her aged parents.

Mr. George Wells, now an active citizen, residing on his father's estate, called a meeting of the parish, when they voted to repair the parsonage, and make such alterations as their new minister might deem necessary for the comfortable residence of the two families. They also voted to continue the salary of their former pastor during his life.

The latter resolution, however, the good old man would by no means accept. His expenses were small, his children all provided for. If he could have a home in the parsonage, under whose friendly roof he had so long labored for his beloved people, and the sum of two hundred dollars annually, his wants would be amply supplied.

Squire Wells lived to a good old age, until he had held the infant of his grandchild, Laura Wells Bentley upon his knees, and then departed, universally respected and mourned by his large circle of relatives and friends.

His son continued to increase in usefulness and happiness. Upon the twentieth anniversary of his marriage he gathered around him his children and children's children to the number of ten souls. As he with his beloved

wife glanced from one to another, and called to mind the active part they had taken in the education not only of their own children, but also of those who had become their companions, they blessed God that he had given them the wisdom profitable to direct.

END.