

TIGHT TIMES,
OR
THE DIAMOND CROSS;
AND
OTHER TALES.

BY
Elara Moreton.

‘THE LEAST FLOWER, WITH A BRIMMING CUP, MAY STAND,
AND SHARE ITS DEW DROP WITH ANOTHER NEAR.’—MRS. BROWNING.

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KITE & WALTON.

DEDICATION.

TO YOU, MY DEAR BROTHERS; DEARER TO ME THAT I HAVE NEVER KNOWN A SISTER'S
COMPANIONSHIP AND LOVE; I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE THIS COLLECTION OF SOME OF MY
FUGITIVE PIECES.

YOUR ONLY SISTER,

CLARA.

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TIGHT TIMES;

OR,

The Diamond Cross.

CHAPTER I.

WITHIN a room furnished with unusual elegance, a young girl sat weeping passionately. She wore a dress of costly material, her fair round arms were loaded with bracelets of various patterns and unique designs, from the plain hoop of solid gold to the coral serpent, coiled about her wrist, with emerald eyes and ruby crested head.

Around her, in lavish profusion, there was everything that could make a home beautiful. Cabinets of rare workmanship, tables of mosaic and of inlaid pearl, exquisite statuary, articles of virtu; glowing carpets that gave back no footfall, hangings of satin and lace, and upon the glistening surface of the broad mirrors, everything reflected in increased beauty.

It was not a place for tears, yet the young girl wept as bitterly as if some great sorrow had visited her for the first time.

"It is too bad;" she exclaimed in a vexed tone, sounding strangely from those beautiful lips. "It is too bad. I do not

believe that the times are so hard that Pa need deny me *that*—when, for a whole year, it has been promised me. I don't care to have any Christmas present, if I can't have what I want."

With pouting lips, burning cheeks, and sullen eyes, the spoiled beauty meditated upon her wrongs, and devised means whereby she might yet obtain possession of the coveted article. Her reverie was broken by her mother, who entered the room.

"Why Carrie! what is the matter with you? What has gone wrong now, my darling?"

"Only think—Pa says I shan't have the diamond cross that he promised me. Isn't he mean?"

"Hush! hush! Carrie dear, don't speak so of your father; you know the times are very hard, and ——"

"I don't believe it is the hard times that keeps him from getting it for me. I don't believe a word of it. What difference, I want to know, would just one thing more make? What is two hundred and fifty dollars to Pa? If it was a thousand dollar cross, like Mrs. Bloston's, then Pa might grumble. And I have told all the girls I was going to have it. It's a shame!—Ma, could'nt you get it for me with your money?"

"Indeed, my child, I would willingly, if I could, but your papa has diminished my allowance. With the exception of a hundred dollars, which he has given me to pay Mrs. Needle's bill, who cannot wait until the first of the year, and Mary the seamstress, and what is left of the hundred that he gives me every winter for charities, I really do not think that I have ten dollars in the world."

"O, dear Ma!" said Carrie, springing to her feet, her eyes all aglow, "O, dear Ma! I will be satisfied with a two hundred dollar cross. Baily's have such a bijou of one—just that

price. You will let me get it, won't you? 'Charity begins at home,' you know."

Mrs. Merton looked pained and surprised. She answered resolutely. "No, Carrie. I shall not rob the suffering poor to add to your already overflowing hoards. It grieves me more to see such a disposition upon your part, than the loss of ten times the amount of money would have done."

"I know of *one* way that I can get it," said Carrie, sullenly.

Her mother looked almost sternly at her for a moment. Then touched by some softening memory, she said,

"My child, how much it would gratify me, to see you reasonable in this matter. You may be sure that if your papa is able to buy you the cross, he will yet do so. It wants nearly a month of Christmas, and times may be easier before then."

The next day, Carrie Merton on her way down street, stopped at the jewellers. The setting of the two hundred dollar cross was really more beautiful than that of the higher priced one; and Carrie was not long in deciding that she preferred it by far, to her first choice.

"It is the last one of that size," said the salesman, "and we are not going to make up any more at present; we have so many orders to fill for Christmas. Miss Grabbit came very near taking it yesterday."

"O, I wish Ma could see it. Could'nt you lay it by until to-morrow morning, and she will come down with me."

"Certainly. But I think you had better take it home. It will show to more advantage there; and I will charge it to your father. In case you do not keep it, I have only to mark it returned. That is the best plan, I think."

"Very well," she replied. "That will suit me exactly."

The dainty velvet case was wrapped up in folds of tissue

paper; and Carrie took it, feeling almost as exultant as if it were really her own.

When she went out into the street, the pavement was covered with snow, and the soft flakes were falling rapidly. An up town omnibus was passing, and jumping in, she rode within a square of her father's dwelling. Still the snow fell steadily, and the fast increasing flakes covered every thing with "ermine too dear for an earl." Carrie bounded along through it, heedless of the discomfort which at any other time it would have been sure to have occasioned her; but now, the diamond cross in her pocket, was a charm to chase away all annoyance.

She found her mother in her dressing-room; and going up to her, she said in her old, winsome way,

"Please, mamma, do not scold me. I have something to show you, but I must tell you all about it first. I just went in to look at it again, and it was the last one, and Miss Grabbit was thinking of taking it; and so Mr. Roberts said I might bring it home to show it to you, and keep it all night—and, I do want you to coax papa to give it to me. I didn't think, when I said take the money, Pa gave you for the poor people,—indeed I didn't. I was so ashamed and so sorry the moment after."

Carrie plunged her hand down into the depths of her pocket—looked up to her mother with a wild, wondering stare, and drew out her hand, empty. She was pale with affright, for the diamond cross was gone.

As soon as she recovered herself sufficiently to tell how she had come home, at what place she had taken the omnibus, and where she had left it, a servant was despatched to look for the cross, although the errand seemed a hopeless one. The fast-falling snow would have covered it, had it fallen unnoticed into the street. If dropped in the omnibus—which.

Carrie described as minutely as she could—it would depend upon the honesty of those within, or of the driver, whether it would ever be heard from again. But, both Mrs. Merton and Carrie inclined to the idea that her pocket had been picked; and they were not therefore disappointed, when James returned without having discovered any traces of it. The advertisements which they inserted in the morning papers met with like success. There came no tidings of the lost cross; and Carrie settled herself to bear her disappointment as well as she could, assuring her mother that if she would only keep the loss, a secret from her father, she would never again have cause to complain of her wilfulness.

Mrs. Merton was the more easily overruled, on account of her husband's increasing anxiety in his business relations. She dreaded to trouble him with an additional outlay, so useless, and so contrary to his own expressed wishes: and at such a time, she preferred shielding him from a knowledge of his daughter's selfishness, trusting that the lesson would prove to her a lasting one.

Reluctantly, she appropriated the money that she had on hand towards paying the bill; that it might not be sent in to her husband at the close of the year. She wanted but fifteen dollars, and that amount she obtained from Mr. Merton, without any explanations as to the purpose for which it was designed. Only the now frequent caution: "Remember Anna, the times are hard, and we must get along with just as little outlay as possible. Every dollar tells in times like these. Poor Ashurst's house and furniture comes under the hammer to-morrow—I should not like to see my wife and my only child stripped of these luxuries," and he glanced around the room, fairly shuddering as he spoke. "At my time of life, I could never hope to climb my way back again—and poverty for ~~you~~ you! Ugh! the very thought chills my blood."

Oh, how Carrie's heart reproached her, as she sat in the shade of the dark hangings, listening to her father. For the first time, the losses of others, and the change that might equally as well come to them, pictured itself before her with vivid and fearful distinctness. Never before had she realized the extent of her thoughtlessness, and her selfish ways.

CHAPTER II.

"MRS. MERTON is not at home I tell you."

"Miss Merton then. If I can see Miss Merton it will do just as well. I must see one of them before I go back."

It was a cold, bleak December day. The winter which had set in early, had increased every week in severity: and now, the streams were all ice-bound, the surface of the country presented one almost unbroken sheet of snow; and high upon either side of the city streets, lay the crisp, frozen masses, that had been thrown from the sidewalks and the road.

It was Mary the seamstress, who stood shivering upon Mr. Merton's marble steps, the door not sufficiently opened to give her the opportunity of entering, of which she would have so gladly availed herself; for her feet were cold and numb, and her shoulders were but scantily protected from the inclement wind.

"Miss Merton. Well, I'll take her your message; but I know she won't bother her head with ^{such as} you."

Unconsciously, Mary drew herself up. The proud light in her eyes, effected what her humble demeanor had failed to do.

"Walk in Miss—take a chair here in the hall. It is warm here by the heater. I will just tell Miss Merton that you have some business with her mother."

"If you please. I thank you."

Left alone, Mary glanced around. It was no strange place to her. New statues adorned the niches; a brighter, richer carpet was on the stairs and floor; but it was the same wide hall, the same broad stair-case, where, when a child, she had frolicked up and down, in her light-hearted mirth. It was the mansion her father had built; where he had spent the happiest days of his life, and where he had hoped to die; but loss had followed loss—ruin stared him in the face, while with a brave heart he struggled on. At length, his only son, in an evil hour committed an act which obliged him to flee from the strong arm of the law; and then, beggared, a bankrupt and disgraced, the father sank into his grave, a broken-hearted old man. The wife and daughter with great difficulty had for years earned a livelihood with their needle; but gradually the mother's sight had failed; and little by little their indebtedness had increased. Then the hard times came on, work became scarce; and with the exception of the money which Mrs. Merton was owing her for the needlework she had taken home, Mary knew not where to look for a cent.

It was with an anxious heart, she awaited Miss Merton's answer; for if her errand proved unsuccessful, that night made her homeless. Repeatedly had she applied for her money, and the last time, Mrs. Merton had assured her that she would have it ready for her this week. Heretofore, her pride had kept her from making known their necessities; but she resolved if put off again, to tell the story of their life, and the destitution to which they were reduced.

She heard Carrie's voice on the stairs.

"Where is she James?—oh, I see. It is all right; you can go back, I will attend to her."

Like a vision of beauty she glided down. Her rustling silk, her costly laces, her glittering jewelry, and more than

all, her lovely, radiant face, where not a trace of care nor sorrow lingered, so dazzled Mary, that she stood speechless before her.

"Did you wish to see mamma? Can you leave your message with me? Oh, wait just one moment, I will be down directly."

She had not waited for an answer. She was gone.

Scarcely a moment, and back she came with a soft, fine shawl in her arms.

"I know you are cold, you look so. You must wear my school shawl. It will keep you so nice and warm."

And with her own jewelled hands, she folded it, and wrapped it around her.

"You are too kind, Miss Merton. I cannot take your shawl, for I did not come to beg. I have been sewing for your mother, and she promised to pay me this week the twenty dollars that she owes me."

Carrie's eyes fell like the guilty creature she felt herself to be. She said falteringly.

"Indeed, I don't know—that is, mamma did have some money laid by for you, but it is all gone. Could'n't you wait another week? you know money is very scarce now. Pa says so every night."

"I know it is Miss Merton. Who should know better than I? But twenty dollars is very little to you; and to us, it is everything; for it is all we have in the world."

"Mercy! you don't mean it! all you have in the world! oh, I will tell Pa, and he will give it to you right away, and a great deal more; I know he will."

Mary smiled a feeble, grateful smile.

"If I could take home a few dollars with me, I should be very glad. Mrs. Hardy, of whom we rent our room has been threatening for the last week to turn us out. She said

if I came back without the money, we should not sleep under her roof to-night."

"Oh no, she never could be so cruel as that, this bitter cold weather. But never fear. I will bring you the money. Tell me where you live."

Mary gave her direction, and Carrie wrote it down.

"Now, don't feel anxious," she said, "I will not fail ~~at~~ bringing it; and keep that shawl on, Mary, you *must* wear it. Pa will be home at three o'clock to dinner, and before five, I shall get to your house. Tell that bad woman I am coming myself to pay her. Remember, that is *your* shawl."

Mary went back with a lighter heart, but not for long.

Mrs. Hardy met her in the entry.

"So you have got back at last. I thought you had given me the slip, and gone for good, leaving the old woman for pay. I would have sold her to the doctors—I would as sure as my name's Jane Hardy."

"Ah, Mrs. Hardy, how can you talk so cruelly?—my poor mother. It is dreadful."

"Yes, it is dreadful, ~~it is~~, *dreadful that I can't get a cent out of you. I'll be bound you brought me nothing this time, but laid it all out in that fine shawl upon your back." She took hold of it, and examined it closely. "I'm a judge of such goods, Miss. You never paid less than twenty dollars for it. Come, where's my money?"

"Miss Merton is going to bring it this afternoon; and this is her shawl—she would make me wear it home. You know I would not spend a cent upon myself, when my mother needs it so much more."

"I don't know no such thing. A likely story, that Miss Merton made you wear it home! I don't believe a word of it! More likely that you stole it! Here, give it to me—I'll take it

in payment for what you owe me. It is just the shawl for my Eliza Jane."

Mary clung to the shawl, wrapping it more closely around her. "Indeed Mrs. Hardy, I am going to carry it back to Miss Merton again. I did not know it was such an expensive shawl—her mother would not let her give it away. I know she would not."

"Why didn't you think of that before? Here, give me the shawl, I tell you. The shawl or the money, do you hear? I have put up with your airs long enough—it is my turn now, and you have got to stand around."

"You shall have the money, Mrs. Hardy, this very day," said Mary, shrinking back from her. "Before five o'clock Miss Merton said she would be here. Only wait until then."

Mrs. Hardy looked up to the face of the old clock that stood in the entry. It was fifteen minutes of two.

"Very well," she said, "I *will* wait till then; but remember; if when that clock strikes five I am not paid, you go out of this house—you and your mother, and your trumpery baggage. Maybe somebody will take you in, that's good enough for you to associate with. My Eliza Jane isn't fit company for you—oh no," and with a toss of her head, Mrs. Hardy walked off, grumbling, "A whole quarter's rent due, and ten scuttle's full of coal. If the shawl is fine, it won't any more than pay me."

A slender figure slipped out from underneath the stair-way, and a pale, delicate face looked into Mary's.

"Don't cry, Mary. Mother shan't turn you out of the house. I feel as though I couldn't love her, when I hear her talk so wicked. I'll watch here for Miss Merton for you, and tell you when she comes."

"You are a good child, Emmie, but don't sit in the cold. I

shall hear Miss Merton when she knocks," answered Mary, as she went up to her mother, who feeble and anxious, sat impatiently watching her return.

She was not as sanguine as her daughter in regard to Miss Merton's promised visit; for she knew by experience, how frequently the rich, engrossed by their own pleasures, forget the promises they have made the poor.

The hours lagged slowly. Three—then four, struck the clock in the hall below. Darkness came on. In the gathering gloom, the mother and daughter sat, each minute seeming like an hour. They listened to the wild wind whirling without, and whistling down the chimney. Then shuddering, they drew still closer together; Mary tenderly chafing her mother's cold hands, or pressing them fondly against her own burning cheeks.

"It must be five o'clock, mother. See how dark it is. It seems to me two hours since it struck four."

"That is because we are waiting so impatiently, Mary; but it is very dark for five o'clock. The clock cannot have struck, for we always hear it when it strikes."

At this moment the bell of a neighbouring factory rang for six o'clock; and close following upon it, was heard Mrs. Hardy's tongue.

Mary opened the door leading out on the stairs, and looked down.

Mrs. Hardy stood in the entry, one hand holding high the lamp, the other shielding it from the draught of air, while her face was turned up to the clock.

"Well, that beats natur! The factory bell ringing for six, and a quarter to five, by that old thing. The supper table ain't set, nor the tea kittle biling, nuther. I thought it warn't never going to strike," and going towards it, she opened the door of the case. The pendulum hung motion-

less within. "This is a new kink," she said, giving it a push with her hand, which sent it rebounding from one side of the box to the other. "If I hadn't been so taken up with contriving about that shawl for Eliza Jane, I should have known it was getting on to supper time. That shawl! oh yes, now I see it. Five o'clock, Miss Merton was to be here; oh you hussy! you'll stop my clock again, won't you?" and she shook her fist energetically.

Mary called down, "I was watching for her, Mrs. Hardy. Indeed I have not been near the clock. It has seemed a very, very long time to me."

Mrs. Hardy turned up a face dark with passion.

"Oh you good for nothing minx! you think to cheat me again do you? I know your plan—you thought it would give you another night, but you have made a mistake. Pack up and be off, I tell you. I give you half an hour—what is in the house after that time, I shall pitch out of the window after you, or keep it for rent, for that shawl won't begin to pay me for the coal and all you have had of me."

Again that little slender form came creeping out.

"Please, mother, don't be so cruel. It was me that stopped the clock."

"Cruel!—saucer-box! What do you mean? It was *you* that stopped the clock. I'll stop *you* then," and raising her hand, she dealt such a blow on the ear, that the poor child was sent staggering back to her hiding place in the corner. There, nestling down by Bruno's warm, shaggy body, she remained a silent witness of the scene that followed.

She heard Mary beg for another day, for her mother's sake; and her blood chilled within her, as she listened to the hard-hearted, taunting answer. Then came their busy foot-steps overhead, as they bundled together their few things.

How Emmie longed to creep from her corner; but her mo-

ther's voice, every now and then rising to a high key, kept her spell-bound in fear. Her little heart was almost bursting; and the tears that wet old Bruno's coat that night, were the bitterest that her sad young life had ever known.

At seven o'clock, the house was quiet. Mrs. Hardy's passion had spent its fury. She had closed her door upon the feeble mother, and her weeping child, as they went out, carrying between them their sole remaining earthly possessions. Her victims were beyond her reach and she was satisfied.

The kettle was steaming and hissing upon the coals, and the supper table was set, when Eliza Jane came in from the factory, where she worked from seven in the morning, until seven in the evening. She found her mother trying on the fine plaid shawl, which she had seized upon for payment.

"Ain't this a beauty, Lizur Jane? I've got the best of the bargain after all—see here, I took this for you, for the back rent; and I've turned out those fine ladies. Their pride 'll have to come down I'm a thinking, for they've got no place to go to, excepting the Alms-house."

"Why, mother; not this bitter, cold night?"

"There, that's all the thanks I get. Hain't you got any more spirit? I guess you've forgotten how she never would keep company with you. I haven't—and I've made her smart for it to-night—if I didn't, the freezing cold will."

Just then, there came a brisk knock at the front door.

"Here, Lizur Jane, you put up that shawl this minute. I'll go to the door."

With the lamp in her hand, she unbolted and opened it.

"Is there a seamstress boarding here? her first name is Mary."

"Yes, she was a boarding here; but, she didn't pay her board, and I packed her off to-night. What did you want of her?"

"I have brought her some money from Miss Merton. She was very anxious that she should have it to-night. Can you tell me where I can find her?"

"I don't know nothing about her. I would have kept her here, if I had known the Mertons were going to send her any money; but I didn't believe a word of it. It was the same old story, week after week; and she was too proud to go every day for it, as I would have done. You see, times is hard, and I've too many mouths to feed, to let people have my rooms, and find 'em in coal for nothing. Likely, you'll find them at the Alms-house, they hadn't any other place to go to."

"Wretch!" muttered James, as he turned from the house. "I would like to have the hanging of that woman."

Mrs. Hardy looked down the narrow court after him. She had caught the first word, and her blood was up. But just then, her husband came reeling along, and the gathering storm fell thick and fast upon his head.

Emmie who had sobbed herself to sleep, awoke at the loud altercation; and shivering with fear, the timid little creature hurried supperless to bed.

Mrs. Hardy's ill-humor continued during the evening. Good tenants were not easily obtained. She began to think she had been too hasty. If the Mertons had been sufficiently interested to have sent a man around with the money, they would probably have done more for them. Self-interest, the only conscience she had, began to reproach her. All night, she dreamed of frozen corpses and of witches on broomsticks riding through the air, uttering frightful imprecations upon her, and when, before daylight the milkman rapped, she was almost afraid to unbar the door, lest the frozen bodies of Mary and her mother, should fall against her.

No such summary punishment awaited her. Neither Mary

nor her mother disturbed her with their presence, in the body, or out of the body; and as day after day passed, she seemingly ceased to think of them, as entirely as she had ceased to speak of them.

Not so with little Emmie. She watched, and waited, and prayed, but all in vain: her eyes were not gladdened by one glimpse of the only one who had ever tried to make life pleasant to her. Sometimes, in dreams she saw Mary; but it was always as a white-robed angel, with a golden crown upon her head, who came to take her away to Heaven with her; but poor Emmie never got one glimpse of that bright region, even in her dreams; for she always awoke in her joy at again seeing the face she held so dear; and then, in her great disappointment she would sob herself to sleep again.

Ah, Emmie, take heart. Angels walk the earth now, as frequently as in the days when the beautiful Scriptures were inspired, from which you conned your only lore. Some day, this oft recurring dream may prove reality.

CHAPTER III.

CARRIE, waited impatiently for her father and mother. It was quite three o'clock when Mrs. Merton came in, and Mr. Merton, usually so punctual, had not yet arrived.

While Carrie was in the midst of her tale, there came a loud ring at the door, a bustle in the hall, a strange voice in subdued tones, and servants whispering. Simultaneously, Mrs. Merton and Carrie stopped to listen. The drawing-room was quite silent, and she caught these words. "I had better see her at once—she needs some preparation, and there is no time to be lost."

Mrs. Merton opened the door—a terrible suspicion entering her heart with its lightning stroke.

She recognized one of her husband's friends.

"My dear madam," he said, taking her hand, and drawing her within, while he closed the door after him, "I am sorry to be the bearer of such painful news. Your husband has been taken very ill—indeed, I—"

"Tell me the worst, Mr. Hildbrun! tell me the worst—this suspense is so horrible! If he is alive, in mercy take me to to him!" said Mrs. Merton with unnatural calmness.

Carrie stood white as a marble statue; but it was no marble heart that beat so wildly within her, or looked out so agonizingly from her distended eyes.

"Try to keep calm, my dear Mrs. Merton. It is a terrible blow, but—"

"He is dead!" cried Mrs. Merton in a piercing voice. The next moment, Carrie's arms were flung around her, and weeping and sobbing, the mother and daughter clung to each other.

It was a sorrowful night that followed. Carrie, her heart more keenly alive than ever to the woes of others, in the midst of all her grief, at length remembered Mary, and at once despatched James with the money.

Upon his return, he did not intrude upon her; and for a few days, Carrie was spared the increased suffering which a knowledge of this fresh consequence of her selfish indulgence would have caused her.

Mr. Merton's death had been a very sudden one. He left his counting-house, apparently in perfect health. As he was about stepping into an omnibus, he fell backwards, and was conveyed senseless into a neighbouring apothecary's. The usual remedies for apoplexy were applied, but he was never restored to even one moment of consciousness.

Troops of friends came to his funeral. Warm tears dropped upon his cold, rigid face, from eyes that had laughed back his merry greetings in boyhood. Long lines of carriages with liveried servants, and horses in glittering harness, followed him to the grave.

A week thereafter, it was known that he had died a bankrupt.

Where now were the scores of friends? At least, those unselfish hearts whose memories of childhood had drawn tears to their eyes—at least, they came forward to sympathize and advise with the desolate widow and orphan.

Not so. The busy stream of worldly life, had obliterated all such memories—had ~~swallowed~~ all such tears.

were A few formal visits of condolence were paid—~~many~~ ^{many} cards left, and the tide of friends swept by the wreck that was stranded upon the shore, and no helping hand was stretched forth to save or succor.

Mr. Merton's elegant mansion had been immediately sold. It had brought its full value—an unusual thing under such circumstances.

The furniture had been paid for by Mrs. Merton, with a portion of the money her parents had left her at their death; and this was all that was secured to her.

The house had been purchased through an agent. Mr. Eaton, the owner, had not yet arrived; but through his instructions, Carrie and her mother remained in it, laying their plans for their future maintenance.

All Carrie's attempts to discover Mary's refuge proved unavailing. She even went through the Alms-house, at James's suggestion, trembling lest she should meet her there; but as much as she desired to see her, it was to her great relief that she did not find her an inmate.

Coming in one day, from an entire morning devoted to these

fruitless endeavors, she found her mother in an unusually cheerful frame of mind.

"I am glad to see one of those old looks on your face, dear Ma; but *I* am completely discouraged. I was so anxious to find Mary; but there is no use in wasting any more time, when we do not even know her last name. Poor child! we might have been of use to each other. She is old in trouble, and in the experience which it brings; although I really believe Ma, that she has known better days. I think I could labor with a good heart, if I only once found her, and knew that she was not suffering for my sins."

"I have some good news, Carrie, to allay your disappointment."

"Have you found her, Ma?—only tell me you have found her."

"No. It is not of Mary of whom I am speaking. We must think of ourselves now; for I am convinced that in these hard times, all our schemes would prove Utopian. Mr. Bonton—the agent of Mr. Eaton has been here this morning. Mr. Eaton proposes to purchase our furniture, and desires us to fix our own price. It is also his wish to retain the servants, and he has instructed Mr. Bonton to engage me as a housekeeper, until such time as is convenient for him to bring his bride home."

"Never! never!" exclaimed Carrie, her eyes flashing with indignation. "My mother, a servant! I would never submit to such an indignity. He may have the house to-night, if he wants it; but he shall never have any control over us, I can promise him! Insolence!"

"Carrie! Carrie! I had hoped that proud spirit was more humbled—that once uncurbed will, more tamed. I appreciate your feelings, but look with me dispassionately at the state of things. When we leave this roof, we give up a certainty for an uncertainty. It would not take long to waste the little sub-

stance that we have, and remember Mary!—dependent upon the little pittance we were owing her, for even the shelter of a roof for her mother. Do not cry so, Carrie. You have done your best to atone for your error; and I know it is one which you will never make again. You must bring your mind to acquiesce to my wishes; for I am convinced that, under present circumstances, it is our only reliable means of support; and certainly, to me, far more agreeable than any change would be. Mr. Bonton said that Mr. Eaton might not desire possession until Spring, but at the same time, he requested that we might hold ourselves ready to leave, should it be necessary. I am sure we have great reason to be thankful that such an opportunity has offered; and you know, Carrie, that it is not the station in life that demeans us.

"I know, mamma—I know that nothing could make you other than you are—worthy of every one's love and respect; but it is a great change, to be the housekeeper, where you have once been the mistress! Oh ma! ma! it is too bad!"

"That is the least of my trouble. If I ~~was~~^{were} only as certain of a provision for the future, equally as comfortable, I should be as happy as I can ever hope to be again."

Carrie drew a long breath. "It seems to me just like some story that I have read. What if Mr. Eaton should turn out to be some old uncle of yours or Pa's, who has come back from the Indies, and who has surprised us in this way; and who will come and live here with us always. Don't you wish he would!"

"I have no such vain wish my child. When I lost my parents, I lost every relative that I had. Your father was an orphan, who carved his own way in the world, without assistance. We have no one to look to, but each other and our God, and you must not buoy yourself up with any such

vain imaginings. They would only end in disappointment, my daughter."

"There is one way," said Carrie musingly. "There is one way—and then, you need never be a housekeeper. If I were to marry Mr. Mark Houston, you could always live just as you do now."

"Carrie! don't let such an idea enter your head. I had thought better of you," said Mrs. Merton, her face depicting the surprise she felt.

"Then you have thought better of me than I deserve. It is not the first time the thought entered my head. When I wanted that diamond cross—but, oh no, I was not in earnest then. I was not so bad as that. Now it is different."

Her eyes eluded her mother's steady gaze; and she fell to twirling her watch chain, and its fanciful little charms.

"You do not know the magnitude of the topic you treat so lightly, Carrie. Marriage without love brings its own retribution, and a fearful one it is. Never—never again my child, speak or think of selling yourself for gold."

"Not for gold mother! you do me injustice. I would not sell myself for gold; but I am not so sure that I would not for your comfort. Besides, it would not be so great a sacrifice, giving him my penniless self for his uncounted money bags; and I know I could learn to love him, as well as any other man. Indeed, I am going to think of it. It would be too good to see how fast our summer friends would come flocking back to us again."

Mrs. Merton made no reply, but she shook her head slowly, and tears stood in her eyes.

Christmas came and went, observed only as a day of deeper gloom, within the mansion once owned by Mr. Merton. The long strips of black crape still hung from the shutters, and the whilom friends who passed, wondered 'when those extra-

vagant Mertons would give up their expensive establishment.'

New Year's day they received an unexpected call. Mr. Eaton's card was sent up, and Mrs. Merton who had before been suffering from a nervous head-ache, was so startled by the unexpected arrival, that she was unfit to see him.

Carrie went down. She knew that he was from San Francisco, where he had realized his large fortune by speculations in real estate; and she had rather a confused idea of a middle-aged man, with a quantity of hair of a neutral tint upon his face, a wide-awake hat, and a California bang-up.

She was a little embarrassed at finding Mr. Eaton a young man, looking scarcely thirty years of age, of elegant exterior and polished address.

In a few words he apologized for the intrusion, and expressed his indebtedness to them, for consenting to remain, and take charge of the household. He could not explain, at present, he said, the condition of his affairs, but he was entirely dependent upon their generosity; as he was totally unfit for the care of an establishment of the kind; although exceedingly desirous to have one in readiness, when his arrangements should be completed for occupying it. So earnestly did he seem to feel his obligations, that he left Carrie in a very happy state of mind. It is much easier to bestow a favor, than to be the recipient of one.

"I don't believe he is married yet," she said to her mother. "He seemed to feel a delicacy in alluding to his arrangements, that he would not have felt, had he really had a wife. I wonder if it is a settled thing. If not, see if I don't set my cap for him."

"Oh Carrie, don't talk so triflingly."

"Why mother, you know I am only in jest. Of course, if he is not married, he *will be* soon. I could tell that well

enough, from what he said. But one thing I know. I *never* will marry Mr. Houston, nor any other man that I do not love. I made up my mind to that, while he was talking to me. Oh mother, you should see him! He is just what a man ought to be. I never saw such eyes—such a clear, deep blue; and such black lashes. Heigho! I will wait until he is a widower, for I do not believe that there are two such specimens of the genus homo, extant."

"Carrie, are you perfectly incorrigible?"

"Ah, dear Ma, do forgive me. It is such a long time since I have jested so before."

Resuming her sewing, she sat quite silently; but her mother noticed the unusual flush upon her cheek, the new excitement in her eyes; and for the first time, a strange fear entered her heart. To whose honor was she trusting, while under such suspicious circumstances she retained her house? Carrie should not see Mr. Eaton again. The next time his card should be sent up; she would wait upon him herself. There was some mystery somewhere.

The following morning, as Carrie was practising alone in the drawing-room, Mr. Eaton was again announced. His excuse for repeating his call so soon, was the bouquet of rare exotics which he had brought to her invalid mother. At his request, she continued her singing, and despite the timidity which she first felt, her voice had never sounded to better advantage. A depth of feeling of which she was herself unconscious laid hold of it, and freighted it with ~~richness~~ richness. Those hours over the music, with the companionship of the flowers so intoxicating in their bewitching fragrance, and the earnest but sad look of those wonderfully beautiful eyes, opened a new world to Carrie.

When the excitement was over, and she was left alone, she looked into her heart, and saw to what suffering she had

brought herself. Could it be true, that she had, on so brief an acquaintance, thrown away her love upon a man, who if not already married, was upon the eve of marriage? One who had never sought her love? Despite her pride, there came an answer, which caused her more bitter, more remorseful tears than any she had ever shed.

Mrs. Merton took the flowers, but talked plainly with Carrie upon the impropriety of Mr. Eaton's continuing his visits. Carrie admitted that her mother was right, but in so sad and abstracted a way, that she would have much preferred her former jesting manner.

Again Mr. Eaton called, and fortune, who seemed determined to thwart the anxious mother, favored him with another interview with Carrie.

But now she was on her guard. She knew the weakness of her heart, and its citadels were no longer defenceless.

"My mother, Mr. Eaton, is desirous of seeing you," she said, advancing towards the door.

"Miss Merton—if I might ask so great a favor, on so brief an acquaintance—will you remain a moment? I am going to leave the city—it may be for weeks. When I return, I trust I shall know if the desire of my life is ever to be accomplished, or whether death has separated me for ever from those with whom every thought has heretofore been associated. May I hope,—” and he reached out his hand to take hers as he spoke.

Carrie, drew herself up proudly.

"I am answered," he said, bowing his head, and signifying by a gesture of his hand, that he would detain her no longer.

Carrie's heart reproached her, as she saw the increased sadness that spread over his face.

"You will always find friends in my mother and myself,"

she answered. "I assure you we feel your kindness; we are not ungrateful."

"Don't speak in that way," he said quickly. "You have laid me under lasting obligations. Let what will happen, promise me that you will always consider this your home?"

"Mr. Eaton," said Carrie, looking up in her calm innocence, into his face. "Your own good judgment will convince you that that could never be. It is our *home* no longer. Had it been purchased by any other than you, we should long since have been exiled from its walls. We hold ourselves in readiness to give it up as soon as your wife—"

"My wife! good Heavens!—excuse, me Miss Merton, but I should stand before you this day the most miserable man in existence, if I ~~were~~ married."

Carrie's eyes fell. Her calmness was gone. In her restraint and embarrassment, in her blushing cheeks, and drooping eyelids, Ralph Eaton read her heart. He saw at a glance also the cause of her previous indignation, as well as how the mistake had originated; and he proceeded at once to give her a brief sketch of his life.

"This house was my boyhood's home, Miss Merton. Circumstances, which I willingly pass over, banished me from it. I was a wild boy then, but I have reaped bitter fruit from the seed of my own planting. My father's death, which occurred soon after I left, I did not hear of for years. I sent remittances, and wrote to know if my mother and sister were living. I had met with unexampled success. Like Midas, everything that I touched seemed to turn to gold. I conceived the idea of purchasing back this house, not knowing who owned it, and of reinstating my mother and sister in their former style of living. The answer to my letters came back. The house was owned by a millionaire, and was not for sale; my mother and sister were living in the greatest obscurity. Immediately, I

made preparations for departure, and sailed in the next steamer. I arrived in the city the day of your father's death; and at once appointed an agent, and gave him my instructions. Since then, my life has been a continued disappointment. One day, stimulated by hopes, that the next saw perish. Now, I have received tidings which encourage me again. A widow by the name of Eaton, with an only daughter, is keeping a boarding-school in Cincinnati. To-morrow I go there. I should be more sanguine than I am, had I not so many times been disappointed."

"How old was your sister, Mr. Eaton? what was her name?" said Carrie, eagerly.

"She is not more than nineteen now, if she is living. Her name was Anna."

"Oh, it is not Mary, then. She is a great deal older. I was foolish to think of her; for of course she would have told us, had she ever lived in this house. How I wish, Mr. Eaton, that I could help you find them;" said Carrie, looking earnestly in his face.

"You *can* help me in one way, Miss Merton," he said rising to leave; "Stranger that I am to you, I dare not say how; but some day, when you know me better, I will tell you the only two secrets of my life. One is the secret of years—the other, not of as many days. Then you shall decide my future for me."

Carrie could no longer meet that ardent, impassioned gaze; nor did she again draw back the hand, which for one brief moment he tightly clasped within his own.

At this unfortunate period Mrs. Merton entered.

"Carrie! my daughter! what does this mean?"

Carrie, feeling as guilty as she looked, darted away, and made her escape out of the back drawing-room door.

Mr. Eaton was left to make an explanation, which, under

the circumstances, proved rather embarrassing—so determined was Mrs. Merton in considering him a married man. She also, found it very difficult to realize the sincerity of a love, that like Jonah's gourd, had sprung up in a night; her own attachment having been the growth of months. However, Mr. Eaton's sincerity of manner, and his deep anxiety for his mother and sister, convinced her that he was no impostor; and she gave her consent to a renewal of his visits upon his return.

Carrie's happiness was too deep for words, when she felt her mother's kiss upon her forehead, and heard her say,

"He seems to be all that I could have desired for you, my daughter. God prosper him in his undertaking; and bring him back safely to you."

That evening, their old friend, Mark Houston, called.

Mrs. Merton did not feel well enough to go down, and Carrie was averse to seeing him. They therefore sent an excuse.

A week passed away, and they were daily expecting Mr. Eaton's return, when Carrie, who was glancing listlessly over the morning paper, sprang from her chair.

"My diamond cross, Ma! it is found!—oh, how I wish it was Mary and her mother, instead! That hateful cross! If it hadn't been for that, they could have staid where they were, and we could have helped them; couldn't we, Ma?" Her mother sighed. "We could have helped them *some*, at any rate," continued Carrie; "but just listen, Ma—See if you don't think it is my cross," and Carrie read aloud from the paper:—

'Found. A diamond cross, evidently lost some weeks ago. The owner can have it by calling at No. 342 Blank street.'

"Well, this is really wonderful," said Mrs. Merton. "To be sure, Carrie, it must be your cross. I have not a doubt of

it. Go at once for it, my child. If 'misfortunes never come singly,' I am sure good fortune falls in the same way."

Thus advised by her mother, Carrie made herself ready, and started for Blank Street.

The walking was bad; for the warm, foggy weather of the last few days had melted the snow rapidly; but Carrie heeded it no more than she did the first snow that fell, when—as she supposed with her diamond cross in her pocket, she made her way through it, little dreaming of her loss, or the evils attendant upon it. Now, it was not the anticipated recovery of the cross which made her footsteps so light. A new fountain of life had gushed up in her heart—the magic circle of love enclosed her round, hedging her in from all annoyance; and the world lay spread before her, more beautiful than all her young dreams of fairy land.

CHAPTER IV.

WE go back to that dark, cheerless December night, when Mary and her mother were turned into the street, without knowing a single place where they could obtain shelter. At first, they wandered on, meaninglessly; but the night was too cold for that. The mother's footsteps began to falter; and Mary, fearful that she would perish in the street, stopped the first passer by, with the question,

"Can you tell me of any asylum, where I can get my mother a place? I, can work for a living, if you will only give me work."

"Get out of my way. What are you blocking up my path for? I never give to street beggars;" and pushing her rudely, the man kept on his way.

Mary's heart sank within her, but she made another effort. Two young men were passing.

"I am not a beggar, sir. Won't you please tell me, if there is not an asylum where my mother can get shelter this cold night."

"To be sure there is," answered the men, laughing gaily, "Over the river, at Blockley. That's the place for her; and as for you, pretty one," he continued, chucking her rudely under the chin, "if you weren't so cold, I wouldn't mind taking you myself."

Laughing at the coarse jest, the two passed on.

Despite the cold, Mary's cheeks now burned like fire. The brutal insult had sent the blood coursing through her veins, like molten lava. She grasped her mother by the arm, and clinging together, they kept on their way.

"Mary, my poor child! Indeed, I cannot go any farther. Let me die here in the cold—it is better that I should;" and staggering back, she sank down against the marble steps of a fair dwelling.

"Oh Mother! will no one help me?"

The light from a street lamp near, flashed full in the face of a middle-aged gentleman, who was passing. Mary saw his grey hairs. She was quick to notice his benevolent expression, and she called out,

"Oh, for pity's sake, sir, help my poor mother! I am afraid she is dying."

Mark Houston's noble, generous heart, needed no second appeal. He sprang to her side, and relieved Mary of her mother's weight. Her head sank back upon his arm, and the light of the street lamp fell full upon it.

"Good God! Mrs. Eaton, is this you! but no, it never could be;" and his eye fell down upon her habiliments of poverty.

At that voice, she opened her eyes, and looked up into his

face. She grasped his hand, and her lips feebly murmured his name.

"Why, it is terrible!—this bitter cold night! Where do you live?"

"We have no home now," answered Mary. "We were turned out into the street to-night."

"Good Heavens! you don't tell me so, child! Here, come at once to my house. We shall all perish in this cold."

"I cannot—I cannot do that. Take me to some asylum, it is all that I ask;" answered Mrs. Eaton.

"No, no. That will never do. If you won't come home with me; there is a boarding-house close by, where you *shall* go."

"Indeed, we cannot, sir," answered Mary. "We have not a cent in the world."

"So much the more reason why you should come with me, as I tell you. Come along. I am an obstinate man." And supporting Mrs. Eaton as much as he could, he led her to the next street, and turning the corner, stopped at the first dwelling. It was a small, plain house. His ring was answered by a woman, in a widow's cap, and a mourning dress. He entered without any ceremony into the little parlor, which was snug and warm.

"You asked me if I couldn't send you some boarders this morning, Mrs. Paxwell. See, I have brought you some already. Mrs. Eaton is a very old and dear friend of mine; but she has met with some sad reverses since I saw her last. I want you to give them your best rooms, and every comfort that your house affords." While he had been speaking, he had placed Mrs. Eaton in the easiest chair; and assisted her daughter in removing the bonnet, and the wrappings which she wore.

At this unlooked for kindness, Mrs. Eaton wept like a child: and Mary looked on like one in a dream.

"I cannot accept such favors from you," sobbed Mrs. Eaton, "favors that I shall never have the means of repaying."

"I am the one that is favored," answered Mr. Houston, "so if you please, we will talk no more about that. I am sure God led you across my path this night, to test me if I were a proper almoner of his bounty: and I have no idea of preparing myself to hear the mandate, 'Depart from me ye cursed, for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.' No! I thank God that the privilege of alleviating your sufferings, has fallen to my lot. It is the sweetest moment I have known for many a long day."

From that night, Mrs. Eaton and her daughter knew no want. Mr. Houston, who had constituted himself Mary's guardian, paid them daily visits; and every time seemed to part with reluctance from his fair young ward. That they might feel less dependent, he had settled an annuity upon them; and always stilled their expressions of gratitude, by saying that he was a steward of God.

On New Year's day, dressed with unusual care, Mark Houston started out upon his round of calls.

Mrs. Eaton's was the first stopping place. Mary was alone in the parlor, copying some law papers he had given her to do; to satisfy her desire of being useful to him. Somehow, Mary got talking of the necessities to which she and her mother had been reduced; and she chanced to mention her interview with Miss Merton.

"An old friend of mine," said Mr. Houston. "Have you ever been there since her father's death?"

"No, I was going there once to explain about the shawl; but Mrs. Needles, through whom I got the sewing from Mrs.

Merton, told me that he had died insolvent, and that they had to move away. I was very sorry, for Miss Merton was a lovely girl, and she would have suffered almost as much as we did, if she had known how we had wanted the money. But it all turned out for the best, didn't it?"

"Yes, that it did. I could hardly keep away from that Mrs. Hardy, the first few days; but now I think of tendering her a note of thanks. The fact is, Mary, I do not see what I ever did with myself before I knew you—Yes I do. Shall I tell you?"

Mary of course answered 'yes.'

"I used to go very frequently to Mr. Merton's; and one evening I told Carrie that I was in love with her, and that I was going to inflict my presence upon her until I wore her out with my perseverance. Long ago, Mary, I determined to marry a young wife, when I should make up my mind to marry at all; for my heart is not so gray as my beard is, I assure you. Well, she laughed at me, and said I was old enough to be her grand-father. Would you do the same, Mary, if I ~~was~~ were to tell you the same story?"

"I should tell you, that you 'had better be off with the old love before you were on with the new;' and send you back to Miss Merton, who may have altered her mind by this time."

"And so have I altered mine. I had never seen *you* then. Miss Merton gave me my answer at once, and I forgave her frankness, because she did not keep me in suspense. Say, Mary, will you be an old man's darling, and give me the right to make my home, your own, and your mother's also?"

"I am afraid I am not fit;" answered Mary, blushing.

"Leave that to me to decide. Marry me out of gratitude if you choose, but it shall be my fault, if I have not taught

you to love me before the year is over. Say, Mary; yes or no."

Mary glanced timidly up. He had always seemed to her so far above her; but now, with his head bending towards her, his expectant face looking down to hers, he seemed nearer and dearer than ever.

"Yes," she answered; and the next moment he held her to his breast; as all lovers in stories have a bad habit of doing.

It was noon when he left her; and then, she went up to her mother. Mrs. Eaton, arrayed in a new black silk dress, and a becoming cap, sat reading by the fire.

"Have you finished your copying, Mary? Why, how tired you look. Your cheeks are burning red, and your hair is all tumbled. Hadn't you better get dressed? I expected Mr. Houston would have been here before this. Don't you think, Mary, that his frequent visits begin to look suspicious? I hope he isn't thinking of anything serious, for I couldn't listen to it—my heart is buried in your poor, dear father's grave," and pressing her handkerchief to her eyes, Mrs. Eaton sobbed audibly.

Mary stood looking on with rather a quizzical expression.

"I have been thinking, though, what an opportunity it would be. A mother ought to submit to many sacrifices for a child's sake—"

"No, no, dear mother, don't talk so," interrupted Mary, "you shall not sacrifice yourself, for I will marry him."

"You, Mary! *you* child!" exclaimed her mother, dropping her handkerchief from her eyes. "Why, he would as soon think of marrying a baby. You are too young by a score of years."

"He, does not think so, mother. He has been here all this morning, and it is arranged that we shall be married the first of next month; and you are to go home with us, and keep

house. Won't it be grand? I wonder he didn't love you the best; I am sure I should have thought he would."

"And do you love him, Mary? or are you marrying him out of gratitude?"

"I am pretty sure I love him, mother; and if I don't, he says that he will teach me to, before the year is out. I never thought of such a thing as his marrying me, until to-day; but the happiest time I knew, was when he was here; and I could listen to him talking to you; with now and then a few words to me. I never loved to hear any one talk one-half so well. I know I should not like the thoughts of his marrying you, or any one else."

"Well, I guess you'll do, Mary; but I'm sure I never mistrusted such a thing. I thought he was coming after me," and she joined in Mary's laugh against herself.

There was much shopping to be done—many preparations to make; and Mary went to work as busy as a bee. It was on one of these excursions, that she found the cross which Carrie had lost. She immediately advertised it; and upon the afternoon of the same day, as Mary was sitting in the back parlor, there came a ring at the door, and a claimant for the diamond cross.

It was Carrie; and the room not being very light, and Mary dressed so differently, she did not immediately recognize her: but at a glance, Mary said,

"Miss Merton!—am I not right?"

"Yes, that is my name; but I do not remember ever—oh, Mary, Mary, have I found you at last?" and the young girls embraced each other as heartily, as if they had been the friends of years. "And you have such a comfortable home, while I have been having the worst fears for you. Oh, I am so glad: and I am glad I lost my cross, now, or else I should

not have found you. Hasn't everything happened strangely? Won't you tell me all about it?"

They sat down on the sofa, side by side; Carrie retaining Mary's hand in hers, while she listened to her faithful narration. When she came to the part Mark Houston had taken, she did not mention his name, but simply spoke of him as an old friend of her mother's. Other than this, she kept nothing back which had occurred since she had seen her. She told her story so artlessly, and with such sweet simplicity of manner, that she entirely won Carrie's heart.

"And the wedding is to be strictly private, you say. Then I am going to be bridesmaid—won't you let me?"

"I shall be delighted, and so will Mr. Hous—"

"Don't Mr. me," said Mark Houston, coming in upon them without ringing, "What! you here, Miss Merton? what does this mean? You two girls are comparing notes, eh?"

"No indeed," answered Carrie, "we have had weightier matters to talk about. And so you are the knight-errant after all! I did not mistrust it, for Mary had not told me the name. Well, I think a great deal more of you than I ever did before in my life; and come to look at you, you don't look so old, I declare you don't."

"A pretty respectable looking grand-father I'd make, now, wouldn't I?"

Carrie laughed. She couldn't help it.

"O you need not laugh. I am very well satisfied, I assure you; and nodding his head towards Mary, he added, "I have told *her* all about it. Didn't I hear something about a bridesmaid, as I came through the hall?"

"Yes, I am going to be bridesmaid," answered Carrie. "You shan't cheat me out of that. And, Mary, I will be honest enough to tell you, that I don't think he ever cared a rush for me. You know every lady always says no, the first

time she is asked. Well, I never had an opportunity to say yes."

"Poor child!" said Mark, smoothing Mary's hair caressingly with his hand. "How sadly your education must have been neglected."

"How so?" said Carrie.

"Oh I know," answered Mary. "*I know* what he means," and despite the blushes which spread over her cheeks, she continued. "I answered 'yes,' the very first time he asked me; and so *I would if I had it to do over again.*"

Mark and Carrie laughed at her earnest manner; and Mark, by a pressure of her hand, conveyed to her the pleasure her frankness gave him.

They had such a long, merry chat, that it was nearly dark when Carrie left.

She had been on the point of going off without the cross; but Mary, who remembered it, went up and brought it down. It was the identical one, and in a perfect condition; but the pretty velvet case was quite ruined by the heavy snow under which it had lain; and which, in thawing had saturated it through and through. The thaw had revealed its hiding place; and there, upon the verge of the water-sluice, Mary had picked it up, sheltered from carriage wheels by the curb-stone of the the pavement.

Carrie's eyes sparkled with the joy she felt, as she bounded into her mother's room.

"It is unnecessary to ask you if you have got your cross, Carrie. I should think there were too many sad recollections connected with it, to give you such unqualified pleasure:" said her mother.

"It isn't the cross, Ma, that makes me so happy. Only guess what else I have found. Guess whose house I have been in."

"I am sure I do not know, my child."

"Well, there's no use in your guessing, for you never would. It is Mary—our seamstress—Mary Paxwell. That's her name. I saw it on the door; and it's just the snuggest, dearest little house that you ever entered: but it won't be long that she will live in it, for she is going to be married; and to some one that you know, too. Now see if you can guess. Oh, you never could, I know you couldn't. It is Mark Houston, and I am going to be bridesmaid;" and Carrie danced around the room like—"like mad," as her mother said. She stopped in the middle of a pirouette, and making a low courtesy to herself in the glass; she continued, "And it is very well, my lady, that you didn't make a fool of yourself, by sending that touching effusion to Mark Houston, that you concocted in your brain. You may thank Mr. Eaton for that. You would have copied it off that very evening, as sure as the world, if Cupid had not laid such violent siege to your before impregnable fortress."

"Carrie!—Is the child crazy! Carrie, what *do* you mean?"

"Are you speaking to me, Ma?"

"Yes, why do you go on so, child? Come and tell me about Mary. Was it she who found the cross?"

"Yes, that's the beauty of it. That is the way I found her out. Precious old thing—it has done some good after all. I mean to give it to Mary for a wedding present—I do indeed. Well, now I'll tell you. She had a dreadful time, with that bad woman that they boarded with; for when the money wasn't sent, she abused them shamefully, got my shawl away from her for the rent, and turned them out of the house; and oh, I can't tell you half. Then, they walked ever so far; and when they were almost frozen, Mr. Houston found them, and provided them with a comfortable home. There, I have told it all now. I don't wonder that Mark Houston fell in love with her—I did myself. You can't think how pretty she is—

dress does make *such* a difference. She looks so much younger now."

Mrs. Merton shared Carrie's pleasure, now that she fully comprehended its cause; and no longer wondered at her elation.

The middle of January, Mr. Eaton returned. Of course, he had been on the track of the wrong ones, and he came back quite disheartened.

This did not prevent him from making love in good earnest; indeed, Carrie's society seemed to be his only solace. Mrs. Merton had expressed a desire that they should become more acquainted with each other, before the day of their marriage should be fixed; and Mr. Eaton seemed quite anxious to give them every opportunity; for not only did he spend his mornings and evenings there, but frequently the entire day.

Consequently, Carrie had very little time to see Mary. She had not told them of her engagement, for she intended to surprise them on the morning of the wedding; having stipulated that if she were bridesmaid, she should have the privilege of providing a groomsman.

Carrie told Mr. Eaton of her romantic friendship for Mary; and he laughed at her enthusiastic description of the 'beautiful seamstress,' as he named her, and begged to see her.

"Indeed you shall not, until the very morning of the wedding; for I am afraid you would desert *me*, if you did. And don't call her a seamstress; I know it does not make her any worse; but she is as much a lady as I am. She told me so herself the last time I was there; and promised to tell me her history when I had time to hear it. I would have stayed then, but I knew you were here."

"Then, you love me the better of the two."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Quite sure; if you preferred coming home to see me, to staying with her and hearing her past history. Woman's curiosity you know. But what I am getting at, is, that if you do love me the better of the two, you would certainly do as much for me as for Mary, would you not?"

"I have not said that I did; but for the sake of the argument I admit it; what then?"

"If Mary asked a favor of you, that was in your power to grant, would you refuse her?"

"No, certainly I would not; and that reminds me, I wanted to consult you about—"

"Oh, never mind; excuse me for interrupting you; but I have no idea of being put off in that way. Well, if you would not deny *her*, can you have the heart to refuse me my request, when you know I am alone in the world?" and stealing his arm tenderly around her waist, he continued: "I wish to be married the same morning—you know it will save so much time if we all go to church together; and positively Carrie I think I should die of envy, if I were to witness a marriage ceremony, while my own was indefinitely put off. No, I could not live through it. I must see that good mother of yours, and throw myself upon her mercy—only tell me, dearest, that I have your consent so to do."

"Why, it would be impossible. I have not begun to get ready."

"That's nothing. It is much the best plan to get married first, and get ready afterwards. You can take your time then."

Carrie made no answer. With her head cast down, she was absorbed in the engrossing occupation of twirling her engagement ring round and round her finger.

"You are not afraid of me, Carrie! Do you not know me well enough yet, to trust me with your happiness?"

"I would have trusted you the first moment I saw you," she answered, looking straight in his face—her fine eyes full of love.

"If so, I shall not wait for any other scruples. I wish you would send your mother to me now; for I am unhappy and impatient until I know my answer." He arose and began to pace the floor. Carrie started to leave the apartment, and he followed her, overtaking her at the door.

"I would not seem inconsiderate of your wishes," he said, "but if you could bring your mind to it, you should never repent it. Are you quite willing if your mother consents?"

"I am, if you so much desire it," she answered; the blood rushing to her brow, as well as her cheeks, lest he might think her unmaidenly.

One instant he held her to his breast; and then, released, she darted away; and sent down her mother as he had desired.

In that long, long conversation that followed, Ralph Eaton came off the victor. All Mrs. Merton's arguments were combatted and answered so satisfactorily, that she could not but consent; and the day of Mary's marriage was decided upon for Carrie's also.

The time soon came round.

The preceding evening, Carrie proposed that Ralph should accompany her to the Paxwell's; as she thought her secret had been kept long enough. He willingly consented.

"I have a cross, that I would like to take Mary as a bridal present," said Carrie, drawing from her pocket, the box in which she had enclosed it. "It is the one that I lost, and she found, you know. Have you any objections?"

"Objections! my stars! what does the child mean?"

Carrie blushed, and looked very much embarrassed. She hesitated and stammered, and finally said, "I mean—that is—you know I shall have no dowry, and I—"

"Dowry! why you have the dowry of a princess. Look here;" and he led her up to the tall pier mirror. "Is this fair casket, and the jewel it contains, no dowry to bring me? All that I have, and all that I am, is no price to pay for it. And if you *must* come down to matter-of-fact arrangements, look around you. Is there not everything here to suit the most fastidious taste? and is it not all yours? Never let me hear you recur to such a subject. I shall be a prouder and a happier man in calling you my wife, than I should be if I owned the Indies."

Carrie gave him a grateful, loving look.

"It is settled, then. I will take it to her," she said. "If you are ready, we will go now."

"Wait a little. Do you remember that morning, when so unintentionally, my confession of love escaped me?—do you remember that I told you then, that I had a secret of years to disclose to you? I want you to listen to it now; for humiliating as it is to recur to it; I should not feel that it was right for me to marry you, while you were a stranger to that episode in my life."

"Indeed I am satisfied not to know it. I would rather that you did not tell me," said Carrie, clinging to his arm as she spoke.

"But I must; to relieve my own conscience," he answered. "I told you I had been a wild boy. It was so. Too willingly led astray by bad company, I contracted debts, which my father refused to pay, and which I considered dishonorable to leave unpaid. I became the dupe and tool of the villain who had given me my first lessons in iniquity; and one day, inflamed by wine, and maddened by his taunts, I forged a heavy check upon my employer. It was discovered, and I fled. Since that day, my hand has neither touched the cards nor the wine cup. Carrie; you *must* love me still; for bitter has

been my punishment. I stand alone in the world— orphaned by that rash act. Can you trust me?"

"Now, as ever," she answered—a smile, beaming with confidence and tenderness, irradiating her lovely face. "And we will have a compact between us," she added. "I am never to allude to my deficiencies 'in worldly gear;' nor you to this unhappy circumstance of your earlier years. Shall it be so?"

"It shall; and I will seal the compact;" he said, playfully, stretching out his arms to imprison her.

She eluded him, and laughing back at him, went out into the hall, and prepared herself for their walk.

Mrs. Paxwell, Mr. Houston, Mary and her mother, were all in the little back parlor, when Carrie and her lover entered. In the awkwardness of their unexpected visit, and the bustle attendant upon the introduction, Ralph's name was lost to the company. Mr. Houston called him Mr. Wheaton, and commented upon the cold weather. Carrie drew her chair up to Mary, and in a half whisper, told of her own plans for the morning, cautioning her to say nothing about it until after she had gone. Mrs. Paxwell and Mrs. Eaton consulted together as to the expediency of lighting one of the burners of the chandelier, the drop-light having a shade on. It was decided that it should be lighted; and Mrs. Paxwell providing herself with a taper, prepared to mount a chair for that purpose.

"Allow me;" said Ralph, who sat near, and despite the protestations of Mrs. Paxwell that she would not trouble him, he insisted upon it and carried his point.

The light flashed down upon his face, and Mrs. Eaton who had been sitting quietly in the corner, started forward and strained her eyes to catch a better glimpse.

At the same moment Ralph observed her face for the first

time. His heart gave one thick, muffled throb, and springing forward, they were clasped in each other's arms.

"My mother!"

"My boy!" were the only ejaculations that escaped them.

The rest looked on in amazement; only Mary, who flung her arms around Carrie, saying, "Have *you* done this? have you brought my brother back to us again?"

"I did not know it, if I did. I am sure I don't know how. Isn't your last name Paxwell?" said Carrie, confusedly. "I am sure, I saw it on the door."

But Mary did not answer. She was awaiting too impatiently, the moment when her mother should release Ralph.

Mrs. Eaton did not seem at all disposed so to do. She clung to him, weeping and sobbing as if she had been going to lose him for ever, instead of having just recovered him.

Mary was not going to be put off any longer, and laying her hand on his shoulder, said,

"Dear Ralph, haven't you a word for your sister?"

One arm of each, surrounded her; and Ralph, whose eyes were wet with tears, gave her a fond, brotherly greeting.

They did not separate early that night. There was too much to be talked over, too many things to be explained. A servant was despatched to inform Mrs. Merton of the news, that she might not be alarmed at their protracted absence. After everything had been discussed; and Mary had kissed Carrie innumerable times, calling her 'sister,' at almost every breath; after the diamond cross had been given, and its history recounted, they fell to talking of how strangely the whole chain of events had been interwoven—link after link.

"I only wish," said Carrie, "that that dear little Emmie Hardy would turn out a fairy, and change her mother into a toad. Wouldn't that be delightful? I would be quite satisfied then."

"Well, I must say that your wishes coincide with mine, irrational as they are," answered Mark Houston. "I do not think I am usually revengeful; but I would like to see that woman begging for her bread. It would be but a righteous retribution."

"I don't wish to," said Mary. "The worst wish that I have for her, is that I could get that dear little Emmie away. She'll kill her, some time, poor little thing!"

"Didn't you tell me that your sister's first name was Anna?" interrupted Carrie, looking up in Ralph's face.

"Yes, I did. How came you to change your name? It has sounded so oddly to hear you called Mary the whole evening."

"Why, I will tell you, Ralph," said his mother. "You know she was named Mary Anna; but as my name was Mary, I preferred that she should be called Anna. When we became reduced so low as to take a room of that Mrs. Hardy, I took my maiden name, Langford, and called Anna by her first name."

"That was not wise, mother. I might have missed you entirely. That accounts now for my losing your track so suddenly. I traced you last to a boarding-house, where I ascertained that you were sewing for the depository, and Anna teaching school."

"Please call me Mary. It is mother's name, and I like it better. And as for its not being wise, Ralph, to change our names, I suppose it was not very; but if you had seen what a miserable old court we had to go into, you would have known that we would not have wished to have published who we were. And as for you, we had dug your grave, and buried you so many times, that we never dreamed of a resurrection."

Ralph took his watch out. It was twelve o'clock.

"It is midnight," he said, "and after the approved manner of ghosts, from time immemorial, I must vanish. Come, little wife, bundle on your things. Don't blush so; I am only anticipating a few hours hence."

Mrs. Eaton could hardly let Ralph go; but the parting all around was finally accomplished.

That evening's paper contained the following announcement:

"On the 1st instant, at St. Peter's Church, by the Rev. Francis Blank, Mark Houston, Esq., to Mary Anna Eaton, only daughter of the late Ralph Eaton.

"At the same place and time, Ralph Eaton, Jr., to Caroline Merton, only child of the late Arthur Merton, Esq."

It was wonderful how the memories of the readers of that paper were refreshed that night.

Mrs. Merton suddenly found that her 'dear five hundred friends' had only been prevented from calling by the fear of intruding upon her grief: but they found it impossible not to congratulate her upon her daughter's brilliant marriage; for the fame of Ralph Eaton's California fortune had spread far and wide.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. MARK HOUSTON was standing at her parlor window. Thick and fast the snow was falling: not in large, soft flakes, but sifting down in minute, glittering grains. The wind drifted it here and there; now and then blowing it in clouds in the faces of the few pedestrians, whom business or extreme want had driven abroad.

A woman struggling along upon the opposite side, attracted Mary's attention. Up and down the marble steps, ringing bell after bell; and each time the door slammed in her face before she had opportunity to make her appeal. Too fresh in Mary's heart was the remembrance of her own destitution, to allow her to look on unmoved. She was on the point of raising the window, to beckon her across, when, attracted by the superior elegance of the house, the woman stopped, and stood intently looking up at the windows, where, behind the polished plate glass, fell hangings of wondrous beauty.

The street was almost blockaded by the snow, yet the woman made her way over; the gusts of wind blowing aside her cloak, and revealing her scanty habiliments. The deep black hood she wore almost concealed her face; yet Mary saw enough to send the blood to hers in a torrent. She did not hasten to the door, as it had been her first impulse to do; but, with her hands tightly pressed over heart, as if she would still its wild throbbings, she took her station by a door that was ajar, which opened into the broad hall, and listened eagerly.

She heard the cook grumbling along, because the servant was out, whose office it was to wait upon the door. Next she heard a voice, so humble in its tone, that she scarcely identified it as that of the person whom she had imagined it to be.

"Don't shut the door in my face; it's only a little I'd trouble you for; just the cold victuals you'd throw in the swill would save me from starving; and mebbe some day you'd get your reward in a husband that would be able to make a living for you."

"O bother take you! I'm able to keep myself, thank God, and I don't want no man around me to pester me. Come in out of the snow a bit. I think I can scrape up a little some-

thing. Here, stamp your feet, and let me brush the snow off your cloak."

"God bless you and reward you. Oh dear!" with a long sigh, "you don't know anything about hard times in this house."

"I should think not; we have just the easiest times in the world; but they do say that the poor people find it desperate hard to keep body and soul together this winter. I never used to think nothing of sending the beggars away; but Mrs. Houston won't let me, now. There, that'll do; you can come along."

Mary opened wider the door. Her voice was a little low and tremulous, as she said,

"My good woman, you can come in here a moment. I want to ask a little about your family, and see if you are really deserving assistance."

"Go in," said the cook. "That's Mrs. Houston that wants to see you."

The woman entered, and looked around the splendid suite of rooms, dazzled, and bewildered, and then dropped her eyes. She had never been in such apartments before.

"Are you a widow?" said Mary, affecting to busy herself with her pencil and tablet.

The woman drew a long sigh.

"No ma'am: but I'm worse off than if I was a widder. My husband was taken with the delirious tremblings—doctor calls it—hard onto two months ago; and it's been nothing but trouble, trouble ever since. My oldest daughter was a getting first-rate wages in the factory, but the times got so hard they had to stop off some of the looms, and so she lost her place. And then ma'am, to make it worse, my two boys came home onto me, that had been agetting their board—two fine boys, ma'am, hearty and strong and willing to work; but

they've walked from morning 'till night, and can't get none. My youngest child never was of no account—she was always a hindrance to me; but I didn't feel it so much until now—with not a cent coming in. Indeed ma'am, the times is very hard, or I shouldn't be here a begging. It's what I never expected to come to." She put her apron up to her face, apparently overcome by her emotion. Mary looked up and drew a long breath. It was such a relief to know that the woman's eyes were not upon her.

"But you have a comfortable house to live in, I suppose."

"As comfortable as we can make it ma'am, with only cinders and what little stuff the boys can get, to burn; but there's no knowing how long we shall have it, for we are back in our rent, and the landlord's been after it twice. If he should turn us out, I don't know where on earth we'd go to."

Mary thought that the woman must hear her heart beat—it seemed to her so audible, but she braced herself up to say,

"The Alms-house, you know."

"O mercy, no ma'am. I'd die in the street first. You don't know all that goes on there. No! no! I'd rather bury all my children, than live to see one of them in the Alms-house," she answered, looking Mary straight in the face for the first time. She started back—pale and wild for a moment: then glancing around the room, and re-assuring herself by the elegant surroundings, she said,

"Be you Mrs. Houston, ma'am?"

"I am:" answered Mary, coldly and haughtily.

"Well, ma'am, I thought you were; but you're the very picture of a—lady I used to know; only you're plumper and rosier, and a good bit younger. Poor soul! I could sleep better of nights if I only knew what had become of them:" and the woman heaved a sigh that was seemingly heartfelt.

"Them," said Mary, and her voice had grown soft and natu-

ral again,—“there were two that looked like me, were there? but never mind them now. Come out in the kitchen, and we will see what cook has found for you. What shall I call you?”

“Jane Hardy, that’s my name, ma’am: and I ain’t no beggar. If you had some sewing to give out, my daughter could do it for you. My eyes have failed me wonderful, since my troubles came on; and I can’t do much myself, but she’s pretty handy with her needle. I could wash, and such like.”

“Well, we will see what can be done,” answered Mary cheerfully: and bustling about, she gathered together packages and provisions, sufficient to fill Mrs. Hardy’s large basket; which had contained before, only a few cold, unpeeled potatoes, scattered over the bottom.

Then, drawing out her purse, she said,

“How much rent are you owing, Jane?”

“Oh ma’am, you’ve done too much for me already. Indeed I didn’t come to beg for money. I couldn’t take it unless you’d have some work for me;” and Mrs. Hardy, really touched, sobbed outright.

Mary slipped an eagle into her hand.

She tried to answer, but her sobs prevented her utterance. The tears she shed were a sweeter offering to Mary, than any protestations of thankfulness could have been; for they were proofs that the hard times had softened Jane Hardy’s heart.

“To-morrow,” said Mary, “if you will bring Emmie with you, I will show her to Mr. Houston, and if he likes, we will keep her and do well by her.”

Jane dropped on her knees.

“Oh, Miss Mary,” she sobbed, “*I know it’s you now—I know it is.* If you’d stuck a knife into me, it wouldn’t have hurt me half as bad as your kindness does. That man that the Merton’s sent was right, when he said I was a wretch.

Many times I’ve thought of it. I was one—God forgive me.”

“And God will forgive you, Mrs. Hardy, if you sincerely desire his forgiveness. Do not kneel to me. I forgave you, the first instant that I found you had repented; and God is more ready to forgive, than ever mortal man can be.”

Jane Hardy went out of that house, even more humble than when she entered it. The lesson that she learned that day, was one that she could never forget.

After she had gone, Mary went to the library, where her husband and her mother were sitting.

“Mark,” she said, her eyes beaming with a light which he might have known was of no unholy spirit. “Mark, you have had your wish. Mrs. Hardy has just been here begging bread.”

He gave his book a throw.

“Capital!” he said. “I, am glad of it. Did she see you?”

“Yes.”

“And know you?”

“I think not at first; but I betrayed myself, in my interest for that protégé of mine, that I told you about. She had suspected me though; only my cheeks were so much fuller, and not so pale, that it puzzled her I suppose.”

“Well, you didn’t give her a cent, of course.”

“Why, Mark! *of course I did.* She was in the greatest distress. Every thing seems to have gone wrong with her, since—since—”

“Since she turned you out into the street. It serves her right. And you gave her something. I would have seen her starve first.”

“Oh no, Mark! you know you wouldn’t!”

“I know I would—as sure as my name is Mark Houston. What did you give her?”

"Some of the marketing that came home this morning, and some tea and sugar, and rice, and—and ten dollars."

"Ten dollars!" exclaimed Mrs. Eaton. "Ten dollars! why, Mary, that's dreadful."

Mark took up a newspaper, and read.

"Messrs. Jones & Smith have suspended. Their liabilities are about a million, while their assets are not over five hundred thousand.

'Stocks continue heavy, and money in pressing demand.'

"No wonder that men are failing for large amounts every day. It is their wives that ruin them—I suppose my turn will come next, now that I have such an extravagant one."

Mary could not see his face for the newspaper: but she knew his fondness for teasing; and going up to him, she laid one hand on his shoulder and looking in his face, said,

"You are not in earnest, Mark, are you? Ten dollars is a great deal for me to give away, I know: but she was in *such* distress. You are not angry with me, dear Mark, are you?"

"Angry! no, bless your bright face, I love you all the better for it; but I couldn't have done it. I would sooner have burned ten times ten. Don't give me up, though, if I can't forgive my enemies quite as readily as you do. Perhaps I shall improve with your example before me. Ah, Mary, they call these hard times, and so they are: but to me, it is the happiest time that my life has ever known: but this must not make me forget those to whom the hard times have brought suffering and privation. That protégé of yours—don't you want to bring her home, and try to make something out of her?"

"Oh, Mark, dear Mark! it is the very thing I wanted to ask. Thank you, thank you a thousand times."

Mrs. Eaton opposed the plan, but the majority decided against her; and in due course of time, little Emmie became

an inmate of Mr. Houston's mansion;—a very heaven to her; and so her dream was accomplished.

Mark Houston, despite his apparently unforgiving disposition, did not let the Hardy's suffer. He found situations for the boys; and provided for the family every thing which they were unable to procure, for the satisfying of their most pressing wants.

Mrs. Ralph Eaton, Jr., was quite as well satisfied with the *denouement*, as if her own suggestion had been followed out; for Mary's wand had proved even more effectual than a Cinderella's.

THE BECKERTONS;

A Tale for Christmas.

CHAPTER I.

MR. AND MRS. BECKERTON lived in a snug house in Vine street.

A very snug house. A three-story brick, twenty-one feet front, with a fine yard in the rear, where their younger children delighted to romp and play throughout the livelong summer mornings.

But Mrs. Beckerton was not satisfied. The house had no back-buildings, the kitchen was so dark and dismal, there were no modern conveniences, and last, but not least, the street was by no means a fashionable one.

Unfortunately, her husband was perfectly satisfied with their present location; and his wife was at a loss what course to pursue to weaken his attachment to the house, and thereby lessen the opposition that she was sure of meeting whenever she should broach the subject of removal.

She waited in vain for an opportunity, and finally, in sheer

desperation, she announced her determination of a change to her husband in the following manner:

"Mr. Beckerton, I am tired and sick of housekeeping in this old barrack of a house. It's enough to wear one out to keep this old wood decent. I've made up my mind to go to boarding."

Mr. Beckerton looked up from his paper with a stare of amazement, but he said nothing. His wife continued:

"Here's our dining-room way down in the front basement, and not another place in the house for a sitting-room; and if you happen to think of any thing you want, up you have to go two pair of stairs, and then down again. I declare to gracious, my back's almost broken!"

"I think if it had been going to break, it would have broken before this," answered Mr. Beckerton, dryly.

"That is the way with you men, you have no sympathy. A woman may slave herself to death in your service, and it's all the same to you; before the grass is green upon her grave you are married again, and that's the way the world goes."

"I wonder that it should be so easy to get wives, if they are so abused and unappreciated," answered Mr. Beckerton, in the same dry tone.

"Well, I'm sure I don't want to quarrel this morning, but I do want to enjoy life a little; and that's what the mistress of this house will never be able to do. I suppose I ought not to expect it. I suppose I ought to be content, now that I have raised a large family. The oldest are capable of taking care of the youngest, if I should be taken away; and so I suppose I shouldn't be missed any. But it does seem hard, it does indeed. There's the Maxwells and the Pember-ton and the Prices—all of them used to live in this same row, and now one of them has a house in Spruce street, and the other two live elegantly out Walnut street. I am sure

we are as able as they, to have things handy and convenient."

"Why don't you be honest, Rachel, and speak your mind out at once? You know, in *your* dictionary, 'handy' and 'convenient' mean *stylish* and *fashionable*."

"Now, Mr. Beckerton! I haven't the least wish to be fashionable. That's the way you are always doing me injustice. I wouldn't have nothing to do with fashionable people; no, I guess I wouldn't; I despise them."

"Rachel, did you ever read Æsop's fables?"

"No, my dear, what made you think of that?"

"Oh, never mind, I'll buy you a copy one of these days, to remember me by when I'm dead and gone, and ain't missed any, and you are looking out for another husband, and ——"

"Mr. Beckerton, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You ought to have more respect for my feelings than to talk in this way. Another husband, indeed! I've had enough of one, I reckon; I shouldn't want another in a hurry."

"I sincerely hope, Rachel, you will not soon have an opportunity of testing the truth of what you say. I am not anxious to resign my claim upon you to another, although I have heard it pretty broadly insinuated that I was henpecked."

"Henpecked! Well, I never! Mr. Beckerton, you are the most aggravating person that I ever heard talk. Henpecked! Well, if that doesn't beat all, when everybody knows that you have your will and way about every earthly thing. But I will have my way once; I've a good right to it; and now I say, in plain terms, I am not going to live in this house any longer."

"I am sorry to hear that," said Mr. Beckerton, as he arose, and quietly lit his cigar with a taper, "very sorry to hear that, (puff;) I hope you will come and see me once in awhile,

(puff;) I shall miss you, that's a fact, (puff;) I shall have quiet times; terribly dull, I'm afraid."

The cigar was now fairly lighted, and without waiting for an answer, he took his departure.

His wife sat down and cried, and she felt better after it.

She was not discouraged; oh! no, not she. She had examples in the past of what her perseverance had accomplished, to reassure her.

There was a house up Arch street to let—not exactly the street she would have chosen, but she considered it a beautiful medium between the one she lived in and the more fashionable part of the city. She had seen the house only the day before, and she had made up her mind to have it.

Mr. Beckerton did not come home to dinner that day. He was afraid of a scene—not but that he felt able to sustain his part, but being naturally of a quiet disposition, and remembering that "discretion was the better part of valor," he preferred avoiding danger to rushing into it.

At supper-time, he found the tea-table temptingly arrayed with his favorite dishes. He was delighted at finding his wife in such a good humor. Poor man! although recalling so distinctly, in the morning, the fable of 'The fox and the grapes,' the equally instructive one of 'The spider and the fly' entirely escaped his memory.

The preserves were sweet, but Mrs. Beckerton's honeyed speeches were sweeter. The broiled steak was done to a turn; so was Mr. Beckerton's heart *done for* before the evening was over. The coffee escaped rich and odorous from the steaming urn; so did his tender words from the depths of his gently-agitated affections. The hot cakes were luscious; so were the fond kisses from Mrs. Beckerton's ripe lips, as, supper over, she drew out the large rocking-chair, and after helping her liege lord (?) on with his double gown and slip-

pers, she sat upon one knee, and made herself as agreeable as all married ladies can to their husbands when they choose.

The next day the house in Arch street was rented.

CHAPTER II.

AND now Mrs. Beckerton was in her glory. To do her justice, she was a most excellent housekeeper, and not a spot escaped her vigilant eye, either on the woodwork, window glass, or ceilings of their residence that was to be.

At length, painters, paper-hangers, house-cleaners, and the "gentlemen of the white-washing profession" were through. Every thing, to use her own expression, was in "apple-pie order" for their removal. But a new source of worryment was discovered. The Brussels carpet, which she had purchased but the year before, was found, upon measurement, to be totally unfit for their new parlor. She stood looking upon it with a most forlorn countenance, as it lay spread out, with the bare white wood of the floor extending several feet beyond it in every direction, and the ugly slashes yawning open, which in their old house had fitted so snugly around the folding-doors.

"I declare! it's enough to make one sick. What shall we do, Mr. Beckerton?"

"Buy a new one, I suppose. I told you that the difference in the rent would be but a small item in the expense of moving," answered Mr. Beckerton, with a calmness that encouraged his wife to suggest other improvements.

"Well, after all, it won't be any loss, for you know we were going to get new carpets for the library, and the sitting-room, and I can match this, and with a few yards more make

it answer for both. I do wish that, while we are moving, you felt able to get new furniture for the parlor. You know Lydia is to come home from boarding-school next month, and now that she is old enough to go into company, I should like her to have things so that she wouldn't be ashamed of them. For my own part, I don't care a straw; but you know these sofas and chairs are dreadfully old-fashioned, and nobody sees a pier-table now-a-days, excepting in second-hand stores. I would like, for her sake, to have things a little less shabby."

Mr. Beckerton's eyes twinkled mischievously.

"I had been thinking, Rachel, that possibly *you* would like to have a little different furniture, and had made up my mind to let you purchase the best that was to be found, while you were about it. Had it not been for your management and economy, things would have gone very differently in this household, and I felt quite willing to indulge you; but if *my wife* don't care a straw about it, I am not going to incur so heavy an expense for the sake of a *child* that has but just got her pantalettes off;" and Mr. Beckerton, turning his back to his wife, walked to the window to hide the roguish smile on his face.

Mrs. Beckerton had long ago found out her husband's fondness for teasing, so his present speech had no effect upon her; and really appreciating his kindness, she followed him to the window, where she quite succeeded in convincing him that the gratification she should experience in having new furniture, would proceed from the most unselfish motives in the world, inasmuch as her husband and children were all she lived for, and to see them happy was all that she desired.

Thus easily did Mrs. Beckerton glide from hair-cloth and mahogany into brocatelle and rosewood, and her husband, who was as anxious as herself to have things correspond, jocosely told her that, as he had made up his mind to be ruined, she

might as well get mirrors and curtains; for the parlor, being so large, did not look furnished without them. This, however, Mrs. Beckerton, being really economical, objected to, for the sum total of the bills already gathered together quite alarmed her; and before she consented, Mr. Beckerton was obliged to communicate to her a portion of the confidence he had hitherto withheld. It was done in this way. They were fairly settled in their new home, the library of which was such a cozy apartment, that Mrs. Beckerton often preferred to sit there with her work, while her husband smoked his cigar.

No one would have suspected this quiet business man of possessing a taste for literature; but his book-cases were not only well stocked with the works of the standard writers of his own language, but they exhibited an imposing array of volumes in German, Italian, and French, with all of which he was completely conversant.

Mr. Beckerton, leaning his head back against the morocco-cushioned arm-chair in which he sat, looked the very picture of contentment, as he watched the smoke wreaths curling up to the ceiling. Pausing a moment, after knocking the ashes from his cigar, he said:

"So you won't get the mirrors or the curtains; you think them a useless extravagance?"

"And so they are," answered Mrs. Beckerton, nodding her head emphatically. "I don't see what under the sun has got into you to think of such things. I never knew you before to propose buying any thing, excepting marketing for the family, and books for yourself and the children. Yes, I remember one thing; but that was a long time ago," and Mrs. Beckerton glanced fondly down upon an old-fashioned brooch that she wore.

"Well, my dear, supposing I was to tell you that, owing in

part to some successful speculations, but still more to steady attention to business and an economical wife, I have been able to"—he paused, looked rather roguishly at his wife, who was bending over her sewing, and continued—"to lay up a little something."

"To lay up a little something!" repeated Mrs. Beckerton, rather sharply; "and now, I suppose, you are going to spend that *little something*. I can tell you what, Mr. Beckerton, if you had had some wives, they would have spent it for you long ago."

"I know it; I know it, my dear. You have been an excellent wife. I have no fault to find with you. Indeed, I do not think we should have been any happier, even had our tastes been more congenial; although I have sometimes wished that you could forget your household duties long enough to listen to passages from my favorite authors, that struck me as being particularly beautiful or forcible."

"You may thank your stars, Charles Beckerton, that my fancies did not lead me that way. Just look at Mrs. Spencer. There's a congenial spirit for you! I declare, I never see her poor husband that my fingers don't itch to sew the buttons on his shirt for him. And the children—it's enough to make anybody's heart ache to look at them. Well, if anybody wants literary wives, they are welcome to them, or literary husbands either, as to the matter of that."

"Now, Rachel!"

"Well, I can't help being a little provoked. You tried your best to spoil me when we were first married, teaching me German and such fandango. It's a mercy I didn't take to it. My jaws used to ache for half an hour after pronouncing those Dutch words. Heaven knows, it wasn't long before I had my hands full, and then there was no time to waste that way."

Mr. Beckerton had finished his cigar. He got up, brushed carefully from his coat a few specks of ashes that had fallen upon it, re-arranged his neck-tie in front of the mantle-glass, and then, with his hands folded complacently behind him, walked up and down the length of the library.

"Rachel," he said, at length, "how much do you suppose I am worth?"

"I'm sure, how should I know? You never tell me any thing about your business, and I have enough to think about without bothering my head about it. Just look here at Harry's pantaloons," and she held up a pair over which she had been busy the last hour. "Did you ever see anything so thin? That boy is too trying for any thing; he is always on his knees playing marbles."

"Well, never mind Harry now. Do you suppose I have cleared fifty thousand dollars since I have been in business?"

Mrs. Beckerton dropped the pantaloons which she was holding up to the light.

"Fifty thousand dollars! No, indeed! Let me see, the interest of that is how much?"

"Three thousand."

"Well, we never spend over fifteen hundred, and you are always talking about keeping within our income."

"Yes, but it does not necessarily follow that a man must spend his whole income. If we had done so, Rachel, I should have been worth less than a hundred thousand, instead of considerably over it, as I am now."

At this announcement, Mrs. Beckerton looked up in blank amazement—the pantaloons fell from her hands to the floor, and her face grew crimson.

"I don't believe a word of it," she said; "you couldn't have kept it secret from me so long, and if you could, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Mr. Beckerton smiled, walked around to the back of her chair, and holding her head between both of his hands, tried to kiss her into a better humor; but she was not to be thus easily mollified. She struggled until she had disengaged herself, and then, picking up pantaloons and sewing implements, she made for the door, where she paused long enough to say:

"You need have no fears now but that I'll get the curtains and mirrors; yes, and every earthly thing I want. Over a hundred thousand dollars! And I slaving all the time at home. A great fool I was for doing it."

"Stop a moment, Rachel; I wish you to listen to me," said Mr. Beckerton. "It was from the best motives that I kept this knowledge to myself. Expenses always increase instead of lessening; and had you known how rapidly we were accumulating, it would have been but natural that your wants would have increased in proportion. I can assure you, my dear, that I have been as much a slave to business as you have been to your domestic concerns, for I was anxious to put ourselves beyond the reach of want before old age comes upon us. Now, come back, like the good wife you have always been, and let us talk about the curtains and the mirrors. You will want them before Lydia comes home; and let me tell you now, that whatever else you need, you are perfectly welcome to get, for I know economy has become a habit with you, and I have no fears of your being led into any extravagancies beyond our means. I have made money, and you have saved it, and we will both enjoy it now—will we not?"

Mrs. Beckerton was appeased. She suffered her husband to draw her back into the room; and they passed the remainder of the evening in devising plans for the future, both for the children and for themselves.

And so it came to pass, that when Lydia came home from boarding-school, she found the parlor glistening with mantel

and pier mirrors, and the plate-glass windows more than half concealed by heavy satin draperies and embroideries of lace as white as the snow-flakes she had left upon the meadows of the New England village, where for the last six months she had been at school.

CHAPTER III.

MR. AND MRS. BECKERTON'S olive plants deserve more notice than they have yet received at our hands.

Lydia, the eldest, or Lillie, as she preferred to be called since her return from boarding-school, was in her sixteenth year, very pretty and very romantic. She inherited all her mother's firmness, together with a fair proportion of her father's literary tastes. There was not quite two years difference in the age of herself and her brother Edward, of whom she was very fond, notwithstanding there was so little sympathy in their pursuits. Edward had an utter abhorrence of books, and copied his sister's compositions regularly every week, by which he would have received great credit, had he not, when praised for his ability, confessed the truth regarding them. The twins, Evelina and Euphemia, (or Eva and Effie, as they were called,) were twelve years old, slender, delicate girls. Next came Harry—the life of the household—a reckless, boisterous boy of eight, full of fun and mischief as he could be, annoying every one with his tricks, and yet making up for all by his frank and affectionate ways. And last, was Rosalinda—darling little Rosa, with her long brown curls clustering around as winsome a face as ever artist copied. She was the sunbeam that filled with brightness every room where was heard the patter of her little feet,

or her silvery, ringing laugh. Rosa was her father's pet; she it was who every night hurried to the door at the sound of the key turning in the deadlatch, to get the "first kiss;" and afterwards what strenuous efforts she made, with her chubby, dimpled hands, to pull down his dressing-gown, and wheel in front of the glowing grate his ponderous arm-chair. When, with her father's assistance, this was accomplished, and he was seated therein, a bachelor would have envied the fond pride with which he lifted his darling to his arms, pressing close to his broad breast her flushed face, with its disordered curls streaming around it, and rewarding her exertions with some mythological tale, which, by ingenious interpolations, he made as fascinating as any fairy lore.

Mrs. Beckerton professed to have no favorite; but it was plain to be seen that Lillie was the one in which she took the most pride. Lillie's tastes were always consulted; Lillie's wishes carried out; and, in justice to the young lady, be it said, she repaid her mother's fondness with as devoted an affection as the most exacting of mothers could have desired.

Of her father Lillie was very proud, and that was not to be wondered at. Having married when barely twenty-one, he was now in the prime of life, and a remarkably fine-looking man. She would sit by the hour listening to the easy flow of his language, as he conversed with his friends, gliding from one subject to another, equally at home with all. It was evident, by the glow of admiration which lit up Lillie's face at such times, that she considered her father a Burke in eloquence, a Humboldt in science, and a Rothschild in financiering matters. Such ambitious dreams did Lillie have with regard to her family, that it would not have surprised her in the least to have been awakened some morning with the intelligence that her father had been elected President of the United States. But while his daughter saw so much in

him to reverence and admire, the generality of those by whom he was surrounded looked upon him as a plodding, painstaking man, whose whole time and attention were absorbed by his business. It was his pleasure that he should be so considered; and very seldom did he reveal to any one such glimpses of his inner life as to create a surmise that he might be a man of more than ordinary genius.

Most certainly, his wife had not been the one to discover it, and even if she had, she would have been none the happier.

One night the family were gathered around the large centre-table in the sitting-room, with the exception of Rosa, who was asleep in the crib, and Mr. Beckerton, who was always absent on Tuesday evenings, it being Academy night. Mr. Beckerton never allowed any thing but sickness to prevent his attendance on the meetings of the Academy of Natural Sciences, of which he had been a member for many years. Mrs. Beckerton had once been inside the walls of this building; but she was so wearied then by her husband's scientific explanations, that he was never able to entice her there again. It was evident by her remarks—such as ‘she should think they might let the dead rest in peace’—that she considered them no better than a body of resurrectionists; and when Edward drew her away from the cases devoted to craniology, to show her some beautiful birds, she grew highly indignant that they ‘could not let even the poor birds alone to die a natural death, but, like a parcel of wicked schoolboys, must kill them for their own amusement, and waste their time in stuffing them up, with their eyes wide open, and standing so stiff and straight, that it made her tired to look at them.’ Very matter of fact was Mrs. Beckerton—not at all appreciating efforts for the advancement of science—but a very devoted wife and mother, nevertheless.

The evening we were speaking of, Mrs. Beckerton, as eco-

nomical as ever, despite her threat, was busied with her basket of mending. Lillie was stitching a fine plaited piece of linen, that looked like a shirt-bosom. Edward was sketching profiles on a sheet of paper, when he ought to have been writing his French translations. The twins were whispering over some very private piece of work, portions of which they kept covered with their aprons. Harry lay sprawled out upon the carpet, looking up at the ceiling, evidently lost in a reverie, inasmuch as he was quiet for a few moments. Beside him lay his skates, which he had been newly rigging up, and some fishing-tackle, that he had got out in expectation of warmer weather. Mrs. Beckerton looked anxiously over her shoulder to see what kept Master Harry so still, fearing he might be in some mischief.

“What are you thinking about, Harry?” she said.

“Nothing,” was Harry's first answer. “Yes I was, too,” he added presently. “Lyddy, somebody's fallen in love with you.”

“Ma,” said Lillie, “I wish you would make Harry call me something else. It's too bad—he calls me Lyd and Lyddy right before every one.”

“Harry, what good does it do you to tease your sister so? Why don't you call her Lillie? You know she would rather be called so,” said his mother.

“Yes, but it aint her name though; and if Lyddy was a good enough name for grand-mother, I guess it's good enough for her. I'm sure I wouldn't care what you call me, so you didn't call me too late for dinner, as Uncle Joe says.”

There was a pause, during which Lillie's thread knotted so badly, that she made slow progress with her stitching. She was excessively anxious to know who it was that Harry spoke of, but she would have died sooner than ask the question.

"I say, Daffydowndilly, somebody's fallen in love with you," broke in Harry, at length.

Finding that Lillie maintained a dignified silence, he continued—

"Somebody that's coming to-morrow morning to look at my fishing tackle, and bring me some new flies. You needn't laugh, Ned:—of course he's coming to look at my fishing-tackle; and you don't know him either—he's bigger than you are."

"What nonsense are you talking about Harry?" said his mother.

"It isn't nonsense, it's the truth. Now, I'll just tell you all about it," and Harry seated himself in a chair beside the table, feeling very large in the possession of a secret which he could not keep to himself any longer. "I was up in Jim Grayson's yard, playing marbles, and his brother Alfred asked me what my biggest sister's name was.

At this juncture, the hitherto dignified Lillie began to fidget.

"What do you think I told him, Daffy?"

"Why I know what you told him—you told him Lyddy of course."

"I didn't tell him any such thing. I told him it was Lillie, and he said it was a pretty name, but not half so pretty as you were. He's a bird, mind I tell you. He went on talking about my skates, and my sled, and my fishing-tackle, and some flies he had been getting ready, and he said he'd bring me in some. I guess he thought I was green; he can come here if he wants to—I'll be very glad of his flies—but if he tries to marry you, I'll kick him out of the house, so I will, for I am going to marry you myself, just as soon as I am old enough."

The twins, who had dropped their work, in order to pay undivided attention to the story, now laughed merrily.

Mrs. Beckerton smiled gravely.

"Look at Lil," shouted Ned: "see how she's blushing up to the very roots of her hair, at her prospective marriage with Alfred Grayson."

"It is no such a thing," answered Lillie, indignantly. "A boy of sixteen, who wears roundabouts! When I get married, it will be to no stripling, I can assure you. I would rather marry a man as old as Pa."

Meantime, Harry, unnoticed, had slipped down underneath the table, and adroitly abstracting from the lap of the twins their work, danced around the room, holding up to view a doll's dress in one hand and a doll in the other.

"O what a shame!" cried Effie.

"I don't care—I think you are real mean," said Eva, sulkily, "to go and spoil all our fun."

"Playing with dolls!" exclaimed their mother—who would have thought it of such big girls."

"Oh," said Eva, "it aint—"

"Hush!" whispered Effie, reaching under the table to pull Eva's dress, "don't let on, and they needn't know anything about it." Then, turning to her mother, she said, "You can take your choice with us, ma—dolls or beaux; you know when you are done with one you begin with the other."

Mrs. Beckerton did not reply. She was deeply absorbed in her work at that particular moment.

The twins were preparing the doll for a Christmas present for Rosa, and that no hints might be given to her, they concluded to keep their own secret. Thanks to Effie's ready wit, it was not mistrusted, and they went joyfully on with their labor of love.

The next morning Harry waited till school-time, and then

reluctantly took his departure, for no Alfred Grayson made his appearance, nor were the promised flies forthcoming.

The young gentleman had proposed the visit in perfect good faith, but on sober reflection, it struck him as being rather an absurd way of introducing himself, and therefore he concluded to wait until he could make the acquaintance of the elder brother, and thus obtain an interview under more favorable auspices. He was not long in accomplishing his wishes, and before Christmas, he became a constant visitor at the Beckertons'.

The merry Christmas!—which all were looking forward to with so many joyful anticipations. Each member of the family was preparing some pleasant surprise for another. Lillie and Edward kept the doors of their rooms locked, and no one could discover what they were about; but wherever the twins went, so many bits of pasteboard were dropped, and so many scraps of silk fluttered after them, that it was easy to guess that pin-cushions and needle-books took up their time and attention.

Harry was excessively private over some wooden chains and peach-stone baskets that he was carving for Rosa; and she, the darling, had coaxed Lillie into teaching her to embroider on two book-markers, the sentences, "For my dear Papa," and "For my dear Mamma."

Mr. and Mrs. Beckerton brought home mysterious shaped bundles, that were packed away in a closet, the key of which was always taken out; and there Rosa daily clambered up to look through the key-hole, in her vain attempts to discover something.

There were a few days in which Mrs. Beckerton was scarcely ever in the house, excepting at her meals, during which time she visited nearly every second-hand book store and book stall in the city. She had heard her husband express to a friend

his desire to obtain some volumes that were now out of print; and his friend's reply, that he had found books second-hand when there was not a copy to be had in the city, encouraged her to persevere in looking for them. Her efforts were rewarded with success, and she returned home with a beaming countenance, the volumes under her cloak, regardless of the rain in which she had been caught out, although she was drenched to the skin. She locked the books away, changed her wet clothing for dry, and so delighted was she with her bargain, that all the evening her face was radiant with smiles, notwithstanding that Harry upset the cream-cup on the spotless table-cloth—a misfortune which, under ordinary circumstances would have entirely destroyed her equanimity. Her husband was so charmed with her appearance, that he several times left his chair to bestow some affectionate caress upon her, and as the evening drew near a close, they grew quite merry, in recalling incidents of their days of courtship, while Lillie and Edward enjoyed the reminiscences almost as much as themselves.

"I guess ma must have been beautiful when she was young," said Edward to Lillie, in a low tone, leaning around the table as he spoke.

"I think she's beautiful now," answered Lillie, "just look at her cheeks and lips; they're as red as roses, and how soft and bright her eyes are. Dear ma! I never saw her look better.

Mr. Beckerton divined the subject of this conversation from the direction of their eyes, and he laughingly said—

"Your mother is growing young, isn't she, children? You'll be taken for her sister one of these days, Lillie."

"Oh, nonsense," laughed Mrs. Beckerton; "I thought by this time you had forgotten how to flatter. Though, truly, there is nothing like happiness to make one feel young. I

think I have hurried and worried along through life too much; but now that Lillie is old enough to take some care off from me, I am going to do differently."

"What can Lillie do with her boarding-school education? Not much to help you, I warrant," said Mr. Beckerton, jocosely.

"Indeed I can, pa?" replied Lillie. "Wait until you see what I have for your Christmas present!"

The mother and daughter exchanged fond and meaning glances.

"This is a great Christmas," said Mr. Beckerton; "I haven't anticipated one half as much since I was a child. Of course, all I do will be for the youngsters; mother don't want any thing. She lives for you, children, and will be quite satisfied if you all get your stockings full," and he looked roguishly up into the soft brown eyes that were bent tenderly upon him.

"No, I am sure I don't want any thing. What more could I ask for? I have every thing I could want: a really beautiful home—" and she glanced round the parlor where they were sitting—"a husband whose only fault is that he dearly loves to teaze me, and I am sure no mother was ever blessed with better children than I have."

"Don't want *any thing*?" repeated Mr. Beckerton, emphasizing the last word. "It seems to me that is rather an old-fashioned pin in your collar."

"And if it is, I wouldn't change it for one covered with rubies and pearls," answered Mrs. Beckerton, with much emotion.

"Nor one of diamonds either, I suppose," said Mr. Beckerton, carelessly.

"No, not even of diamonds. Didn't you buy this and bring it home to me on the first anniversary of our wedding-

day, when Lillie there lay a little tiny thing on my breast, scarce a month old? I am sure I never in my life had any thing please me half as much."

"Which? The baby or the pin?" asked Mr. Beckerton, archly.

"Well, the baby did please me the most, that is a fact; but you know I meant the pin," and Mrs. Beckerton joined good-humoredly in Lillie and Edward's hearty laughter.

The twins came down from the sitting-room with some complaint of Harry, who loitered behind them in the hall. His mother called him in, and reprimanded him gently; but he was so much displeased, that when he went around, as was his custom, to kiss them all good-night, he omitted his mother.

Mrs. Beckerton did not notice it, but Harry never forgot it.

CHAPTER IV.

LILLIE was so wide awake with her thoughts, that she did not easily fall asleep that night. Through the windows, from which she had flung aside the curtains, fell columns of cold moonlight, for the ashen clouds that had all day covered the sky, were now swept down to the horizon. From her warm bed she looked steadily up to the blue heavens, yet her thoughts, it must be confessed, were all earthly. She smiled over the remembrance of their happy evening, of her mother's affectionate ways, her father's playful manner, and then she fell to wondering if ever she should have so fond and good a husband.

"Yes, just such a one," she thought; "some one whom I have never yet seen, of course, for I should certainly fall in love at first sight; he must be tall, commanding, very elegant

in his address, he must know every thing, and by no means must he have a common name. Lydia! to name me such an ugly name. That is the only thing that ma ever did that was wrong; I will never give any of my children such a hateful name. If the first should be a daughter—what will I call it? Let me see—Isora? No, there is no pretty pet name to that; nor to Ida, nor Edith, nor Alice, nor Inez; I will call it Gabriella. Ella is such a sweet name. It's a pity ma hasn't got a pretty name, else I would certainly name it after her. It's a downright shame, so it is, to give people ugly names. Mercy! what am I talking about?" and she covered up her head with the bed-clothes, as though some one was there to see the blushes that dyed her cheeks. Still she could not stop her thoughts; they would go on picturing the future, until at last she fell asleep.

But not for long. A cold hand laid upon her own aroused her from a pleasant dream, and starting from her slumber, she saw her father, partially dressed, standing by her bedside, the light from the lamp he held, streaming full upon his pale and troubled countenance.

"Your mother is very sick, Lillie; you must dress yourself and stay with her, while I go for the doctor."

In a moment Lillie, in a shiver of fear, was out of bed, groping on the floor for her stockings. She could not ask what was the matter, but seizing her clothes in her hand, followed her father down the stairs without dressing.

On the bed her mother lay, restlessly tossing about, her face and hands burning hot, and her eyes glistening unnaturally.

"I would not have any one to stay with me but you, my daughter," she said, as Lillie came to her bedside. "Come and get into bed with me; how your teeth chatter! What a cold night it must be! It is strange I am so warm."

Mr. Beckerton bent over the bed to kiss her before leaving her.

"You must tell the doctor that he must make me well before Christmas. It would spoil the children's pleasure if I were to be sick then, wouldn't it, Lillie?"

She answered not a word, but clinging close to her mother's side, she choked back the strange tears that were almost stifling her.

Her mother talked on and on without ceasing, and before her father returned with their family physician, Lillie knew that her mother's mind was wandering.

That day and the next, and still the next—day and night—Lillie and her father sat almost motionless by the bedside, or moved noiselessly about the room; but not once did she arouse from her delirium sufficiently to recognize their presence.

Christmas Eve came; but through the house was heard no voice of merriment. They scarcely thought of the festive day so near, for the physician gave them no hope, not even one word of encouragement.

The long night passed away, the morning dawned, and, O joy! the fever had abated, and the light of love once more illumined the eyes of the devoted wife and mother.

"My husband! my children! where are they?" were the first words she uttered.

Mr. Beckerton bent fondly over her; his eyes filled with tears of joy; he could not speak in his happiness.

Lillie kissed again and again the pale hand that she clasped.

"I have been very sick, I know;" she spoke in a low tone, and her sentences were broken; "very sick, but I thank God that I am better now. He has been very merciful to spare my life. I fear I have been ungrateful to him oftentimes."

Her husband stooped down and kissed her lips.

"You are too weak, dear wife, to talk now," he said.

"Only tell me—is it Christmas yet?" she whispered.

"This is Christmas morning; but try to sleep, my dear; it will give you strength."

Mrs. Beckerton was too weak to offer any opposition. She turned her pallid face to the wall, and as her low, regular breathing fell upon the watchers' ears, they exchanged tearful smiles, while with full hearts they offered up prayers of thanksgiving and praise.

The hours passed on. Still she slept tranquilly.

Mr. Beckerton unlocked his drawer, and taking from it a morocco case, handed it to Lillie.

"A Christmas present for your mother," he said. "Go to the light until you look at it."

Lillie took it to the window, parted the curtains, and opened the box. An elegant cluster-pin of diamonds flashed in the sunlight before her. Then rose up to Lillie's mind her father's jesting words about the old-fashioned pin. She closed the lid, and handing it back to her father, whispered:

"How happy this will make dear ma. Although I believe if it were nothing but glass, it would be all the same to her if you bought it."

Her father brushed the tears from his eyes, and going to the same drawer, took from it a casket.

"This is for you, Lillie," he said, opening it and producing a real *bijou* of a watch, the case ornamented with enamelled roses. He hung the chain around her neck, and pressed her tenderly to his bosom.

"Oh! if ma had not been sick, what a day of joyful surprises this would have been for us," whispered Lillie.

"If she had not been sick, I had never known the happiness I know now at the prospect of her restoration to health," answered her father. "The rest of our surprises will keep

until New Year's day, and then I hope your mother will be able to participate in our pleasures."

The physician coming into the room interrupted them. He walked to the bedside, bent for a moment over his patient, took the hand that Lillie had so lately clasped within her own, and after resting his fingers a moment on the pulse, said:

"Yes, it is as I thought it would be; now that the fever has left her, she is sinking very rapidly."

What a scream was that which rang through the chamber, as Lillie fell prone upon the floor.

Mr. Beckerton sprang to the bedside of his wife, who was aroused from her stupor by that terrible cry.

"Bring me my children," she said, her voice weaker and more tremulous than when she had last spoken. "I thought I was better, but this is death!"

Her husband, paralyzed by his sudden revulsion of feeling, did not move; but the physician left the room to obey her wishes. After giving a servant orders, he returned to Lillie, whose swoon proved a difficult one to manage.

And now, creeping up from behind the bed, came Harry, where he had been all the morning; no one missing him from sight, or if so, not dreaming he was there. He climbed up, and threw himself across the pillow.

"Oh, mamma kiss me—oh, mamma, pray to God to let me die with you."

She fastened her lips to his, in a long, long kiss—she murmured to him—

"My good boy, my good Harry—he will come to me some day."

Mr. Beckerton groaned aloud in his agony.

His wife stretched out her hands towards him—

"Do not grieve so for me; do not agitate me now, dear hus-

band. I want to see Lillie, all of them, while I am still able to speak."

The door opened, and Edward entered, leading Rosa by the hand. Eva and Effie, with arms around each other's waists, followed.

Their mother's eyes still rested on the door.

"Where is Lillie?" she said, in a clear distinct tone, for her strength seemed to have returned to her.

From an adjoining room the physician came out, and told the dying mother the truth regarding her daughter.

Rosa, lifted to the bed, nestled down tearless and silent in her mother's arms. They only were still, for all around were sobs and groans of anguish.

One by one, she called her weeping children to her, and kissed them with some tender words of parting.

"Could I but have seen Lillie's face once more; but it is best so—it is best so."

Her voice was again growing fainter. She motioned to her husband to raise her head higher on her pillow. Instead, he lifted her gently and leaned it against his breast.

"Yes, yes, that is right; I would die in your arms," she whispered.

She heard the servants' sobs, who had gathered around the door-way, and desired that they should be admitted. To Rosa's nurse she said—

"Be kind to my baby, and teach her to remember me."

"I will—indeed I will," cried the weeping Janette.

To the woman who had lived many years with her, she said—

"You have been a faithful servant to me, Ann. When I am gone, you must encourage Miss Lillie to take my place. Promise me that you will not leave her, and I will die content."

Ann promised with a fervor that satisfied the dying woman. She closed her eyes, and in a few feeble words of prayer committed them all into the hands of Him, whose chastening, though oft-times grievous to be borne, never fails to purify and bless.

Christmas night was approaching. The daylight waxed dim. Still supporting his wife, sat Mr. Beckerton, no longer able to control his groans of anguish. She had lingered through the day, beyond their expectations; but now the fluttering pulse, the gasping breath, gave warning that the spirit was struggling with its fetters of clay.

Again the children were summoned, again her eyes turned from one to the other, resting at last upon her husband's face.

"My husband—my children—my poor Lillie?"

They were her last words; the lids fell over her loving eyes, and the form that Mr. Beckerton strained so wildly to his bosom was naught but clay.

CHAPTER V.

'POOR LILLIE' (the last words the fond mother uttered) lay week after week unconscious of all that was going on around her. She was spared the terrible pang of the last parting—the agony of the hour when the encoffined form was borne forever from the dwelling—the days of gloom, when the silent household moved stealthily about, speaking alone in whispers, as though the terrible presence of Death had chilled the life-blood that before had coursed so warmly through their veins.

The slow, nervous fever, that brought her to the very brink of the grave, at length left her, but her convalescence was slow. Her father sat frequently with her, avoiding all allu-

sion to their common sorrow, and Lillie never asked a question. He often saw tears pressing through the lids, when another might have thought she slept, and bending down, he would kiss her pale, sorrowful face, as if to assure her that her mother's death had not left her alone.

The children were soon allowed to enter her room and divert her with their presence. Edward brought his sketches for her examination, and talked to her of his studies, and told her every little thing he could think of to interest her. The twins were assiduous in their offers of assistance, and were never tired of sitting on each side of the bed, bathing her hands and forehead with some odorous wash, or smoothing with their palms, her soft bands of hair, which fortunately the fever had spared her. Harry brought pockets full of gingerbread, groundnuts and candy, (sore was his disappointment when he found that Lillie could not eat them,) while Rosa sat by the hour, rocking her doll, with her dreamy eyes fixed on the ceiling.

"Mamma said your name the last thing," she said to Lillie one day, after having sat a long time in this quiet way. "I wish—"

"Now!" interrupted Harry, papa told you not to say anything about—" and Harry hesitated and stopped; and then, changing the subject of conversation, continued—"You don't know how much all of us cried, when you were so sick, Lillie. Sometimes, Rosa and I sat outside your door all the morning, and I told her then, that if you got well, I never would call you Lyddy again, and no I won't. I've been sorry ever so many times. The twins used up all their pocket-handkerchiefs, and then wanted to borrow mine, but I would not lend them, for I wanted them all myself. Somebody else cried too. He used to come two or three times every day to see how you

were. If ever you do get married, Lillie, I think he'd be just as kind to you as I could."

The last two or three sentences were not at all enigmatical to Lillie. She well knew who brought her the beautiful bouquet of exotics that was on the stand beside her bed, and to whom she was indebted for the bunches of juicy grapes pulled fresh from the hot-house vines, that had proven so cool and refreshing to her parched mouth; and she felt grateful to Alfred Grayson for all his thoughtful kindness, but never one pulse of her heart quickened at the mention of his name.

It was spring before Lillie was well enough to venture out into the open air; and then the daily rides that she took into the country did much to invigorate and restore her constitution. Her father watched with delight the soft glow of returning health upon her cheeks, and her gradually increasing animation.

The Christmas presents had all been long ago distributed. Over his dear-bought volumes Mr. Beckerton had shed many a tear in the midnight silence of his library. I said all—Edward had failed to bring forth his. But no one questioned him about them; for he was an odd genius, of whom there was never much expected. He had no taste for study, seldom joined his schoolmates in their boyish sports, but instead, preferred taking long strolls into the country, with no other company than his sketch-book; and as sure as there were any visitors staying at the house, Master Edward was never seen only at meal times. His room had great charms for him then, and his poor mother used to say, that there "was no end to the drawing-paper and pencils that that boy wasted." His father had long ago given up the idea of making a business man of him, and therefore had centered all his hopes in Harry. In short, by all but Lillie, he was rather looked upon as "the black sheep" of the family.

One evening, when they were assembled together in the sitting-room, as was their custom after supper, Mr. Beckerton said—

“Janette brought your Christmas present to me, Lillie, while you were so ill. I am proud to wear shirts that my daughter made so neatly for me,” and he glanced down at the stitched bosom, dazzlingly white in contrast with the mourning suit he wore.

Tears sprung to Lillie’s eyes, for she thought of the one who had cut and fitted her work so nicely for her, assisting her in the most intricate parts.

Her father saw her emotion, and with no other purpose than to change the current of her thoughts, said, turning to Edward—

“You, my son, were the only one that prepared no present.”

Edward blushed, commenced speaking, hesitated, and finally stammered out—

“I did prepare some—something, but—but I did not know whether it would not give more pain than pleasure now.”

“What was it?” cried Rosa, springing from her father’s lap, and looking eagerly up into her brother’s face. “Won’t you give it to us? I should so like another Christmas present.”

Harry looked quite animated and expectant, and the twins put their heads together and whispered.

But still Edward did not move; he grew more and more embarrassed.

“Ah, go, Edward, like a dear good brother, and bring it to us now. You are too diffident—always underrating whatever you do,” said Lillie, coaxingly.

“Yes, please do,” chimed in Rosa’s musical voice.

“I am sure you can’t refuse Lillie anything—I know I could not,” exclaimed Harry.

“We will take the will for the deed, if you have failed in any undertaking. Bring us whatever it is, and we will be the judges,” said his father.

Thus urged, Edward left the room.

“Do you think it any play-toy?” asked Rosa, looking earnestly into Harry’s eyes.

“Ned don’t deal in play-toys. I don’t believe he’d touch one with the tongs,” answered Harry.

“What can it be?”

“I’m sure I don’t know. If we wait long enough I expect we’ll find out. You are just as curious as Eve. Uncle Jo says all the women are.”

“I don’t like uncle Jo,” said Rosa, poutingly.

“Well, I do—he’s one of ’em, I tell you. When I get old enough, he going to teach me ten-pins, and take me gunning, and buy me a rifle too, and next summer, he’s going to ~~learn~~ teach me how to swim.”

“And then I’ll hate him worse than ever,” said Rosa, with energy.

Edward, came timidly into the room, with a large portfolio under his arm. He laid it down upon the table, untied it, and took from thence a sheet of Bristol board. His face reddened as he held it up before them.

“Rosa—it’s Rosa!” shouted all.

“O! was there ever anything so natural?” said Lillie.

Edward did not wait for any more comments, but held up to view another. Some exclamation burst from the lips of all, for it was a crayon head of Harry, and as beautifully executed as Rosa’s. Next were produced Eva’s and Effie’s, then Lillie’s and their father’s—all of them excellent, but it was left for the last one to send a thrill to every heart.

Nothing could be more lifelike than that tender glance, that cheerful smile—nothing more natural than the dear lineaments that were traced there.

"My dear mamma, my dear mamma!" said Rosa, clapping together her little hands and jumping in her joy.

Harry and the twins echoed her words, but Lillie and her father said never a syllable, as they leaned forward, gazing as intently upon it as though they feared it was but a vision that would fade into air.

Mr. Beckerton rose, and going around the table to Edward, laid his hand upon his head—

"God bless you my boy. I have not deserved—"

His voice was so choked with emotion he could say no more, but sinking down upon a chair, he buried his face in his hands, and wept like a child.

It was from this crayon that the portrait was painted which, when another Christmas came round, adorned the wall of a recess in the parlor. And now that a year had flown, time had so softened their grief, that it was a melancholy pleasure to them to look upon their mother's face and imagine that her spirit still lingered near—a guardian angel, to watch above their path.

The family remained united with the exception of Edward, who, with Alfred Grayson, had entered college the previous spring.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. BECKERTON took great comfort with his children. Lillie was a thoughtful and companionable girl, and her father was well pleased to give her the instruction she requested of him. She was herself quite encouraged by her progress in

the study of German, when suddenly her father's interest seemed to flag. He was absent-minded when with her, and much more frequently passed his evenings away from home. They knew that it was at the Graysons that he went, for Uncle Jo had told them so; but they did not know that he had found there a new pupil to give German lessons to.

Mr. Beckerton had always been scrupulously neat in his person, but now he became more particular than ever. Lillie felt the change; but as it was but little more than a year after her mother's death, she would not have surmised the cause, had it not been for Janette's assistance. Although she repelled the girl's insinuations, they left a load of suspicion on her heart, that was not lightened by time and her own observations.

Even Harry had glimpses of the truth.

"I know what I'd do, if papa should ever marry again, and bring us home a new mother; I'd shoot her," he said to Janette, one day, who had been hinting in a roundabout way at what might happen, as she brushed Rosa's curls.

"I wouldn't let you," said Rosa, "for I would love dearly to have him bring me one."

"For shame, Miss Rosa! To forget your own dear mamma so soon. I wouldn't have thought it of you!" exclaimed Janette, and in her indignation she gave, quite unintentionally, a stronger pull than the soft ringlet needed to bring it into shape.

"You hurt!" cried Rosa, stamping her little feet. "I wish I had a mamma, so I do; she wouldn't let you pull my hair that way; and it isn't because I have forgotten my mamma; it's because I loved her so dearly that I want one."

"You ungrateful little thing," answered Janette, "I didn't pull your hair. Never mind, you'll have a new mamma soon enough, I warrant you. Then we'll see!"

"Yes, we'll see and *feel* too," said Harry; "don't I know what stepmothers are? Um! I guess I do. Josh Winters told me all about his; she whips him like anything; until his back is raw, and then she puts salt and vinegar on it, and asks him if that feels good. Jimminy! I'd fust her before I'd stand that," and, suiting the action to the word, Harry doubled up his fists and made at an imaginary figure in the air.

"How would you like that kind of a mamma?" questioned Janette of Rosa.

She shrugged up her little shoulders in childish terror, but answered promptly:

"Papa wouldn't get that kind."

"Just you tell her, Janette, that story you told me the other night. I don't want no stepmothers coming here, and what's more, I wouldn't stay here if they did come. I'd run away and go to sea, or else I'd go live with Uncle Jo. But then Uncle Jo ain't half so funny as he used to be; he's as sober as if *he'd* got a stepmother."

"Mebbe he's in love," suggested Janette.

"Whew! Uncle Jo in love! that's a good one," shouted Harry. "Not he, I can tell you; he ain't the kind to fall in love; he's always making fun of women."

"Oh! his day'll come, and then the fun will be the other way, mebbe," and Janette tossed her head knowingly, as though she had worlds of experience.

That night, when Rosa went to bed, Janette told her the nursery legend to which Harry alluded; and thenceforth her mind was so full of the cruel stepmother, that she could not contemplate the possibility of a pleasant one.

Before long, this vague, shadowy fear settled itself into a certainty.

Mr. Beckerton suggested to Ann, who had taken the place of housekeeper, some alterations in the arrangement of the

furniture, previously to sending home an elaborately carved piano, together with an etagere of the latest style, and lovely little statuettes, and figures in bronze and china for its adornment. The parlor walls were hung with beautiful paintings. There were quiet landscapes, stormy marine views, bold mountain scenery, copies of heads by Guido and Titian, and, to make room for one of these last, Mr. Beckerton found it necessary to have his wife's portrait removed to an upper story.

What indignation then burst forth! Lillie and the twins cried as though their hearts would break. Rosa, who was too young to understand much about it either way, cried because they did; but Harry, boiling over with resentment at such treatment of his dead mother, privately procured a poker, and went into the parlor with the intention of "punching" out the eyes of the usurping picture. He had mounted a chair for the purpose, and had already brandished the poker in the air, when something in the expression of the beautiful, sorrowful face before him arrested his hand. It fell motionless by his side, and, touched by the reproachful look of the deep, shadowy eyes, he burst out crying, and threw himself on the floor.

When Mr. Beckerton came into supper, he was not a little annoyed by the gloomy faces that met him at every turn. It was evident to him that something was in the wind, but what that something was he did not discover, until going into the parlor, where Janette, at his order, was lighting the gas, he stumbled over Harry, who, with his poker still tightly grasped in his hand, was sound asleep in front of the recess where had hung his mother's picture.

Then Mr. Beckerton was visited with a suspicion of the truth, and, acknowledging in his heart the depth of affection that had called up the sadness so evident upon the faces of

all, he lifted Harry in his arms, and carried him up to his bed-chamber, without pausing to notice the effect of the paintings when the room was lighted, for which purpose he had entered the parlor.

That evening he did not leave the house as early as had been his custom. In his library, with closed doors, he gave a few hours to the memory of the dead.

Another week, and he announced formally to his family his approaching marriage with Miss Leonora Grayson. At the same time he gave orders that the children should lay aside their mourning.

The Graysons were the occupants of an elegant mansion a square or two above the Beckertons, but, with the exception of Alfred, they were entire strangers to them; and as Miss Leonora had arrived on a visit since his departure for college, the children were in utter ignorance of the existence of such a being.

'Uncle Jo,' or Mr. Joseph Beckerton, to be more respectful, had introduced his brother to Miss Grayson, on their way home from church, one Sabbath morning, not at all anticipating the consequences which we have already seen.

The wedding-day at length arrived, and the children hung around their father as though it were a last parting. There were plenty of tears on all sides, but Lillie gave way to her feelings more than the others. She clung nervously to his neck, kissed him again and again, and sobbed herself into hysterics after he had gone.

It was a morning wedding, and very private, as both parties desired it. Mr. Grayson, being the nearest living relative, gave his ward and niece away; after which they left, to spend the honeymoon in travelling. This would fairly launch them into the month of July, when they expected to return, to take the children their usual trip to the sea-shore.

A few days after their father had left them, Uncle Jo and Harry were walking down street together, and Harry proceeded to question him about his stepmother, as he found him in rather a better humor than he had been.

"Is she cross-looking, Uncle Jo?"

"A perfect hyena," he answered promptly; "I know I wouldn't trust myself with her. I did once, but she'll never catch me again."

"Oh! I'll look out for that; I am going to run away when she comes; but tell me all about it. Did she hurt you much?"

"Yes, more than I was ever hurt before; in fact, I made such desperate struggles to get away from her, that I've had an ugly pain here ever since," and Uncle Jo laid his hand across his chest as he spoke; "but I shall get bravely over it one of these days."

"There! the ugly old thing! I knew something was the matter with you, for you have been as cross as get out."

"Yes, I know I have. Sick people are often cross; and, you see, Harry, I really was very sick, although I managed to keep about. I thought, one time, I should never live through it; but wait till you see her, Harry, my boy, and you won't be surprised at my suffering so much."

"Jehu! she'd better not touch me. Now, Uncle Jo, wouldn't you run away, if you were in my place?"

"I'll tell you what I'd do, Harry. I would have everything ready to go at a moment's notice, and the first time that she tried to flog me, I'd be off in a hurry."

Harry pondered over the advice a moment, and then said:

"There's one thing I didn't think of before. It wouldn't be brave in me to run away, and leave Rosa here to get all the beatings. Poor little Rosa! No, I won't stir a step. I'll fight like a Turk for Rosa, so I will; and if she beats

any body, she may beat me. Maybe she's old, and not very strong. I can always fix old Ann off, when she gets at me. How old is she, Uncle Jo?"

"Oh! old enough to be your grandmother."

"Is her hair gray?"

"Gray as a badger."

"I bet I know what kind of eyes she's got. Ain't they hard, cold eyes, just like Mrs. Winters's?"

"Not at all like hers. They are a great deal more wicked; the wickedest-looking eyes you ever saw."

"Oh, Uncle Jo! wouldn't it be dreadful if she should put Rosa and I in a bag, and whip us until our bones rattled like china, just like the stepmother, Janette told us about?"

The roguish uncle burst into such an explosive fit of laughter, that every one that passed them in the street turned to look at him.

"I don't see any thing to laugh about," said Harry.

"And so Miss Janette has been telling you stories about stepmothers, has she? Mischievous hussy!" and then Uncle Jo laughed again, as the thought occurred to him that she was no worse than himself.

"I don't see what the thunder you are laughing about," said Harry, angrily; "never mind! Janette says you'll laugh out the wrong side of your mouth one of these days."

"What made her say that?" questioned Uncle Jo.

"I told that you were always laughing at the women, and that it wasn't likely you would fall in love with one of them; because she said that maybe you were in love."

Mr. Joseph Beckerton was sober in a moment. He had a secret of his own, that he did not care to have even suspected, and he saw need of being doubly on his guard, now that Miss Janette had an eye on him; for be it said here, Miss Janette's eyes were exceedingly bright ones, and although she had a

careless, inattentive air, there was nothing that escaped her notice.

When Harry went home to supper that night, he looked very mysterious and important. Uncle Jo had charged him not to repeat to any one what he had told him; but the temptation proved too strong for him to resist, when, upon going up into the store-room, he found Janette there alone in the pantry.

"Janette, don't you wish you knew how she looked?" he said, abruptly.

"How's a body to know what you mean? How who looked?" said Janette, in a cross tone, as she hid something between the boxes.

"Why, you know, that old maid, that Miss Grayson; you know well enough who I mean."

"Who told you she was an old maid?" questioned Janette, still busying herself in the pantry.

"Oh! never mind who told me. I know all about her, though; and if some one wasn't so blamed cross, maybe they'd know too; but I guess I shan't tell."

"If you mean me, I ain't a bit cross. Look here, see what I've got for you," and she took out a saucer of preserves, and producing a spoon from her pocket, locked the pantry door, and set it on the top of the flour barrel. "There, now, take a good eat; it isn't long you'll have a chance at them."

Harry was not slow to obey.

"Now, tell me all about it, that's a good boy," said Janette, dusting off a tea chest with her apron, preparatory to sitting down.

"She's as old as your grandmother, to begin with," said Harry, his mouth so full of the preserves he could hardly speak; "her hair is as gray as old Mr. Badger's, and she's the wickedest woman that ever lived."

"For shame, Master Harry! I wonder those preserves don't choke you, you bad boy! You know you are telling a story."

"I tell you it's true, and I know more than that. She caught somebody once, somebody stronger than you, and she gave them such a pommelling, that they never got over it; he told me himself, he did; he's had a pain in his breast ever since."

"Has Alfred Grayson got home?"

"No; you needn't ask who it was, for I won't tell you."

"I don't want to know. I don't believe it, any way. It's a story, and you know it is."

"I tell you it ain't. You just ask Uncle Jo next time you see him, if you can't believe me. There!" continued Harry, flourishing his spoon in the air, "if that didn't come right out before I thought of it. Janette, do you be sure and never tell any body."

"Uncle Jo, was it? And she caught *him*, did she? That's a good one; a pain in his breast, has he?" and Janette giggled at the idea.

"What are you laughing about? Don't you believe me now?" said Harry.

"To be sure I do; but look here, don't you tell any one else what you've told me; just wait till your pa fetches her here, and then we'll see how old, and how gray, and how wicked she is. I've got my own opinion about it."

CHAPTER VII.

THE beautiful month of roses was fast drawing to a close. A letter had been received, announcing the return of the tra-

vellers. Everything was in readiness, as Mr. Beckerton had ordered. Lillie, who had persisted in keeping on her mourning, looked more gloomy than ever, as she moved about the house in her sombre black dress.

And now the very day arrived. The twins picked a fresh bunch of flowers, and carried it up in a vase to their father's chamber. The sweet odor of the jessamine and the heliotrope floated through the apartment and made it seem less cheerless to them that it had done before.

Harry, dressed in a new suit, sat on the stairs with his head in his hands, thinking of his mother, and the terrible future in store for him. Rosa, lovelier than ever, in her thin white dress, with its blossomed-colored sash, was never a moment quiet. She was so eager to see her papa, that she forgot Janette's nursery tale, and Harry's woful predictions.

It was nearly noon when Rosa heard carriage-wheels stop in front of the house, and bounding to the door, she was lifted in her father's arms and had the first kiss before any one else knew of his arrival. Harry heard the noise, and from a favorable position over the balusters, reconnoitred the scene below. He had not settled in his own mind whether it was best to advance or retreat, when the twins came sweeping past him, and forgetful of a stranger's presence, gave their father the warm greeting for which his heart yearned. But Harry still held back; the bugbear was too near, and he almost screamed as she bent over Rosa to kiss her, lest she should bite her instead.

The servants were huddled together in the back entry, striving to satisfy their curiosity regarding the bride. So affectionately did the new mamma kiss Rosa and the twins, putting an arm around the waists of Eva and Effie, as she accompanied them into the parlor, that they became quite favorably disposed towards her. Just as they were about to disperse, Harry

ventured from his perch, and sliding down the baluster, landed in their midst.

Janette jumped.

"I declare to gracious," she said, "I'm all in a flutter. I was most frightened out of my wits. Master Harry, just let your new ma see you at that, and you'll catch it, I tell you."

At this prospect Harry was going to shoot up stairs again, but his father called after him, and kissing him affectionately, attempted to lead him into the parlor with him.

"I don't want to go," said Harry, holding with one hand to the balustrading of the stair-case.

"I want you to come in and see your mamma, my son."

"I don't want to see her—I know enough about her already," answered Harry, sulkily. "She's a wicked old woman, and I won't let her kiss me."

"For shame! for shame! Harry; whose work is this? Nora, come here, my love, and let us see what power your voice can have over this obstinate little boy of mine."

Nora, clad in a plain travelling dress, her mantilla and hat thrown aside, answered the summons with her presence. It was a very sweet voice that addressed Harry, very fresh lips that touched his forehead, and a very small, white hand that clasped his own. All this gave him courage to steal a glance from under cover of his long lashes, and emboldened by a glimpse of the fair young face above him, he took a less stealthy and longer look.

"Uncle Jo'll go to the bad place," he said smilingly; "he's the biggest story-teller I ever knew."

Nora blushed. "Oh, never mind Uncle Jo, just now, Harry—we'll talk about him another time. I want to get acquainted with you now;" and she led him into the parlor as she spoke.

From that moment, the acquaintance progressed rapidly,

and excepting the few impatient, uneasy glances that Mr. Beckerton cast toward the door, there was every appearance of the most perfect satisfaction and happiness. It was Lillie that he was watching for, but he watched in vain. Even at dinner she did not appear, and pained and grieved that she should so absent herself, regardless both of his feelings and his lovely bride's, he went to her chamber.

The room was desolate. No little things were scattered about as there usually were—everything was arranged in the most perfect order. The thin white curtains were looped back from the windows, and through the bowed shutters the light fell upon a little walnut stand, that was underneath it. On it Mr. Beckerton found a note directed to himself. With trembling hands he broke the seal and read:

"MY DEAR PAPA—Do not think me bad or ungrateful, but I cannot stay here to see another fill my mother's place. I made up my mind from the first, to go away from you, and not destroy your happiness by the sight of my sorrowful face, and the mourning garb that I could not lay aside. That was why it was so hard for me to part with you when you went away. Do not fret or grieve after me. I will take care of myself, and should the time ever come when you will need me, I will return to you, but now I am useless. Have no fears concerning me, dear father—my mother's spirit will never forsake me, while I continue faithful to her memory. It almost breaks my heart to leave you and the children. I shall stay with them until the last moment. No one knows of my intention. God be with you all, and give you the happiness that now seems forever denied to
YOUR LILLIE."

"Good heavens! what silly, romantic freak is this?" exclaimed Mr. Beckerton, as he finished the note.

White as death, he hurried down to the servants to ques-

tion them. Lillie had kept her plans well concealed, and removed her clothing very privately, for none of them mistrusted her departure.

The household were in consternation at the news. Nora alone was calm, and she only outwardly so. Her advice and sympathy had the effect of subduing the agitation into which her husband was thrown. At her suggestion, he went to the houses of those relatives where he thought there was a possibility of her being found. His brother helped him in the search, but all their efforts proved fruitless, and Mr. Beckerton returned home to pass a sleepless night, while Uncle Jo left in the first train for the New England town, where Lillie had been at boarding-school.

It was all in vain, for no trace of the wanderer was discovered, and Mr. Beckerton, almost worn out with anxiety and want of rest, at length acknowledged that nothing more could be done, and that they must wait for time to reveal the mystery.

Poor Lillie, in the one-sided view she had taken, dreamed not of the sorrow and trouble she had brought to the hearts that so dearly loved her, else she would never have persevered through all the trials she encountered. The foolish child wept herself to sleep for many a night, thinking of the home she pined for, but her morbid feeling would not suffer her to imagine the desolation that her absence had occasioned therein.

"I would rather have buried her, God knows I would," said Mr. Beckerton to his wife, one morning when she had been endeavoring to console him.

"Oh, no, Charles—do not say that; there is still hope of her return to us," she answered.

Mr. Beckerton groaned aloud. "I have such tormenting thoughts, such terrible fears," he said; "you do not know what I suffer." He arose from his chair, and paced the room

rapidly. "Nora, I wish now that I had brought the children to see you, as you requested me to—that I had let them learn to love you before they knew the position you were to occupy towards them. It might have saved me this. You and Lillie would have been sure to have become warmly attached. Had you ever seen her, Nora, you would not wonder though at my fears. She was so beautiful." He ceased speaking for a moment, looking abstractedly at a seat by a window that Lillie used often to occupy. "I can see her now," he said, "as I have seen her hundreds of times—her braided brown hair put back from her temples—her large serious eyes, so tender in their gaze. My daughter!" and he stretched out his arms as he called upon her—"My daughter! how could you leave the home that sheltered you from temptation and from sin? how could you bring such distress upon the father whose love for you was almost idolatry? My God! to think what perils her very innocence and loveliness will expose her to—to think what she may become! Nora, I tell you if I do not find that child, I shall lose my reason."

It was painful to see such excitement in one usually so self-possessed, and Nora's gentle heart ached at the sight of the father's anguish. She would willingly have gone to the ends of the earth, could she by so doing have restored his daughter to his arms, although she felt that he exaggerated the dangers attendant upon her unprotected state. She brought cushions, and made him lie down upon the sofa, and try to compose himself. She expostulated, she reasoned with him—she chided him for want of faith in his child, and the feeling she expressed so earnestly, mingled with her words of love and so many tender caresses, could not fall upon the ear without effect. Mr. Beckerton was soothed by her sympathy, reassured by the confident tone with which she spoke of woman's power to guard herself from the approach of evil, and he suf-

ferred her to divert his thoughts from the painful channel through which they had coursed.

She well knew his favorite authors; for many an evening of their first acquaintance had been whiled away in the reading of Goethe's grand poems, and the incomparable dramas of Schiller. She took a volume of the latter from one of the book-cases, and selecting such passages as pleased her in Don Carlos, read them aloud.

Mr. Beckerton's eyes rested fondly upon her, and well they might, for her expressive face beamed with a higher order of beauty than regularity of features alone could ever give. In Nora, the fond husband had indeed found a congenial spirit; nor was there such a great difference in their ages as to render the match unsuitable. Mr. Beckerton was only thirty-eight, and his wife, although she looked scarcely twenty-two, was but ten years younger than himself.

He told her that night that nothing was wanting to complete his happiness but the return of his daughter; and in his heart of hearts he felt what he said.

Bitterly disappointed were the children in not being able to take their promised jaunt to the seashore. Harry was dreadfully provoked with Lillie, notwithstanding he loved her so dearly; for he thought it very ungenerous for her to run away as he had proposed doing, and leave them all to the mercy of a step-mother, who might have been a cruel one for all she knew about it. The nursery rhyme of little Bo-peep was a favorite with him in those days, only that in singing the third line, he thus ~~paraphrased~~ ^{changed} the original, "Let her alone and she'll come home."

Rosa was too fond of her new mamma to trouble herself much about anything. She started one day to take her up to their play-room, and Harry volunteered to accompany them. On their way they stepped into Lillie's chamber.

Harry's face sobered in a moment, as his eye fell upon his mother's picture.

"That is my own mamma," said Rosa, pointing to it.

"How came it up here," questioned Nora.

"They had no business to put it out of the parlor," said Harry, doggedly.

"No indeed," answered Nora, "it was not right, and we will have it carried back the first thing we do, wont we?"

Harry's face brightened up. He threw his arms around Nora, in his boisterous way, utterly regardless of the elaborately plaited frill she wore, nor did she give a thought to it, so much pleased was she by his demonstrations of affection.

The play-room was not reached that afternoon.—They were too busy in superintending the removal of the portrait to the parlor, where in its old niche it was duly installed.

With Ann, this act accomplished more than any thing else could have done. She expressed her willingness to work her fingers off to the bone for her new mistress, which positively was not at all necessary in the present state of the household.

When Nora found the month of July was drawing to a close, and still no tidings of the lost one, she concluded to send the impatient children into the country for a few weeks, their daily rides being only an aggravation to them, as the city in contrast seemed to them dustier and hotter than ever, on their return. A farm house was selected, so near the city, that they could see them at any hour, and thither were they sent with Janette, who was as much revolutionized in her feelings towards the step-mother as the children themselves had been. The revolution was in part brought about by the discovery that Mrs. Beckerton had not married her husband for

his money as she had surmised, inasmuch as she had quite a large income of her own.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE summer evening, just as twilight deepened into dark, two young men—Edgar Howell and Walter Stanley—were sauntering down Chesnut street. Howell had been suspended from Yale College on account of some misdemeanor.

After giving an account of "the fun" which had been the immediate cause of his rustication, he said—"You see, Stanley, Al Greyson did not make himself sufficiently conspicuous to merit the eclat of a suspension. The Governor said that it used to be considered a disgrace in his day, but I have convinced him that such notions have exploded. By the way, Al is not half the trump he used to be—he chums with Ned Beckerton. You remember Ned, at Dawson's Grammar School. A slow coach we all used to think him, but they do say he's turning out a genius."

"Ah!" was the monosyllabic reply of his older companion. It was evident his thoughts were pre-occupied, for although the young Sophomore made every effort to be agreeable, he was unable to extract anything farther than an answer of one syllable, and that not always apropos.

Stanley was a medical student. The young ladies of his acquaintance, called him "a love of a man," "a perfect Adonis." Some older ones, who had had more experience in reading "the human face divine," said there was that in his countenance that they did not like. His own sex pronounced him "deep," and cautioned their sisters against too great an intimacy with him; but generally speaking, he was excessively admired, and courted and flattered exceedingly. He was tall,

finely proportioned, ~~and of a rich purplish black~~. His crisp, waving hair, was of a rich purplish black. It harmonized well with his clear brown complexion, the ruddy glow upon his cheeks, the red lips so exquisitely shaped, and the rounded chin.

Yes, Walter Stanley's face was faultless—but his heart! who shall tell of the sins that festered there?

The dead cannot speak to us, or one scarcely a month in her coffin would rise to tell us of her trusting love, her betrayal, her broken heart; and the name of *the murderer* would be his whose face is still as calm—whose form is still as erect as though no memories of sin lingered in his bosom. Walter Stanley, the world my judge you lightly for your crime, but the time will come, when the worm that never dies and the fire that is not quenched, shall drive all peace from your bosom; and in those hours of agony shall your terrible sin be expiated!

It was with difficulty that Stanley disengaged himself from Howell, on account of the latter's earnest desire to "make a night of it," but pleading an engagement, he at length made his escape.

Within the last week, he had taken lodgings at the house of a Miss Morgan, and although his room was large and airy, it was a strange dwelling for an elegant young man. His meals he continued to take at Jones' as formerly, but his luxuriously furnished room there, was quite deserted.

In the direction of his new lodgings he walked rapidly now, and upon reaching them, made sure that no one whom he knew was in sight, before entering them.

Miss Morgan's house was a large old-fashioned one; directly in the heart of the city. A large brass plate upon one door announced "Miss Morgan" as "fashionable dress-maker and

milliner." Upon the other ~~two~~ ^{was} a piece of paper, on which was written, "Rooms to let. Inquire within."—

The lower part of the building Miss Morgan used as a ware-room for the display of her millinery, and in an alcove at the further part, some of her young ladies occupied themselves with their work, ready to drop it at any moment to wait upon customers.—The large room in the second story of the back building was devoted to dress-making, and was crowded with girls, all of them busy as bees from morning till night.

They boarded at their own homes, with the exception of three or four, who were serving an apprenticeship, and one who preferred remaining in the house. The weather was so warm now, that all the windows and the door leading out into the broad stair-case were obliged to be kept open.—Whenever Mr. Stanley passed up and down, walking slowly as he was sure to do, there was such a buzzing and fluttering and blushing as would have shocked a more incorrigible spinster than Miss Morgan.

Two of the girls, however, never raised their eyes, and one if possible bent her head still lower over her work. Miss Morgan had commended them accordingly.

"Miss Day is an example for you, young ladies," she had once said, "and Miss Price, also. You never see their attention diverted by a handsome young man; but handsome or homely, I believe if I kept one of my lodgers in this room I should not get a dress done between the rest of you before Christmas."

Lizzie Day's face reddened, and her needle flew swifter than ever. Tears came into Emily Price's eyes, for she thought of the time when beaux had engrossed more of her thoughts than they ever could again.

The evening of which we were speaking, Miss Morgan's young ladies were more than usually engaged, finishing off

some work for one of their customers who was to leave for Newport the following morning. They were all gathered in knots around the different gas-burners, so that Mr. Stanley, coming up very silently, was observed by scarcely any of them. Lizzie Day, happening to glance up at that moment, met his black eyes bent full upon her, and blushed scarlet, but Emily Price, who also saw him, turned as white as the bit of dainty satin she was manufacturing into a sleeve.

"She's no saint, Ellen, for all her blushes," whispered Anna Howe, nodding her head towards Lizzie, for glancing over her shoulder, she had seen Stanley disappear around the turn of the stair-case.

"I do hate such quiet, deceitful people," answered Ellen Hunter.

"She is so stuck up with Miss Morgan's praise, that she scarcely condescends to speak to any of us, and when she does, you might think she was a queen," said Anna.

"Yes, she's a proud thing, but 'pride must have a fall,' they say. I know, for once, I should not be at all sorry to see her humbled," replied Ellen.

Emily Price sat near enough to hear these whispers. "For shame" she said, "Lizzie Day is not proud—she has a sore heart; I am sure her eyes tell you that."

Lizzie knew that she was often the theme of her companions' conversation, but she never seemed disconcerted or annoyed by it. She was affable to all with whom she came in contact, but out of the work-room she kept entirely aloof from them. When she had made her engagement with Miss Morgan, she had stipulated that, on account of her delicate health, she should have a room to herself, and not be obliged to work after seven o'clock; but it was midnight the evening in question before she went up to her chamber.

It was a neat little room, but very small and close, and Liz-

zies, who felt almost stifled by the heat, went out to the broad window-seat at the end of the hall. As she sat there, looking up to the blue heavens, and the holy stars therein, there came to her such memories as to send the warm tears to her eyes—chasing one another rapidly down her face. At length there came pleasant thoughts, for the tears ceased to flow, and a smile came to her eyes instead.

"I am sure I ought to be happy," she thought. To be loved by such an one as he! How proud I shall be of my husband—just such an one as I always imagined I should love; and how strange and romantic it all seems. To follow me so many days before he ventured to speak; and then after he found that I loved him as dearly as he could love me, how kind of him to come here for the purpose of watching over me, and guarding me from ill. Darling Walter! I could not keep from telling him that I am not what I seem, and now he calls me his incognito. It seems like a tale in a story-book, and it will come out just as they do too, for he will be so surprised when he finds that my father is rich, and that I do not have to work for a living. Oh! if mamma ~~was~~ only alive!"

She fell to sobbing as her thoughts wandered back to her sorrows again.

A door on the landing below opened. Walter stood a moment irresolute. He held his breath to listen, but no sounds within the house disturbed the stillness of the night other than Lizzie's sobs. Stealthily he stole up the stairs, and, leaning over the weeping girl, said—

"Why are you so cruel to me, Lizzie? You only make yourself unhappy by doing as you do."

"It is not anything that you know about that makes me cry to-night, Walter."

"One of these days it shall not be so; you shall have no secrets from me then, Lizzie. You are feeling so badly, I can-

not find it in my heart to scold you now, but do you think it is right to keep me here in this hot place waiting all the evening for you? You promised me last night that you would let me know your decision, and I came home earlier than usual. Every hour has seemed an age to me."

"I could not help it; Miss Morgan is so kind to me, and she was so much hurried. You and she, Walter, are the only friends that I have to care for me or love me now. Oh, if you knew how very desolate I was before you told me that you loved me. I did not want to live. I used to pray every night that I might die."

Walter Stanley kissed the pure brow that was raised to him, as Lizzie spoke so earnestly, and sitting down beside her in the window-seat, he put his arm around her waist and gently forced her to lay her head upon his shoulder.

"But she shall never be desolate again, sweet Lizzie," he said, kissing her again and again. "She shall always be happy if my love can make her so. But even that does not make you happy, darling."

"Not always; I never can be perfectly happy again, Walter; but you must not blame yourself for that, or think that I do not love you as I ought. I shall try not to trouble you with my sorrow; but let us talk of something else."

"You promised to tell me to-night, Lizzie, when you would go with me to be wholly mine. Will you do as I wish you to, and not make a longer delay for any foolish scruples?"

"I cannot. I have thought it all over, but I cannot change my mind. Nay do not interrupt me now. I am very firm, you know, and as dearly as I love you I will not allow myself to be influenced by your pleadings. In a few months I shall lay aside my mourning garments, and then I shall no longer object to our marriage, but will go with you to the ends of the earth if you desire it."

Ah! could she have seen the glitter of his small, deceitful eyes—the frown that darkened his features—could she have looked still deeper and read the falsehood and treachery he was meditating in his heart, how would she have sprung aside from those encircling arms!—with what withering scorn would she have repelled the words of love that he now poured so rapidly into her ears.

Words of love! That I should have misused so holy a name!

But so they seemed to the young, confiding creature, who in her innocence and inexperience had not a thought of guile.

His fervid, passionate manner aroused her, however, to a sense of the imprudence of her conduct, and with her usual decision she forced him to leave her.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Lizzie Day entered the work-room the next morning, there were so many eyes fixed on her, and so much unusual whispering and giggling, that she was exceedingly annoyed.

Miss Morgan bent a severe and searching gaze upon her as she said—

“Miss Day, I am sorry to find some very unpleasant reports circulating amongst my young ladies regarding you. I cannot entirely discredit them, and yet if you are able to disprove them, I shall be very much relieved by your so doing. I give you an opportunity, by requesting a truthful reply to these questions. Have you been in the habit of meeting Mr. Stanley clandestinely? And were you in conversation with him last night in your entry, at as late an hour as between twelve and one o’clock?”

Lizzie, embarrassed and frightened, and every moment growing more so, could not find words to frame her answer.

“It is sufficient,” said Miss Morgan, “your countenance betrays your guilt. I placed too much confidence in you, Miss Day, to have deserved this deceptive conduct. You may consider yourself discharged.”

“If you would let me speak a moment with you alone,” stammered Lizzie at length, “I could convince you that—”

“No,” interrupted Miss Morgan, “your defence, if you have any to give, must be before all, as all are cognizant of your conduct.”

“I cannot—I cannot,” sobbed Lizzie, as she covered her face with her hands.

“Then you must leave the house at once; you have already brought sufficient scandal upon it, by your improper behavior, to use no harsher term.”

Still Lizzie lingered, but the scornful laughter of the girls, and the whispers that reached her ears, proved more than she could bear, and rushing from the room, she went up to her chamber and threw herself on the bed. Her wakeful night had left her worn and wearied, and despite the new trouble that stared her in the face, she wept herself to sleep. She must have slept hours, for when she awoke the noontide sun was high in the heavens. She resolved that they should not force her to leave the house before she had seen Walter; and now that this had happened, she questioned whether it was not best to yield to his wishes, and give him the right to protect her. She made up her mind so to do, and commenced packing her few clothes for removal. A footstep startled her, and looking round, she saw Emily Price standing in the doorway. Emily boarded with Miss Morgan, and had a room in the attic, with Ellen Hunter, who was also an apprentice. Her

face was an interesting one, despite the sunken eyes and wasted cheeks.

"Lizzie," she said, "I could not let you go without bidding you good-bye. I have been up twice before, but you were asleep. I am sure you could not sleep so soundly if you were not innocent. Poor Maria did not use to sleep that way. Oh, Lizzie, will you listen to me, and believe me, and take warning, if I disclose to you the secret of my sister's shame?"

"I presume you mean well, Emily," answered Lizzie, coldly, "but there can be no similarity between such a sister as you speak of and myself."

"Ah, Lizzie, you do not know—no one in this house knows beside the one who brought all our trouble upon us; for Maria and I were alone in the world. He does not dream that I am here, or he would have kept far enough away."

"Who? What are you talking about? Emily Price, if you mean Walter Stanley, I want you to know that we are engaged, and that we should have been married before this, if he had had his way," said Lizzie, angrily. "I suppose it is the interest you take in me that caused you to listen to us last night, and to publish to the girls what you overheard."

"Oh, Lizzie, how can you talk so! You ought to know that it was not ~~me~~ Indeed, I was so tired that I slept all night, and all I know about it is what Ellen Hunter told us. But, dear, Lizzie, don't be angry with me if I tell you about that bad, bad man. He promised Maria too that he would marry her, and she went away with him to get married, and never came back to me until she came back to die. He did not mean to marry her when he took her away; and, Lizzie, he broke her heart, for she was as pure and good as you before she knew him, and so lovely! Oh, if you would only believe me! if I could only save you from him!"

Her earnestness was not without effect; for Lizzie could not doubt the truthfulness of those imploring eyes, the touching grief depicted on that sad face; and in turn she questioned eagerly, until the whole tale was told, and she had learned all the unworthiness and baseness of the heart she had so trusted in.

How frightful seemed the precipice to her on which her footsteps had strayed. How fervently she thanked Emily for disclosing to her the dangerous path into which she was so imprudently, and in such blind confidence, upon the eve of rushing. She kissed her tenderly, soothed the agitation which the recital of her sister's wrongs had awakened, and without shedding one tear over her own rude awakening from the dream of love, she finished her arrangements for leaving. It was now her anxiety to escape without seeing him, and consequently she hurried away before nightfall.

She was tired of the city, tired of the world, almost tired of life; and remembering a quiet little spot away in the country, where, when a child, she had passed many pleasant summer months with her mother, she resolved to take rest and refuge in it for a season. Out of the city she walked, on, on, along the banks of the Schuylkill, without pausing to rest, until, overcome by fatigue, she sank down on the grassy slopes she was traversing. The busy hum of the city could not reach her there; the smoke and haze which hung over it was away in the distance, illumined with the glowing light of sunset. Over her head stretched the green branches of forest trees, and at her feet the mossy bank swept down to the river's edge. The deep-blue river: not a ripple disturbed its placid surface. Ah! how she envied its tranquillity; how she longed for the repose that was imaged there! Closer and closer she crept to its brink, and then she drew back in fear, as a strange temptation whirled through her mind. She was

so tired of life; death seemed so near and so easy, and again she crept nearer.

What was it now that held her back?

The memory of the dead. Her buried mother's love. With a strong arm it drew her away, past green meadows and familiar roadside groves, and though Night now threw her gray shadows over all, she kept on, unmindful of the solitude.

The memory of her mother's holy love!

It strengthened her to combat with the despair which at first threatened to crush her; it enabled her to drink of the bitter cup that, in her blighted love, had been given her; and cheered by that one memory, she steadily kept on her way.

Drenched with night-dews, she at length reached the old stone cottage. How lovely it looked to her as it lay wrapped in shadows before her! What memories of childhood stirred within her, as she gazed upon its mossy roof, its vine-clad portico, and the trees that spread their sheltering arms over all.

With a throbbing head and aching limbs, she walked slowly up the avenue of lilacs that led to the porch. The door was open, and she stood there a moment with the light from the entry shining full in her face. She could see nothing in the dark parlor beyond; but, with shouts of "Lillie! oh, darling sister Lillie!" out came rushing Eva and Effie and Harry and Rosa, almost smothering her with their caresses and embraces.

Not an hour had elapsed, when Janette despatched a servant to the city with the news, and before midnight Mr. Beckerton held his daughter in his arms. With what gentle love did he chide her for the anxiety she had occasioned him, and with what a grateful heart did he thank God for her safe return to him.

And Lillie! how fully she realized her error and her ingrati-

tude, when she saw the love which they all lavished upon her. In her own breast she hid, for the present, the price she had paid for her folly. She longed to see the wife her father had chosen, so glowing a description did he give of her virtues, and yet she shrank timidly from the first meeting.

It was a night of excitement, and proved to be more than Lillie could bear, added to her previous exposure and fatigue. She was threatened with a recurrence of that terrible nervous fever that had brought her so low before; and the physician ordered that she should be kept in a quiet and darkened room until the unfavorable symptoms should disappear. The children he forbade to enter, and even her father he thought it advisable she should not see. The kind farmer's wife and one other attendant were all that were allowed admittance. Lillie was not slow to guess whose lovely face it was that bent so tenderly and anxiously above her; whose low voice read to her such sweet passages of Scripture; whose soft and magical touch charmed away the pain from her brow; and long before she was permitted to be about again, she had learned to love Nora as fondly as did the rest.

As soon as Lillie was pronounced convalescent, Uncle Jo and the children paid her visits whenever they chose, bringing her huge bunches of wild flowers that they gathered in the woods and meadows near, and regaling her with the most delicious fruit that could be procured.

"I think I'll run away myself," said Harry, "it would be such fun to have a fuss made over me when I came back again."

"Oh! they wouldn't make so much fuss with a boy," replied Uncle Jo.

"Don't you believe that," said Harry; "I've read the parable of the prodigal son, and I know all about it. Be-

sides, I don't believe *you*, any how; didn't you tell me stories about *her*?" and he pointed to Nora.

"Hush!" said Uncle Jo.

"I won't hush. I'm going to tell every thing you said."

Uncle Jo was really blushing, and Nora's face was still redder, if possible.

"Harry, come with me," said his father, noticing the embarrassment of both.

"I'm going to tell papa, any how," called out Harry, as he left the room. And he kept his word. Mr. Beckerton had quite a laugh with Nora over the *double entendre* of his brother's words; and, in time, Uncle Jo was able to laugh with them, but not until his susceptible heart was again smitten by the boy god. This time he fell a victim to the charms of a fair one, younger than himself, who was kind enough to smile on his wooing, and showed a decided preference for his society over that of his elder brother.

Edward Beckerton and Alfred Grayson passed their fall vacation in their respective homes. Lillie was very kind and sisterly to Alfred, who paid his cousin Nora as frequent visits as he had Lillie, two years before. They had all seen much change in that time, but Alfred remained true to his first fancy, and Lillie as indifferent to his boyish love as ever.

During the winter she frequently met Walter Stanley in society, who recognized her at once as the "incognito" who had disappeared so mysteriously from him; but now that she had discovered his unworthiness, it was easy to treat him with the scorn he merited. More than ever fascinated by her exceeding loveliness, he again addressed her, and this time in sincerity, for her ~~position~~ position made a marriage with her seem desirable to him in every point of view; but he was unprepared for the decided rejection with which his proposals were met. He reminded her of the time when she would

have done differently; but her reply, although she breathed but one name, silenced him for ever.

One of Lillie's first errands had been to look for Emily Price, towards whom she felt the deepest gratitude. She found her in the graveyard, buried beside her sister, whose shame she had so keenly felt.

Christmas came and went: no more the merry Christmas that it had been once to them; for as the years fly on, shadows will thicken in our pathway, until at length the dark night of death settles over all. No more the merry Christmas, but still, a very happy one; and of all the presents Lillie received, the one she prized most was a case containing the old-fashioned brooch her mother had valued so highly, and the diamond pin which she had never worn.

Before Christmas came round again, there was another claimant for affection in the Beckerton family, to whom the whole household were as devoted as though a little angel had fallen down from heaven in their midst.

And then, whenever Lillie's companions teased her about her beau, her invariable answer was that she would never marry; the little one at home required her attention; but nevertheless, in the course of a few years, a young man of very elegant exterior, who had made the tour of Europe, after graduating from college with the highest honors of his class, persuaded her that it would be a greater charity to pay a little attention to his welfare; and accordingly, Miss Lillie Beckerton became Mrs. Alfred Grayson, notwithstanding he had once been sixteen, and worn roundabouts. It will never be believed, if I mention the fact, that their daughter bears the name of Rachel. Mr. Grayson's consent to its being so named, was obtained by having Leonora coupled with it, and it must be confessed, that the child is called Nora more frequently than any thing else. Lillie tells her husband that

she never can be sufficiently thankful that her father married again, and he teasingly assures her, that should occasion ever require, he will be sure and follow his example.

Edward is in Europe, perfecting himself in the divine art, for which he so early showed an unmistakable genius.

No particular talent has been developed as yet in the twins. They have given up making doll's clothes for Rosa (who now makes them all herself) and instead, have taken to embroidering cunning little dresses for their niece, of whom they are extravagantly fond. It is said that one of them is going to be married—some say Eva, and others Effie. It is considered doubtful if the gentleman himself knows to which he is engaged.

Harry is as fond of fun and mischief, as he was when younger, and sometimes plays practical jokes that are not very much relished; but as ever, his warm affectionate heart helps him through without much severe censure.

Rosa loves as dearly as ever, to have a game of romps with her papa; and the remarkable baby, now grown into brother Charley, can contribute his share to the uproar.

Nora is as happy as the day is long, and whatever difference she may find in her feelings towards her own child and the others, it is never revealed by any partiality. Without being literary, she still finds time to read to her husband or to listen to him.

Whatever the world may think, there never was a happier couple, notwithstanding it was a second marriage, and ten years difference in their ages.

Aunt Esther's Dowry.

Women are generally better than the course followed in rearing them might lead us to expect. Their souls are of high origin—the divine ray cannot be totally obscured. Some of the principles which are necessarily instilled often produce unexpected fruit: then suddenly there arises such beautiful and such devoted sentiments.

MADAME NECKER DE SAUSSURE.

CHAPTER I.

How is it that parents who have the most lively enjoyment of their daughter's society, deprive themselves with so much pleasure of their daughter, that sometimes they hardly inquire whether she shares this satisfaction? How is it that mothers, especially, so willingly abdicate their sweetest prerogative.—*The Life of Woman.*

"You are wasting all your eloquence, mamma, for I will never marry a man that I do not love; and Arthur Falkner! 'a widower of all others!' Ugh! the very thought gives me a chill!"

"You will do as you please, of course, Miss Bel. After always having had your own way, it is not to be expected that you should regard my wishes in any matter. Your Aunt Esther has filled your head with her queer notions; but remember, 'as you make your bed so you must lie,' and, with your refined tastes and expensive habits, if you marry a poor man, you will pay hourly penance for it."

Isabel Ashley made no reply, but a smile hovered on her lips as she leaned over her work-table, and reërranged the ivory spools of floss and thread, which already were in elegant order.

Mrs. Ashley was right. Aunt Esther, a sister of Mr. Ashley's, who, until of late years, had made her home in their household, had indeed filled Isabel's head with her "queer notions." She it was who, from the cradle had labored to instil into her mind a love of truth—to develop her spiritual nature, as well as her intellect—to impress the religious principle upon her character; and, although there had been much in the fashionable mother's example to counteract the effects of her teachings, yet the seed so early planted could never be wholly rooted out.

Aimé-Martin has said, that the most difficult thing on earth is not merely to do good, but to inspire others, and to cause them to love it. In this respect Aunt Esther had been successful. However faulty Isabel's character might be, there existed in her heart that love of goodness, which ultimately will lead the soul onward and upward toward Infinity. "The chain commenced on earth, does not break, but ascends to lose itself in heaven."

Mrs. Ashly watched her daughter's occupation until the angry flush with which she had last spoken died out of her cheeks, and then, in a calmer tone, she ~~proceeded to give her quite a~~ ~~lecture, upon which she~~ touched feelingly upon the elegance of Mr. Falkner's "menage," the distinguished position which a lady qualified to preside over such a mansion could not fail to hold in society, and then, in strong and glaring contrast, was held up to view the life of self-denial which a young couple without means must necessarily lead.

Isabel glanced up at her mother mischievously, her dark-

blue eyes twinkling with fun through their black and silken lashes, and shaking her head slowly, said—

"It is of no use, mamma—of no use. I have such 'queer notions,' as to make me prefer to be that fearful thing, an old maid, even if I have to work for my living, than to live idle in a paradise, with one whom I do not love."

Mrs. Ashley gathered up her needle-work, and, as she prepared to leave the room, said bitterly—

"It is quite easy to see *who* might have a certain person's hand for the asking; but, if I am not greatly mistaken, Ralph Bramley is wise enough to make no declarations to a portionless lady, however far vanity may tempt him to lead her."

The door closed. Mrs. Ashley was not there to see the effect of her words; but they had gone home.

At first the hot tears dropped slowly and heavily, from Isabel's eyes, as she sat impatiently beating the footstool, upon which one foot rested. As the tide of thought swelled on, her cheeks glowed vividly, and at length, burying her face in her hands, she wept like a child.

Could it be that Ralph Bramley had been trifling with her? Could it be that the heart, which had seemed to her so noble and good, should be so utterly selfish as her mother would have her think? "No, no, no!" were the words in which her thoughts found audible answer, as she arose from her chair and hurried up to her chamber, where she spent the remainder of the afternoon in recalling every word and look, every tone, that had led her to believe that one day she should listen to an open avowal of the love which, heretofore, she had not doubted. She knew his ambition; she knew that she would be a dowerless wife, her parents' expensive manner of living requiring their whole income; and, therefore, that years must elapse before they could be united. Still, what was that to

her? There was surely no sacrifice in the present, with her pleasant home and his frequent society; and, once secure in the possession of his love, how could the future be otherwise than bright, with the confidence which she felt that his intellect would one day win him a name and a position which the proudest heiress in the land might covet sharing?

That night she went down to the drawing-room to meet Ralph Bramley with a heavy heart. Her suspicions were awakened, her confidence shaken, and she resolved she would be more guarded in her manner, while she watched for a betrayal of his true sentiments.

Mrs. Ashley was already there, and Isabel, in no mood to mingle in their trifling conversation, sat apart, while her mother adroitly led the way to a discussion upon the folly of a young couple marrying without means.

Mr. Bramley went even further than herself in his disapproval. It seemed that he could scarcely find terms of censure strong enough for the thoughtlessness upon all sides in such cases. Very little delicacy, Isabel thought, he showed in lavishing blame upon the young girl who, to use his own words, "from a mistaken idea of the requirements of love, consented to become a hindrance to her lover, who otherwise, might have filled a sphere of the widest usefulness." Still more severe was he upon the man who could take a young girl from a luxurious home to share the deprivations of his lot, and upon the parents who could consent to such a sacrifice on the part of the daughter.

Isabel's lips curled scornfully as she listened. There was very much of truth in the worldly views that he advanced; and how should her truthful heart be able to detect the sarcasm which he so well concealed, in hopes of drawing out the defence that he anticipated from her unselfish nature.

Other gentlemen, Mr. Falkner among the number, dropped

in during the evening. Isabel unconsciously made herself more agreeable to him than usual, in her efforts to appear indifferent to Mr. Bramley. Ralph, who had never happened to meet Mr. Falkner before, was now in turn deceived by the pleasure Isabel apparently received from his society, and thus the breach widened between them.

But for the mother's interference, how far different would have been the record of those two lives! Isabel's love would have ennobled and restrained Ralph Bramley's impulsive character, and developed the higher resources of his nature. Great was the hazard that both ran, and if either escaped unharmed it was not because they were not subjected to perilous temptations.

CHAPTER II.

And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman's at best a contradiction still.—*Pope.*

RALPH BRAMLEY came no more to Mr. Ashley's, and the field was left open to Mr. Falkner. His brilliant conversational talents, and his aristocratic air, won him Isabel's respect and admiration; but when, after the lapse of a few weeks, he made proposals for her hand, she rejected them unequivocally. His perseverance, however, added to her mother's constant persuasions and her own pique, at length prevailed, and Isabel Ashley and Arthur Falkner were betrothed. What a whirlpool of excitement she was then plunged into. Congratulations were showered upon her, and every waking hour was absorbed by the visits of her friends, or the busy preparations that were going on, in the purchasing and making up of her wardrobe, which her parents insisted should be of the most costly and beauti-

ful fabrics that could be found. She had no opportunity for reflection, and so she was hurried on, until a day or so before the wedding, when she accompanied Mr. Falkner to a florists to select some new plants for his conservatory. While he was engaged in giving directions to the gardener, Isabel sauntered down a green aisle, where roses and geraniums and fuschias, leaning around her and over her, wooed her still farther on, when face to face, she met Ralph Bramley in the narrow passage-way.

Isabel received that upbraiding glance with no stoical nerves, and in one moment her tell-tale eyes revealed all. So powerful were the emotions that overwhelmed her, she scarcely knew that Ralph had seized her hand, but the torrent of eloquent words that was poured into her ears recalled her to herself, and snatching away her hand, she said reproachfully:

"It is too late now—too late," and darted back to the spot where she had left Mr. Falkner, as though she would have sought his protection against herself. He was not there. Not many minutes elapsed, however, before he joined her; and then her wildly agitated manner, did not escape his penetrating glances.

Had Isabel looked up into his eyes she would have been startled at the dark fire that was smouldering there. He asked no questions, but simply saying "we had better go directly home, you have had too much exertion this morning," gave orders accordingly to the coachman, who left them at Mr. Ashley's door. Gladly would Isabel have been alone, but there was no such release for her. Mr. Falkner led the way into the drawing-room, and carefully closing the door, asked her attention for a few moments. Isabel tremblingly sank down upon the nearest seat, while she felt rather than saw, that he remained standing before her, with a resolute, defiant air.

"I do not know, Miss Ashley, to whom I am indebted for the effort, so honorably made, to deprive me of a bride, neither do I wish you to inform me; for so long as I remain in ignorance, I shall be unable to visit upon him the punishment that he deserves; but I desire that you should know that I overheard the conversation, and—" here his tones took a tinge of sarcasm, "and that I commend you for the course you pursued. You were perfectly right in saying that it was 'too late.' *Too late* it most certainly is, and I would advise you in case you should have any further communication with *your friend*, to let him know that I am not a man to be trifled with."

Isabel looked up imploringly. A wild appeal for release was trembling upon her lips, but one look upon that stony face was enough. She knew that she might as well kneel to marble, and her lips were sealed.

Arthur Falkner read that glance, and answered it.

"We will have an understanding—it is as well now as hereafter—and that you may feel that we stand upon equal terms, I will convince you that you receive no more than you give. I persevered in my suit to you, Miss Ashley, not from any fancied sentiment of love, but because your accomplishments, your beauty, your grace of manners, your position in society, were all such as would cause me to feel pride in presenting you to the world as my wife. I need not enumerate your motives in accepting me; but with all the luxuries of life at my disposal, I imagine that we shall be equally indebted to each other. Your countenance betrayed to me your love for another. With more sincerity, I tell you in words, that my heart is buried in the grave of the one who was my wife, and I have lived long enough since her death to know that it can have no resurrection. I am called obstinate, Miss Ashley—firm, I most certainly am, and believe me, while life lasts, I will never yield you to another."

Isabel heard every word—heard and answered not. It seemed to her, that paralyzed by his cold demeanor, she was turning into stone. Even when he left her alone, not a tear came to her aid; and from that hour she expressed no interest in any of the arrangements that were being made—no emotion at sight of the elegant presents that were lavished upon her; until at last even her mother grew troubled and distressed, and questioned her as to the cause of her altered appearance; but Isabel's nature was a proud one, and she locked her secret in her own breast, and never, so much as by word of reproach, or sigh of regret, did she betray the anguish that had settled upon her young heart.

Oh, how carefully should mothers examine into their own motives when exerting over their children the great influence of which they are capable! How careful to see that no false pride actuates them in their approval or disapproval of a daughter's choice; for more than gold, or all the adornments that gold can buy, is the faithful love of one true heart.

CHAPTER III.

Oh grief, beyond all other griefs, when fate
First leaves the young heart lone and desolate
In the wide world, without that only tie
For which it loved to live, or feared to die;—
Lorn as the hung-up lute, that ne'er hath spoken
Since the sad day its master-chord was broken.

Lalla Rookh.

SUMMER flowers were blooming every where when Mr. Falkner and Isabel were married, for it was in the sunny month of June; but autumn's frosts had cast a blight over woodland and meadow before they returned from their tour, to take pos-

session of the mansion that Mrs. Ashley had so coveted for her daughter, and which Isabel was so calculated to grace.

But all the magnificence with which she was surrounded, all the splendor of which her husband made her the mistress, failed to satisfy her yearning heart. His deference of manner, his studying of her tastes, his constant regardfulness of her wishes, might deceive others, but Isabel well knew that it was not love that actuated him, for his own lips had told her so.

Her parents were elated at her success; but Mrs. Ashley noted the frequent gloom of her manner, when free from excitement; and then the still, small voice of conscience would summon her to its tribunal, until one survey of those elegant apartments, flashing with mirrors and adorned with the costliest furniture, drove away all accusing thoughts.

And so the weeks flew on, and mid-winter, with its tide of fashionable parties, was ushered in. Mr. Falkner, proud of the attention his wife received, urged her from one scene of gaiety to another. At length Mrs. Ray, the acknowledged leader of ~~fashion~~ *fashion*, gave her grand ball of the season. At a late hour appeared Isabel and her husband, and every eye centered upon them, as they advanced through the suite of drawing-rooms to their hostess. Isabel, pure as the pearls she wore, seemed unconscious of all the admiration she excited. Her appearance was indeed striking in the extreme. Her clear, ~~her~~ complexion was a shade more pale, her deep-blue eyes a trifle larger and more intense in their depth of expression, the whole contour of her face, in short, more severely classical than it had seemed a few short months before; but, then, far more attractive was her matronly dignity than the girlish freshness which it had replaced.

Nothing could be more becoming than her rich dress of maize-colored satin, with its bertha and deep flouncings of costly lace; and never were arms and neck revealed, more faultlessly fair or

more symmetrically moulded. Her magnificent black hair was dressed entirely without ornament, save at one side, where, looped in the braid, hung a most perfect spray of valley lillies.

"How beautiful she is?"

"More beautiful than ever!" were the whispered exclamations.

"Who is ~~she~~ who is ~~she~~?" asked a fair young stranger from a northern city, of the gentleman upon whose arms she was leaning.

"That is Mrs. Falkner—the belle of the season. Is it possible you have not met her before?" was the answer.

"You forget that this is my first appearance in New York society. And that is her father, I suppose?"

"By no means—her husband."

"You don't say so! why she is so young, and his hair is almost gray. Poor thing! I thought her eyes were not happy ones. Do you know why she married him?"

The gentleman smiled at her naive and earnest questioning.

"I can tell you what is current in society," he answered.

"It is hinted that the daughter's choice would have rested elsewhere, had it not been for an ambitious mother; but, for my own part, I think it gossip, for Falkner seems quite devoted to his young bride, and she is so perfectly satisfied with his devotion as to be utterly regardless of the attention paid her by others. I never saw a person more so. After all, Falkner is a fine-looking man, very elegant in his address, and I see no reason why he should not be as able to command the love and respect of his wife as any of the striplings of the present day, two-thirds of them brainless fops, and the other third as vain and self-conceited as a woman of what little talent they have."

"For shame, Mr. Macon. 'Vain and self-conceited as a woman!' That is really too bad. But as you are so severe

on your own sex, I will not quarrel with you on behalf of mine, provided you will tell me whether you class yourself with the first two-thirds, or with the last."

Mr. Macon replied in such a way as to continue the bantering conversation.

Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Falkner reached the saloon that was given up to the dancers. Here, as usual, Isabel was soon surrounded by a circle of admirers; for, as to admire Mrs. Falkner was the fashion, they were willing to subject themselves to her cold, although never ungracious reception. This evening, Ralph Bramley was the first to solicit her hand in a waltz. His pertinacity displeased her, for she had always refused to dance with him since her marriage, and, resolved to punish him, she immediately afterward waltzed with another.

Her husband noticed this breach of etiquette, and censured his wife severely for it in his own mind. Had he the least suspicion that Bramley was the one whose avowal of love he had overheard, he would have commended her instead.

As the night wore on, Isabel, wearied by the gaiety that surrounded her, wandered off by herself to a remote part of the extensive conservatory. The cool plashing of a fountain near, fell gratefully upon her ears, and, finding a seat where some large tropical plants cast a heavy shadow, she gave herself up to one of those reveries that were now not uncommon to her. Through green vistas of drooping vines and rare-blooming exotics, she could catch such glimpses of the brilliantly-lighted apartments, as to make it seem like a scene in fairy-land. Hundreds of wax tapers mingled their soft light with the glare of the chandeliers, reflecting back a thousand-fold from the flashing mirrors on the glistening satin draperies that fell from the arching door-ways and lofty windows—on the statuary—on the fresh-blooming flowers, that arranged in stands of gilded wicker-work and in vases and baskets of

moss, were every where seen—throughout the drawing-rooms—around the spacious saloon—up the broad stair-case: and gliding in and out amidst all this splendor, yet with no appearance of a crowd, so large was the mansion, were hundreds of fairy forms, whose dainty dresses of gossamer or of soft rich satin, sweeping over the gorgeous flowering of the tufted carpets, gave an ethereal appearance in the distance, impossible to imagine.

Isabel saw all this, and yet her thoughts were not upon it. One little year before she had mingled with the same throng, the lightest of the light-hearted; and now, oh where, amidst them all, she questioned, could she find one whose chains so crushed the heart with their burden as did her own? She knew it not—in her hopelessness she dreamed of no greater misery than was hers; but there were there that night, those, to whom Isabel's burden would have been as the lightest and the purest flakes of snow. Those, from whose hearts the innocence of youth had departed forever, and, although they wore fair smiles, and brows where time had scarcely laid a finger, yet all the music and mirth that surrounded them could not lay the phantom of memory that haunted them with its presence.

Ah, Isabel! God only can keep thee from knowing a deeper, and a keener anguish! He only can defend thee from the temptations that even now are gathering in thy path!

Those flakes of snow that fall so heavily—so freezingly upon thy young heart now, have not so accumulated that the sun cannot melt them away. One there is who is never deaf to the cry of humanity. Trust in Him—pray to Him, and from the midst of the clouds that cast their shadows so densely upon thee, He will smile down, and His strength will guard and fortify thee against all evil.

Tears gathered in Isabel's eyes as she sat apart and mused on. Now and then a group passed her by, but in the recess in

which she was hidden she was not observed. She felt grateful to her husband for the kindness that he ever showed her, and she battled with her heart, striving to stay the tide of emotion that Ralph Bramley's voice never failed to agitate.

Suddenly she sprang from her seat, and crushed back the tears in her eyes, for the one of whom she was thinking stood beside her.

How tenderly low was the voice that so thrilled her!

"Isabel!"

She vainly essayed to answer.

"Isabel, you have almost crazed me with your coldness! Speak! Give me one word of encouragement! Tell me—are we not both equally miserable?"

Again Isabel's pale lips moved, but there came no audible answer. The reproof she would have given, was legible in her face, as he continued—

"I know that I have lost you forever, but have some mercy upon me, Isabel, or I do not know what extreme I shall be driven to. Do not repel me so chillingly! Let me at least look upon you, and listen to your voice, as I did once. Oh, Isabel! God only knows the storm that is raging within me—will you refuse to quiet it? It is so little that I ask of you—only throw aside those freezing tones. Look upon me as you once did, and I shall go from you a better and a happier man. Do not turn away from me—stay, Isabel, I beg of you to stay."

It was in vain. She had gone.

His brows were knitted, his eyes flashed with a fierce light, and turning on his heel, he wrenched a half opened white moss-rose from its bending stalk, and wantonly tore its pure petals apart, crushing them with his foot as they fell on the tessellated floor before him.

Isabel went straight to her husband, and pleading great fatigue, requested him to send her immediately home. He

dispatched a servant for the carriage, and accompanied her himself, questioning her with seeming anxiety; and on account of her pale cheeks and drooping air, deferred the reproof that he had intended giving when he should be alone with her.

CHAPTER IV.

To see that eye so cold, so still,
Which once, O God! could melt in bliss!
No, no, I cannot bear the chill—
Hate, burning hate, were heaven to this!—*Moore.*

ABOUT a week passed away before an opportunity presented itself to Mr. Falkner, to express to his wife, his disapproval of her treatment of Mr. Bramley. They were driving out on the Harlaem road, when Ralph passed them on horseback, Isabel scarcely returning his salute.

"I have very seldom, Mrs. Falkner," said her husband, "seen any thing in you to which the most fastidious could object, with the exception of your treatment of Mr. Bramley. I have once or twice been mortified at your violating the plainest rules of etiquette, where he was concerned, as in the matter of waltzing with another, at Mrs. Ray's, after having refused him. You know that it is gratifying to me to have you receive attention, and that the usages of polite society require you to accept of it; and although as I have observed before, your general manner is colder than I should desire it to be, it seems to me that it is frequently increased to rudeness to Mr. Bramley. I am in hopes that when you know him better your unreasonable prejudices will vanish; for I can assure you that I find him a young man of remarkable talent, and I should not be surprised should he eventually rise to some of our highest

offices. I trusted him yesterday with a case that requires great legal research and acumen; and, by the way, I had forgotten to mention to you that he dines with us to-morrow. I hope you will remember he is my friend, and treat him as such."

Isabel bowed her head in answer, and turned away to conceal the tearful eye and quivering lip. Her first impulse was to confide in her husband, who she knew would never have placed this trial in her path had he known all—but then to her memory came the words, "I do not wish you to inform me, for so long as I remain in ignorance, I cannot visit upon him the punishment he deserves;" and Ralph Bramley was still too dear to her, for him to be subjected to any danger for her sake. No, she would hide in her own heart all its struggles, and none should dream of the bitter waters that were surging there.

The next day Mr. Bramley kept his appointment and dined with them, and from that date became a frequent visitor at their house.

Isabel, sustained by a higher principle than even her sense of duty, was forever on her guard; and not unrewarded was she for the effort she was making. Her husband's pride in her seemed daily developing itself into fondness; and Isabel had learned to feel that the love of such a man as her husband was something to be proud of. She would at least make herself worthy of it, so far as she was capable; but she might never hope to return it, while the beatings of her heart were so quickened by the footstep of another. For the emotion which she so frequently experienced, and yet so well concealed, she sometimes felt a reproachful pang; but then would come the thought, that so long as she triumphed over all, the suffering which she endured was sufficient penance.

One evening, Mr. Falkner, having an engagement out, was kept away until a late hour, and it so happened that, there

being no other company, Ralph and Isabel were left entirely alone.

Since he had been admitted upon such familiar terms into the household, he had not offended Isabel by any words of love; although his tones and looks were oftentimes sufficiently expressive. This evening, the restraint was increased instead of lessened by Mr. Falkner's absence; and at an early hour he arose to leave, requesting her first to sing one of their old songs with him.

In complying, Isabel miscalculated her own strength.

The sad, but rich and deep tones of his voice, stirred many buried memories, and the tears that started to her eyes could not be concealed from one so ever watchful for any trace of feeling in herself.

He saw his advantage, and he was not slow in improving it.

"You *shall* listen to me to-night, Isabel," he said, grasping her small, delicate hands firmly in his own. "Twice have you escaped me by flight, but it shall not be the third time. Ah, Isabel! I have watched you day after day, until I have thought your heart was ice; but these warm tears that are now dropping on my hand deny it. And for me, too, are they not?" he added, looking into her face, with eyes that would have seemed overflowing with tenderness, had it not been for the glow of an unholy light.

She struggled to disengage herself.

"Nay, do not be frightened, Isabel. I ask nothing of you, but to let me hear from your lips that my love is not wholly thrown away—if not from them, let me read it once again in your eyes," he said, stooping to gaze into them, while her tremulous breath played amidst the masses of waving brown hair that shadowed his forehead.

Her continued efforts to release herself seemed to madden him. His eyes flashed with impatience, his breath came quick

and heavy, and ~~fast~~^{lighter} still he clasped the hands that were so powerless within his own.

"Oh, Ralph! oh, Mr. Bramley! I beg of you to let me go. This is ungenerous, cruel—more than this, it is dishonorable. Think of my husband! How kind he is to you, as well as to me!"

"Think of him! Do I not think of him until my brain is almost mad? Did he not rob me of the only treasure that life held for me? You bid me think of him, when there is not an hour in the day but I do think of him, and wish him dead!"

"Ralph! Ralph! that I, his wife, should be made to listen to such words from your lips. I command you, let me go. Indeed, you hurt my hand cruelly. He was never thus unkind to me."

A smile, that was half a sneer, answered her. Although he released her hands somewhat, he still held them firmly.

Isabel now grew perfectly self-possessed; she ceased to struggle, and, summoning, all her energies to her aid, endeavored to calm him by her dignity of demeanor.

Once more he smiled mockingly, as he said—

"You think to deceive me again into the belief that your heart is frozen. It is in vain, for here, where I stand, I can mark all its warm beatings; and more than that, I know it is for me that its pulsations are quickened."

A strange change was taking place in Isabel's breast; one of those sudden revolutions of feeling, which like a tornado sweeping in its strength, spreads devastation, where but a moment before, all was peace and beauty. The change was as great in Isabel, but it was not so destructive an one. From that moment her feelings took a healthier tone. Ralph Bramley's unprincipled conduct suddenly opened her eyes to the defects

in his character. She ceased to love, when she ceased to respect; and she was able with truth to answer—

“You deceive yourself, Mr. Bramley. One who has so forfeited all claims to my regard, as you have done this evening, cannot expect to retain any place in a heart that heretofore may have been so unworthily occupied.”

These words, spoken in sincerity as they were, were sufficient to restore him to himself. He slowly released her hands, and they fell crushed together and quivering in her lap. A deep gloom settled in his eyes. Once freed from the thrall of passion, he was not so lost that he could not see at a glance the enormity of his offence.

“I deserve to lose your regard,” he said, “but oh, Isabel, I was crazed. ~~There is no more to be said.~~ Forgive me this once. My wrenched heart, with every fibre bare and bleeding as it is, drove me mad, or I could not have distressed you so.”

Again those tones were low and tender, but the wife's feelings had been so outraged that they fell without effect upon her ears.

“I shall think more leniently of you, perhaps, when you have left me, Mr. Bramley, but certainly not while you offend me with your presence.”

Once again, he attempted a defence, but Isabel refused to listen, and he was obliged to leave, feeling that he merited all the scorn that he saw depicted upon her beautiful countenance.

CHAPTER V.

The heart is like water. It flows where it will.

Lamartine.

When I have read of the actions of the passions in dramas and novels, which are extolled as displaying the secrets of the heart, I have either considered sudden revulsions and contrasts of feeling, depicted in the same individual, impossible fictions, or, at any rate, true only of characters, with which I, the reader, had nothing in common. But I have learned my mistake.—*Lady Lee's Widowhood.*

THERE was one room in the house in which Isabel was seldom seen. It was the library; and equally free from the intrusion of her husband was her own apartment, that opened into the conservatory. It was here, the next morning, that she sat, reviewing in her mind what course it was best for her to pursue in reference to Mr. Bramley. How she felt the need of her husband's advice and assistance—how earnestly she longed to confide her secret to him; and could she have been sure that she had not deceived herself in imagining that she was gradually winning his love, she would have done so; but there was the remembrance of what he had said of his first wife, and the impossibility of his loving again; and pride held her back from being the first to make advances.

Most beautiful looked Isabel in the subdued light of that elegant room. Her morning-dress of maroon cashmere, robed a form as faultless as ever Praxiteles chose for a model. Through windows of stained glass, through curtains of snowy lace, and brocade of as vivid a pink as the cleft heart of a budding rose, came the mellow light that rested on her fair brow. The hangings of one window had been carelessly swept aside, and here tiny waves of light rippled in, lending the white

ground of the ~~carpet~~ carpet its ruby glow, and lighting up with lifelike hues its masses of tangled flowers which were so skilfully interwoven. Divans ~~of pink and gold~~, with silk cushions of pink and gold—chairs of unique and fanciful patterns—stands, glittering with bijouterie, were arranged with the most skilful taste. The chiseled mantelpiece, of statuary marble, was ornamented with a time-piece and vases of Sevres china, enameled with pink and gold, and here and there, amid the choice paintings that adorned the wall, were exquisite little statuettes, supported by brackets of ivory and alabaster. The greatest perfection of detail was shown in all the appointments of the room, and yet of how little value was it to its young mistress, who sat there, shading her sad eyes, unmindful of it all?

"I will at least tell him that I cannot receive Mr. Bramley as a guest," she said, rising from her seat and going direct to the library. The door was ajar, and she went in, but he was not there.

In strong contrast to her boudoir was the simplicity of the library. The mantle-piece of carved oak, matched the book-cases, the arm-chairs, and the tables, and even the same dull hue predominated in the Brussels carpet on the floor, relieved only by a checker of crimson.

A chair larger and more inviting than the rest was drawn up to the table, and Isabel languidly seated herself in it to await her husband's return. He could not have gone to remain long away, for his papers, which were usually put under lock and key, were now scattered around; nor could it have been long since he left them, for the ink was not yet dry upon the pen in the standish. Listlessly she turned some leaves that lay in an open port-folio before her. Her own name arrested her attention. Scarcely thinking of what she was about, she read on. Could it be possible that she it was of whom he was

writing? She almost disbelieved the evidence of her eyes—so deep, so passionate was the love traced in that diary—and not a thing of recent growth was it either. From constant allusions to the past, she found that from their first acquaintance, had his heart been given up to her, while her love seemed to him a treasure beyond his wildest hopes.

Isabel was melted as she noted the despairing tenderness that filled many of the eloquent passages. Her tears plashing on the papers, in which she was so much absorbed, aroused her to the impropriety of thus acquiring a knowledge of her husband's secret, and springing to her feet, she fled like a guilty creature from the room.

But not from her thoughts could she as easily escape. Her cheeks were lighted with an unwonted glow, her eyes were suffused with a tenderer and a happier light, and as she stood before the mirror in her dressing-room, she smiled to see how great a change the consciousness of her husband's love had wrought.

Ah! there is nothing in the world that will so re-act upon the heart as love—nothing that will so fill the inner being with new life, as the thought that we are necessary to the happiness of another.

Isabel heard footsteps near her chamber-door, and timid and trembling as the bride of an hour, she watched if it might be her husband who had followed her.

No, it was a servant who brought a summons for her to the parlor. In her new found happiness she would have denied herself to all, but glancing at the card, she found another pleasure in store for her.

Her old friend, Herbert Norris—a son by the first wife, of the gentleman her Aunt Esther had married, and who had been travelling with them in Europe—was awaiting her in the parlor.

With much of her old impulsive manner, she hurried down

the stair-case, impatient to see one who brought tidings from her beloved aunt. In her eagerness she did not even observe her husband, who was just returning to the library; but he paused to look after her, so strange was it to see in her so much of animation. He overheard the first words of greeting.

"O Herbert, how glad I am to see you—it has seemed so long since—" the door closed, and Arthur Falkner was no listener, so the last part of the sentence, "since I have heard from Aunt Esther" was lost upon him.

He entered the library, and locked himself in. Folding his hands behind him, he paced the room to and fro.

"At length, the knowledge of who it is that Isabel loves is to be forced upon me—who it is that can call back her old ways; all ice as she has proven to others. Ah, my wife! why did God deny me the love that would have brought me such perfect happiness?"

"I deserve it—I deserve it all," he continued, "all the agony that I have suffered—all that I am suffering now—the future has no trial in store for me that I have not merited; for in my wretched selfishness did I not shut her out from the heaven of love that was dawning upon her. Isabel, may God forgive me! you never can, nor can I forgive myself."

He sat down in his arm-chair, and burying his face in his hands, thought how he could best recompense her for the trials she had undergone. To separate from her—to leave her unmolested mistress of his wealth, would never do. Slander might assign a cause that would bring disgrace upon her.

Scheme after scheme was revolved; but to adopt the only one that seemed to him capable of restoring her to happiness, required so much of self-denial that he would have gladly abandoned it; but again and again it recurred to him, until at length he triumphed over the selfishness of his heart so

much as to resolve to offer to procure for her a divorce; for he knew that by his influence, and a liberal use of his means, this could be accomplished. For this purpose he left the library to see if she were yet disengaged.

Meantime, Isabel after wearying Herbert with questions about her aunt, volunteered to repay him for his information, by gathering a bouquet for him from the conservatory. He accompanied her there for the purpose, and laughing and chatting they loitered through, culling their spoils here and there, and finally sitting down in Isabel's boudoir to arrange them. With the freedom of their childish acquaintance, he stooped to fasten some sprays of daphnia in her hair, when Mr. Falkner entered the room and quietly looked on.

It was such an unusual thing, that Isabel was quite startled out of her self-possession.

"Mr. Falkner, Mr. Norris—my cousin Herbert—Aunt Esther's step-son," said Isabel, explanatively.

Mr. Falkner was coldly polite; and the restraint of his presence caused it to be a relief when Herbert Norris left.

Isabel's eyes fell, and her cheeks burned under her husband's steady gaze, for her heart was full of the secret she had discovered.

To him these were so many confirmations of the truth of his suspicions.

A cluster of daphnia fell from Isabel's hair. Scarcely knowing what she was doing, she stooped, picked it up, and carefully placed it in a vase of water.

Again the glow of a smouldering fire shot from Mr. Falkner's eyes. The stormy passions of his nature, over which his manhood had gained such an ascendancy, were triumphing now. They were reflected in that strange glance, in the pallor of his face, in the livid lips that worked convulsively, although no sound escaped them.

Isabel, unconscious of the change, still sat caressing the flower, which she had placed upon a stand beside her, and although she knew it not, her happiness visible in her very air, despite her furtive look and blushing cheeks.

At length the storm broke in all its fury.

"Isabel, ~~listen~~ I came here to release you from the bonds which my own folly forged for you, but I was not prepared to see such shameless bravery. It seems that there is one who has the power to melt the ice in your bosom, and call up, even in my presence, smiles that to all others are denied. Would to God you had concealed it from my eyes better, and not have ~~thus~~ aroused the demon within me!"

Isabel, fixing her innocent, pleading eyes upon him, said,

"What have I done to deserve these cruel words? You are wronging me, indeed—"

Her husband interrupted her.

"Do you take me for an idiot that you deny to me the evidence of my senses?" he questioned, and then, as she would have answered, he checked her, forbidding her to speak. "Listen to me," he added, at the same time snatching the daphnia from the vase, and tearing its pure waxen petals apart—"while you remain in this house, madam, you will preserve no love tokens, to gall me with the sight; nor shall you, with my consent, have another interview with your lover here. In pursuance of the plans which I came to communicate to you, I will immediately make arrangements with your parents for your removal there; and then, in a few months at the farthest—when you have obtained the divorce, for the application for which I give my consent—you will be at liberty to receive his visits without dishonor to yourself or to me."

He turned to leave the room.

"My husband! for mercy's sake, listen to me! if you only

would, how much misery might be spared to both—I cannot be sent from you—I"—

He shook his head—a mocking smile was on his lips, as he paused in the door-way to say—

"And so it grieves you to leave all these pretty gewgaws? Well, it shall be as you say—no doubt you will find, though, that love will repay you for all such deprivations."

Had it not been for the unworthy suspicions these words betrayed, Isabel would never have suffered him to depart, until she had convinced him of his mistake. This it was that sealed her lips—that froze the warm current of her viens, and made her sink back upon her seat, nerveless and rigid as a piece of marble.

Amidst the whirl that racked her brain came the one thought, "He loves me, and his own heart will teach him how unjustly he has judged me, and he will return to me again."

In vain she waited—the weary day passed on, and even at the meal-hours he did not join her. At length, in the solitude of her chamber, she abandoned herself to her grief. Blessed, soothing tears came to her aid, relieving the heart that seemed all but bursting with its anguish. She could not sleep, but, in the exhaustion that followed her fit of weeping, she lay motionless. The clear moonlight that flooded the room fell brightest upon the couch where she had thrown herself, all her long-waving hair unloosed, the forgotten clusters of daphnia still tangled in its thick masses, yielding their odorous breath, all bruised and blighted as they were.

The moonlight faded from her form, and left it robed in shadows. By and by it died entirely out of the room, and the darkness of night settled over all. It was a weary time to lie and think, but the gray light of morning still found Isabel with unclosed eyes—those strangely beautiful eyes, more beautiful in their languor than ever.

At length the chamber was flooded with sunlight. It roused Isabel from the apathy that had settled upon her and inspired her with new courage.

After an unusually careful toilet she went down to the library, hoping to meet her husband there, before going to the breakfast-room, confident in her power of convincing him, in his calmer moments, of the wrong he had done her. The door was locked. She tapped gently, but received no answer. The day wore away, and, disappointed and sick at heart, the evening shadows again fell around her. The next day, and the next, he still remained closeted in his library, denying himself to all, save the agent who had charge of his estates, and office-boys that occasionally came and went with packages of papers.

What could it mean?

At night until a late hour she could hear him pace the floor of his bed-room; but there she could not disturb him.

Thus things had gone on for nearly a week, and Isabel was almost worn out with suspense, when one morning, at an early hour, the door of the chamber was suddenly flung open, and her mother, pale and greatly agitated, came in, and threw her arms around her. Isabel, weak and nervous as she was, returned the embrace without questioning, and wept outright.

"It is terrible, my child! terrible! and so sudden. Do calm yourself, and tell me all about it."

Still Isabel sobbed on, and made no answer.

"I had never thought of the possibility of such a thing. Your husband, of all others. Do try to tell me how it came about—how came he to risk so much?"

Isabel dashed the tears from her eyes and looked up at her mother.

"You must know more than I do," she said, striving to

calm herself. "It was an unfortunate misunderstanding—but I thought no one knew of it but ourselves."

"Misunderstanding! no one knew of it! Heavens! is the child crazy, that she does not know the whole town is ringing with it!"

Isabel gave one cry of anguish, and fell prone at her mother's feet.

That terrible cry brought Mr. Falkner, in his dressing-gown, to his wife's room. He lifted her and carried her to the window, dashing up the casement to let in the cool morning air.

"Isabel! Isabel!" called the mother frantically.

It was of no use. Her head dropped over her husband's arm, her dark hair floating down, and neither the mother's agonized calls, nor the husband's renewed exertions, could bring the flush of life to her death-like face.

Mr. Falkner spoke not a word, although his presence of mind did not for a moment forsake him. He laid her on the couch and brought aromatic vinegars, with which he chafed her forehead and her cold hands, until the quiver of her eyelids and the heaving of her breast denoted a return of consciousness.

A moment more, and she sat bolt upright, with her waxen hands pressed over her forehead.

"What has happened? Tell me quickly, or I shall lose my reason—I know it is something dreadful."

"I will tell you, Isabel—you shall hear it from my own lips. I am beggared, but I will not drag you down to ruin with me."

Still she did not understand.

"No, no, that is not it—that would be nothing. Tell me, mother, what is it? Oh, I remember now;" and, sinking back among the cushions, she said, in piteous tones, "Oh, Arthur! why would you not listen to me, before it was too late?—to

think that every one should know of this cruel misunderstanding!"

Mrs. Ashley stopped her rocking and her weeping, in both of which she had been indulging, in order to soothe her excited state, and looked up in amazement.

"She has lost her reason—I know she has. To call your failure nothing, when every one says that you are determined to pay every thing, and so will not have a cent left. I know, if *I* were a man, and had a wife dependent on *me*, I would not give up everything to *my* creditors. They would think all the more of me if I ~~were~~ wise enough to keep it myself."

"Is it true, Arthur? Is this what mother means?—have you lost all?" asked Isabel with eagerness.

"Almost every thing—but you will not blame me for the course I have pursued, when you know all."

"Blame you?" cried Isabel, springing into his arms. "I thank God for it, for now I can tell you without fear of misconstruction, how very dear you are to me, for yourself alone," and she hid her head upon his shoulder, frightened at her own temerity.

It was a strong clasp that held her there, and powerful were the throbs of the agitated heart that answered the gentle beatings of her own.

Arthur Falkner knew that he was beloved by his wife—he felt it in the clinging of her arm around his neck, he read it in the depth of her blue eyes, when he swept aside her hair to kiss her forehead—he had not one doubt of it, and yet how much there was to him still unexplained.

Mrs. Ashley felt herself an intruder, and folding her shawl around her in a gracefully becoming manner, she quietly took her departure. "Queerer" than ever seemed to her the "notions" that Aunt Esther had instilled into Isabel. To be thankful for the loss of a fortune, was more than she could comprehend;

and she was quite vexed with herself for her waste of sympathy. She could not understand Isabel's allusions to a misunderstanding, nor did she care to, so centered was every thought upon the unanticipated failure of her son-in-law.

CHAPTER VI.

Far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife,
They kept the even tenor of their way.—*Gray*.

NOT many weeks elapsed before the red flag of the auctioneer fluttered from a window of Mr. Falkner's mansion. A long line of carriages was drawn up in front and in the neighborhood of the house, and a continual stream of people was pouring in and out of the entrance. Never on festal night had it been so crowded. All over, from the attic to the cellar, curious eyes were peering. Rude hands examined the texture of the gorgeous curtains, and rattled the plate, glass and silver, as though it were the first time such articles had fallen under their notice. Merry laughter and gossiping remarks floated here and there above the general buzz that pervaded every apartment.

At length the auctioneer's hammer silenced those who had come for the purpose of buying, but with the majority, the stream of gossip flowed on.

A showily dressed little body, with a profusion of light curls clustering around her insipid, thoughtless face, was delighted with a Parian ornament that had been knocked down to her at double the value.

"If a person does not care to pay a good price for any thing, they had better not bid against me," she said to her com-

panion, "for when I once start anything, I will have it at any rate, and it only makes me the more determined if two or three are bidding against me. I would have paid a hundred times the value of that vase before I would have given it up."

"A fool and his money are soon parted," said an old woman dressed in rusty black, who stood close by the lady's elbow, but as her eyes were steadily fixed upon the auctioneer, the owner of the vase did not seem to receive the remark as personal.

"No. 96. An elegant Dresden china night-lamp. That will soon be up. Shall I bid upon it, Eloise?" said a mustached and perfumed exquisite, to the childish figure that was leaning upon his arm.

"It is not worth while, for you know we shall have gas, Alphonse, and we can turn it very low," she answered, with the most perfect ~~indifference~~ *indifference*.

The old lady looked straight at them through her glasses, gave a most expressive "Humph!" and was soon absorbed again in her catalogue.

"That Dresden china lamp I am determined to have," whispered the buyer of the vase, "so there is no use in Dr. Wilmington's coveting it for his bride that is to be. Isabel Falkner thought worlds of it, I know, for it was one of the gifts that her Aunt Esther sent her from Europe. Won't she be piqued at my having it?—she always did treat me as though I was a nobody. It is my turn now. Poor thing! I ought not to exult over her either, for goodness knows she has fallen low enough."

"No. 96," cried the auctioneer. "An elegant Dresden china night-lamp."

"Which is marked retained," said the bookkeeper.

"Which is amongst the articles retained," repeated the auctioneer. "No. 97. An original, by Guido."

"Oh what a spite, to think that after all, I should not have that lamp," said the lady of the flaxen curls. "I wanted to carry it to her, for the sake of seeing how she is living. I expect she has cried her eyes out before this, and if her husband don't get reproaches enough from her and her mother, I am mistaken. I pity him, poor soul!"

This was but one of the very many charitable suppositions that were that day made of the Falkners. How keenly disappointed would have been the envious hearts from which they proceeded, could they have known the true state of things.

Mr. Falkner had saved more from the wreck of his fortune than he had anticipated—enough to yield him a moderate income; and happier than they had ever been before, they took possession of the house which Isabel had busied herself in furnishing, during the many days in which her husband was so closely confined in examining his accounts.

It was not Isabel's taste alone that had been in requisition, for it was her means that had provided every thing.

The first steamer that arrived from Europe after her husband's misfortunes were made public, brought a letter from Aunt Esther, which contained the following passages:

"We hear, dear Isabel, that your husband will be deeply involved by the failure of his consignee in Liverpool; so you must now accept from my hands the dowry that was long ago promised you, and which, considering the many years that I passed under your father's roof without incurring the expenses of an establishment of my own, is no more than you are justly entitled to. By inquiring at my lawyers, you will find that the sum of ten thousand dollars was settled upon you previous to my marriage, and, therefore, there is accumulated for you the interest of several years. I had intended giving it to you when you should marry, thinking that you might be united to one to whom it would be an assistance; but we heard such

accounts of the splendor of your husband's establishment, that I knew it would be but 'as a drop in a bucket;' and I rejoice now that I reserved it for the days of reverses, to which the wealthiest are liable in our country.

"You used to mention a Mr. Bramley in your letters to me. Is his first name Ralph? There has lately died in Leicestershire an eccentric old gentleman, a Sir Ralph Bramley of Bramley Hall, who has left his entire property to a nephew and namesake in America, to the exclusion of his young wife, to whom he was married about a year since. I hope the heir will provide liberally for the widow."

So Aunt Esther's generosity furnished Isabel with means; and never was there a prouder wife than was she, when for the first time she showed her husband through the house. Her eyes were full of happy tears, and although Mr. Falkner made brave efforts to hide his own, there was more than one that escaped his control.

"Here is the library, dearest. It would not hold all your book-cases, of course; but we measured the recesses, and Herbert retained those that fitted them best, filling them first with your most valuable books. The carpets and chairs, too—do they not look natural?"

Mr. Falkner sat down in his favorite chair, and drew his wife into his lap. He could not speak, but he pressed his tremulous lips again and again upon her cheeks and brow.

There, folded caressingly in his arms, Isabel made her explanations. She told frankly of all the phases of her fancy for Ralph Bramley; of which her husband had never before the slightest suspicion. How gently he chided her for not confiding her troubles sooner to him, at the same time reproaching himself for his want of discernment. He made her repeat to him the history of her awakened love for himself—the misery she endured at the thought of the separation that she

supposed he was laboring to effect, when his business affairs were alone engrossing his attention—the anguish of the moment, when ignorant of the true cause of her mother's emotions, she misinterpreted her meaning; and, in return, he confessed to her that disappointed love alone had prompted him to deny the passion that he felt for her.

Never was human happiness more full and complete than theirs. Truly has it been said that "Love is happiness for this world, and for eternity—a flame which burns in heaven, and of which the soft reflection extends to ourselves."

Mrs. Ashley saw nothing in the new state of things to repay her for the mortification she endured at her daughter's change of circumstances.

"Isabel has no ambition, Mr. Ashley," she said complainingly, to her husband. "She actually seems as happy again as she did when mistress of her first splendid home, with its retinue of servants. I am sure I shall never get over the loss of it. And now, only to think, she keeps no carriage. Why, in the whole city, there was scarce one that could equal her turn-out; but she does not care a sou. It is too trying. You may thank your sister Esther for it, Mr. Ashley; it was all her doings, making Isabel such a spiritless, unambitious creature as she is."

"I am sure I do thank her for it," replied Mr. Ashley, with more warmth than he generally manifested. "I have felt that we have great reason to thank her, for Isabel has borne herself like a true woman through her husband's reverses. I tell you, I am proud of my daughter. I have never heard one word of repining from her lips; and her husband says that her presence would fill a hovel with sunshine and make it a palace to him. There was a time when I feared that you had done wrong in encouraging her to marry a man so much her senior, and thought it possible that she had fancied Bramley. By the

way, did you hear that he had inherited an immense fortune from an English relative?"

"Bramley? Ralph Bramley?—Isabel's old lover?"

"Yes, some say his income will be fifty thousand a year; Bramley himself, does not estimate it as high as that. He told me yesterday, that while it would not fall short of forty thousand, neither would it much exceed it."

Mrs. Ashley looked the picture of despair, but she wisely said nothing. Her husband was too much like Aunt Esther and Isabel, to sympathize with her, in this new affliction. To think that the poor lover whom she had sneered at, should in one short year have reached the pinnacle of wealth, while the rich suitor, whose hand she had all but commanded her daughter to accept, had in the same brief period, met with such a dizzy fall, was a bit of republican experience that she was far from relishing.

Her vanity and her ambition, had subjected her daughter to perils, which might have proven her downfall, had it not been for the principles which Aunt Esther had so faithfully instilled—a *dowry*, of which Isabel well knew the value, for she saw how near a wreck, her life might have been, had not the influence of her early education been strong to hold her in the paths of right.

Ralph Bramley crossed the ocean to meet with a bitter disappointment. A new will had been found, which gave the young widow undisputed possession of the entire property, so long as she remained a widow. In the event of her marrying again, Ralph was to succeed to the property.

This was a heavy blow to him, but so completely did he disguise his feelings, as to convince his new found relative, that he was the most disinterested person in the world. Accepting her proffered hospitalities, he improved his time so well, that at the end of a month, he had succeeded in fully

convincing her, that the wishes of the 'dear deceased' would be best carried out by their union. Accordingly, Bramley took a tour on the continent, until the period of mourning expired; when he returned to take possession of his estate, and its fair incumbrance.

His married life was far from being a happy one.

United to one beneath him in the scale of intellect—one toward whom he was only attracted by sordid motives, his punishment daily became more severe. The society which should have constituted the chief charms of his home grew more and more irksome. He plunged from one species of dissipation into another, in his vain search for happiness, disappointing the high hopes of his friends, doing violence to his own better nature, and squandering the income for which he had taken upon himself the bonds that had so soon become galling to him.

Thus, from his want of moral principle, was Ralph Bramley alone the sufferer in the blight that fell upon his early love.

A Day in Midsummer.

Lo ! from yonder rising upland
Springs the dewy-footed Morn ;
Sweeping, with her waving garments,
Through the fields of rustling corn.
Through the vale she quickly glideth,
Breathing on the billowy grain,
And like amber wavelets flowing,
See it sparkling o'er the plain.

Now she bends beside the fountain,
In the deep and dark ravine,
Bathes her lips and sunny forehead,
Wreathes her hair with ivy green.
In the grand old wood she wanders,
Through the glossy vine-arched bowers.
Weaving in an od'rous chaplet
Timid buds and trembling flowers.

To the lightly dancing brooklet
Whisp'reth she sweet words of glee,
As adown the rocks it leapeth
Laughing o'er the loving lea.

In her eyes you see no traces
Of the depths of natal gloom,
Which her parent, Night, enshrouded,
As she weeping left his tomb.

Light of heart, she onward hastens,
Humming o'er the water's tune,
While upon the hill tops, sleeping,
Waits her younger sister, Noon.
Morn awakes her with her kisses,
And the beauty lifts her eyes
On the mossy vales and uplands,
Where the dew enamelled lies.

Flinging back her golden tresses,
Waving in voluptuous light,
Up the graceful Noon arises,
Glorious in her sister's sight.
Then the maiden Morn departeth,
And sweet Noon walks forth alone,
Languishing beside the fountains,
For her lovely sister flown.

Every hour she grows still sadder,
Every hour she mourns in vain,
Till at length the star crowned Evening,
Hastens o'er the lonely plain.
Struck with wonder at the beauty
Even of her fading charms,
Evening bows entranced before her,
And she sleeps within his arms.

ELSIE GRAY;

OR,

The Minister's Daughter.

VERY young was sweet Elsie Gray, when Philip Stewart parted from her in the oak grove which skirted the village of Glenwood. And Philip—wild Philip, numbered but a few more years than his companion, yet he loved her with a most devoted brotherly affection, and the gentle Elsie repaid it with a love no less deep.

Mr. Gray was the minister of Glenwood, and Elsie was his only child, a joyous creature—a perfect sunbeam, irradiating the large gloomy rooms of the old parsonage, and causing the father's heart to thrill with pleasure, and the fond mother's to tremble with delight.

Directly across the way from the parsonage, stood the large ~~manor~~ mansion of Squire Stewart—the great man of the village, living upon the superfluity which his father and his father's father had accumulated for him. Beneath the shade of the fine old elms which waved their long branches in 'clasp-
ing coolness' about the latticed windows of the parsonage,

had Elsie and Philip frolicked for hours, and over the clover meadows, and through the dark pine groves, had they rambled day after day, never dreaming that a future was to come in which their paths should separate.

Ah! beautiful childhood! loving, trusting childhood! Most blissful period of life, which no after-yearnings can ever restore. Wherefore do we pass so hastily the pure fountains and vine-clad temples of youth, trampling upon the perfumed blossoms, as we press eagerly forward over the greensward of life, to gather its thistles and its thorns?

Philip was an only son. Mr. Stewart was ambitious, and in this lay the history of their separation, but the heart of the youth beat bravely and strongly within him, and beneath the shade of the old oak he strove to re-assure the weeping Elsie.

"Oh, it does not take so long to go through college, Elsie—four years will soon glide away, and then you will be so proud of me, and I shall be so proud of my little wife, too, for that you are bound to be, are you not, Elsie?" But his companion only blushed, and awkwardly twisted the ribbon of her sash, for she was not quite sure that it was right for two so young to talk about such a serious subject.

"Now don't lose that paper," continued Philip, "for on it is the exact direction which all your little notes must bear, if you want me to receive them."

"No danger of my losing it, Philip," she replied; "but much more danger of your forgetting me when you get to that beautiful city, and you will learn to be ashamed of me, perhaps, and to call our love foolish, I am afraid," and she sighed heavily.

Long and earnestly they talked in the thick shade of the glossy leaves of the old oak, which was gathered in massive drapery, fold after fold, above them.

The sound of the fretting, moaning streamlet, which wound

through the glen, was borne to their ears like the complainings of a troubled spirit, while afar off within the maple grove, beyond the school-house, came ringing sounds of laughter from the merry children frolicking beneath the shade, and Elsie felt how lonely and desolate would these familiar sounds find her on the morrow. Twilight stole over the village and its scattered forests, and Philip and Elsie retraced their steps, the one with a heart beating high with hope and ambition, the other with pulses listless and faint, for from out the future, misty visions were looming upon her path, and her young heart throbbed grievously with thoughts of that evening's parting.

The next morning, as Philip was whirled from his father's door, he caught the glance of a tearful face through the parted vines, and the wave of a snowy hand. It was his last glimpse of *the child* Elsie.

One morning, a few weeks after the departure of Philip, Mr. Stewart crossed the road to the parsonage. In the little porch, Mrs. Gray was sitting alone, busy with her needle, and through the open window came the sweet sound of Elsie Gray's voice, as she recited her morning lessons to her father.

"Good morning, Mrs. Gray; this is very fine weather we are having now," he said, as he leaned over the little gate at the end of the gravelled walk.

"Very," she answered, gathering her work from off the seat into her lap; "Will you not sit down, squire, I will call Mr. Gray, directly."

"Oh, it's of no consequence," he said, as he drew nearer, "I only came over to speak to you a-about the children—Philly and Elly, you know. They've always been so brother and sister-like, he a-coming over here so much to recite his Latin and Greek, we can't wonder that they think a deal of each other; but I'm most afraid that this writin of letters

backards and forrards, won't be just the thing for Philip's studies, and they're so young, I thought mebbe we'd better put a stop to it."

"Well, it's just as you say, squire—if you think it will take Philip's mind from his studies, of course they'd better stop, by all means."

"Yes, yes, that's my opinion, and I'm glad to find you think as I do," answered the squire, eagerly. "I'll just write a word to Phil—he always was a good boy to mind, although he was a leetle wild, and you can tell Elly what we think about it."

When Squire Stewart left, Mrs. Gray communicated to Elsie his wishes. A quick, fluttering sigh escaped from her bosom as she answered, "very well, mother—I would'nt for worlds divert Philip's mind from his studies," but dutiful as she was, she could not overcome the growing dislike which, from that morning, she felt for Squire Stewart.

Vacation came, and with it a little note for Elsie. She cried with disappointment as she read it. Week after week had she counted the days—the very hours—and now to find that five more months must be numbered before they could meet, was too much to bear patiently.

Poor Elsie! no wonder that she sobbed so grievously. No wonder that she thought him strangely changed to prefer travelling with his father to wandering with her through their favorite wood paths.

But spring flitted onward, and summer came and departed, and beautiful autumn rested upon her forsaken couch. Then beneath the shadows of the same old oak, Philip and Elsie again sat, but how much of change had that one little year wrought. Elsie's delicate form was like the lily bud with snowy petals, just expanding. The auburn hair, which before had hung unconfined in wavy curls, was now of a glossier and

a darker hue, and was banded plainly over the forehead, and twisted simply around her small but beautifully shaped head. And Philip, he was changed. A deeper, steadier light burned in the clear depths of his dark eyes, and his proud lips curved with a haughty smile, as he recounted the incidents of his year of trial, to his listening companion.

"Thank heaven, I am a Freshman no longer," he said, and Elsie thought to herself what a fine thing it must be to be a Sophomore, as Philip had pictured a Sophomore's life so glowingly.

Ah! those happy four weeks, how soon they were numbered with the past, and again Elsie sat lonely and sad over her studies in her father's library, and Philip returned full of hope and happiness, for now he was, indeed, a Sophomore.

When April came, Elsie's heart was too full of anxiety, to grieve that Philip had gone to a Southern city to pass his vacation with a classmate.

Anxiety for the life of a father whom she had well nigh worshiped from her infancy, and whose grey hairs were dearer to her than the untold wealth of princes. But when had love the power to save its cherished objects from the grave? Alas! never—and so Elsie stood beside her dying father's couch, and poor Mrs. Gray knelt, praying wildly amidst her stifled sobs.

One moment of intense stillness followed by a quick, gasping moan—a low, trembling voice, saying, "God bless you, and be with you, my darlings," and the spirit of the devoted husband, the loving father and the faithful pastor escaped from its fetters of clay.

Ah! there was deep and bitter mourning within those walls that night; but the morning sun shone upon two tranquil and placid brows, for the struggling spirits had been subdued with the first wild gush of grief, and humbly and fervently had they

repeated the words of the Saviour, 'Thy will, not mine, be done.'

Days passed, and slowly from the old church tower rang out the funeral knell. They bore his coffin reverently and carefully up the broad aisle, where Sabbath after Sabbath, for well nigh a quarter of a century, he had passed in the strength of his manhood. They rested it beside the altar, where one short month before he had broken the bread, and consecrated the wine of the communion, and as the villagers pressed around, many a choking sob and moan of sorrow echoed through the aisles. One by one they passed to their seats, and Mrs. Gray and Elsie stood beside, to take their last look. The face of the widow was mournfully sweet, as she bent fondly over the clay, and pressed her parting kiss upon the marble lips of the departed; but Elsie's was as pallid as the form before her, and her compressed lips and glazed eyes told—oh; how plainly—that her crushed spirit was writhing and struggling within her. The voice of prayer went up in faltering tones from their midst, and then again they passed from the church, and wound slowly along the little path that led to the burial-ground. The coffin was lowered in the new-made grave, and old Deacon Walters came forward with tearful eyes, and the widow and the orphan, resting upon his arms, stepped to the brink, and glanced downward. Large, scalding tears chased each other down the widow's face as she turned away, and a half-stifled groan escaped from her swelling bosom. Elsie was motionless, and almost rigid, and the good deacon was obliged to draw her gently from the spot: but when the earth fell rattling upon the lid, she sprang wildly forward—a gasping cry—a terrible shriek, "My father! oh, my father!" and she fell heavily upon the pile of earth.

Long, very long to the anxious mother did poor Elsie remain in this death-like state, and when her eyes opened languidly

and slowly, they rested upon the vines which were twined across her chamber window.

* * * * *

It was the middle of June—the month of roses—and softly through the latticed windows of the parsonage stole the sweet breath of the pure jessamine, the clustering seringo, and the wreathing honey-suckle. Elsie was busily employed in fitting a bombazine to her mother's wasting form, for now they had poverty as well as affliction to battle with. The small salary of four hundred dollars, which Mr. Gray had received, had ceased the very moment of his death, and even the last quarterly payment of this had not been made. As economically as they had always lived, Mr. Gray had found it impossible to lay aside any of his salary at the end of the year, for he had entertained all the ministers, missionaries and lecturers, whose business had led them through the village.

"See, mother, how nicely—how beautifully it fits," said Elsie, as she fastened the last hook of the sombre dress.

"It does, indeed, my dear, and how thankful we ought to be that you are able to do it," replied her mother.

"I am thankful, dearest mother, very—very thankful; and now I will tell you what I have been thinking about. I am fond of this kind of work, you know, and I think I could so easily earn a support in this way, and yet be always with you; for you know if I ~~were~~ ^{were} to teach school, we should be separated so much. Don't you think it is a good plan, mother?" said Elsie, anxiously, as she saw her mother bend her head upon her hands. For a moment, Mrs. Gray did not answer. Should her daughter—her young, fragile and beautiful daughter, bend day after day over the toilsome needle? Should she bow her

fair young head hour after hour over the tedious work, to obtain the scanty pittance with which the seamstress was rewarded? her daughter, whom she had sheltered from the cold and guarded from the heat—whom she had nurtured as delicately as the rarest exotic of the green-house—should she toil—and toil—and toil for bread? There was misery in the thought, and raising her hollow eyes, she said, "no Elsie, no, darling—not yet, not yet. I will see our good Deacon Walters. Your father's parishioners will not surely let his widow and his orphan want for bread."

"But, mother, I am young, you know, and I must do something for a living, and I would so much rather be here with you, and take in the sewing, than to teach school and board around from house to house, as the teachers have to."

"Well, Elsie, I will think about it; you are no doubt, right; but it will be hard, very hard, my daughter."

That evening Mrs. Gray slipped from the house, and went down to the dwelling of Deacon Walters. She was closeted but a little while with him, and when she parted from him, he said—

"I will do all I can for you, Mrs. Gray, but my influence has not been much since the young minister came. Farewell—God be with you," and he grasped her hand warmly.

A week from that evening, Deacon Walters called upon Mrs. Gray, at the parsonage.

"We held a meeting at the vestry, last night," he said, "but the—ahem! the parishioners said—that—that the young minister has a growing family, and that they—they have to increase his salary, and that the church is in debt, and they—they say they are not able to do anything for you; but I've got the promise of the last quarter's payment, and a small sum which we took up by subscription," and Deacon Walters laid

twenty-five dollars on the table, without saying that twenty was from his own purse, and the rest made up by sixpences and ninepences from the *generous* congregation.

Good old man—how his heart bled for the delicate wife and young daughter of his last minister! how it throbbed with holy indignation for the wrongs which they endured so patiently! Would that their case was an isolated one; but no, scores of delicately reared wives and daughters of ministers are turned out upon the world to seek their sustenance as they may, unaided by those who listened year after year to the preaching of the word of life from the unwearied lips of the husband and father. Shame! shame! a bitter and burning shame to the inhabitants of the towns and villages who sanction such unchristian, such inhuman conduct. With what agonizing lamentations will they cry in the last day, saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered or athirst, and did not minister unto thee?' and how full of truth will be the answer, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me!'

Elsie commenced enthusiastically her labors, and through the long hot days she flagged not, for her young heart sustained her with the thought that she was earning the bread for her dear mother and for herself, and she was again happy in being useful. Sometimes a blush would flit across her face, as she thought how rapidly the weeks were passing, and how soon Philip—dear Philip, would be with her again, and then she would sigh, for she could not help wondering why he had not written to her in her bereavement, and fancying how surprised he would be to see her so much changed, for Elsie had indeed changed—changed from the pure and snowy bud to the wonderfully lovely and almost queenly lily. Her girlish form was fast perfecting in the full and faultless contour of the woman,

and her dark mourning fitting so tightly her graceful form, was singularly becoming. Thus a month flitted by, and at her little writing-desk, Elsie was counting the earnings of those four busy weeks.

Over and over again she counted—was it possible that she had earned scarce two dollars. Try hard as she could, and she did, indeed, try very hard, she could not make it more, and with a long, sad sigh, she went to her mother's room, and laid the little pile of silver on the bureau.

"It is a very little, mother, is it not?" she said, "very little, after sewing so long and so steadily—we shall never be able to live, I am afraid," she sighed.

Poor child! had she been able to die, it would have been better, far better for her, as far as mortal eye could then see, for it would have saved her young heart from many a pang, but the tried gold comes forth pure and unalloyed from the furnace, and through the chastenings and afflictions of earth, the spirit is prepared for its Heavenly home.

That night she went to carry home a little bundle of work, and she strove to walk cheerfully over the grass-grown path, although her spirit was heavy within her. She reached the house, and after receiving the pay, she turned to leave, but a name arrested her attention, and she paused long enough in the door-way to hear the speaker add—"and his father's a-going to New Haven first, and then Mr. Phil joins him, and they go from there to Niagara, and then across the lakes." Elsie had heard enough—enough to send the tears rolling thick and fast down her feverishly glowing cheeks, and she turned from the road-side into the wood-path which led down beside the old school-house, and through the glen to the massive oak which had witnessed their first parting. There, upon the moss, she threw herself, crushing the king-cups and the daisies, and the long fern leaves which were growing in that wild place,

side by side, and she wept bitterly over her repeated disappointments, and murmured at the destiny which seemed mocking her brightest hopes.

Meanwhile the rich Squire Stewart had crossed the road to the parsonage, and was now in close conversation with the widow.

"Yes," he said, "she seems to be mighty handy with the needle, but it's such poor pay that women get here in the country. Now, if you could only manage to get to New York or Boston, I haven't any doubt but you could make a nice, comfortable living."

"Oh, how could we live away from Glenwood—Elsie and I? It would most break our hearts to think of it. No, I had ten thousand times rather struggle along here, in sight of my husband's grave, than to live more comfortably in the busy, noisy city."

"But you ought to think of Elsie," commenced the squire; "she gets such poor pay, you could not live on that any way, and you say yourself you are a-getting in debt. Now, I offer you more than the house is worth, and you might invest it in some snug way, and it would yield enough to pay for the rooms you would have to rent, and then Elsie would get so much more for her sewing, you would live nicely. Now, Widow Gray, you'd better think of it."

"I will," sighed the widow, heavily, as he left the house.

There was a sinister smile in the eyes of Squire Stewart, as he crossed back to his elegant house. Did he congratulate himself upon making a bargain if he should succeed in getting the parsonage at the price he had named? No, it was not that, for he had in reality offered more than it was worth. What caused that strange smile? Was it at the thought of removing Elsie from the neighborhood of his son, that he might better carry out his plans in uniting the broad lands of

the Ashley's to his own, by wedding his son with the sole heiress? ~~Why need he to have feared—~~ Why need he to have feared—had not month rolled away after month, and Philip showed no sign of remembrance of the one he used to love so well?

Ah! so thought the mournful, sorrowing Elsie; but Squire Stewart well knew how many—how very many letters he had burned which bore her name upon the envelope. Beware ~~of thy own~~ beware of thy own machinations, for many and many an one have so entangled the webs which they were weaving, that the very threads which they have sought to part they have joined together.

When Elsie came home that evening, her eyes swollen with weeping, and her dress dripping with the night dew, which she had swept from the long grass in the forest, her mother told her of Squire Stewart's proposal, of her own reluctance in accepting it, her dread of leaving the little village, and then waited for an answer.

Elsie's voice was husky as she replied, "there is but one spot in the whole village which I should dread to leave—but *one spot*, and that is my father's grave. We have no memory of kindness to chain us here, mother, and sooner or later we shall have to go; then let it be now, while we are both well and strong, before we have to beg for bread, or at best sicken and die within the walls of the poor-house." Mrs. Gray looked with astonishment upon the gleaming eyes of the energetic young being before her, and marvelled that Elsie could be thus changed.

Another month, and in a neat but small—very small frame tenement in the outskirts of New Haven, the mother and daughter were domesticated. A graceful elm flung its cool shade over the doorway, and a few scattered vines and shrubs adorned the small yard. The little swinging sign suspended by the door, bore the words 'Mantua-making and Plain Sew-

ing;' but a week had passed, and no work or encouragement had they received. Beside the little open window they sat, recalling the days when they depended upon the one now slumbering in the grave for support as well as for happiness. Dark storm-clouds were gathering over the blue sky, and the red lightning quivered and flashed through the wreathing mist—but afar in the past had their memory wandered, and they heeded it not, until suddenly a terrific peal of thunder seemed to shake the cottage to its foundations. This was followed by a scream of alarm from the roadside, and Elsie hastened to the gate in time to open it for two young girls, just as the thick rain poured down in torrents. Sheltered beneath the roof of the little dwelling, the girls soon forgot their fears, and talked merrily to each other of their mama's anxiety, and wondered if she would send the carriage for them. Mrs. Gray gathered from their conversation that they were rich, and after the shower had passed over, and they began to talk of hastening homeward, she told them that they were strangers, and that they sought employment, and showed them some of the needle-work which Elsie had done, the elegantly stitched bands, and the neatly-hemmed ruffles; and the girls promised to tell mama, and left. The next morning a showy equipage stopped in front of the little cottage, and a ~~man~~ dressed woman beckoned to Elsie to come to the carriage.

"So you are in want of plain sewing, are you, Miss—Miss what shall I call you?"

"Elsie Gray, if you please."

"And you sew neatly, Miss Gray, my daughter tells me—what are your prices?"

"I have received ninepence," replied Elsie, "for making shirts, and twenty-five cents for cutting and making dresses; but we found we could not live upon that, and I came here in hopes of getting more."

"Ninepence for shirts!" exclaimed the lady, in astonishment; "live upon that? good gracious, I should think not. Here, John," she said, calling to the footman, "take this piece of linen, and these bundles out into the cottage," then looking back to Elsie, she added, "I will give you seventy-five cents for every shirt you make after the pattern which you will find in one of the bundles."

"Oh, it is too much—too much," said Elsie, breathless with pleasure.

"Not any too much, child," replied the lady, "for I am in a great hurry for them; when do you think you can let me have half a dozen?"

"Well, with mother's help, I think I might say the last of next week."

"Very well, I will call for them myself," and the *magnanimous* lady rode from the cottage, saying to her companion, "there is a clear gain of seventy-five cents upon every shirt, for I have been paying a dollar and a half for their making." The lady smiled and bowed, but made no answer—the expression of her countenance was, 'you have made a very good bargain with an unknown seamstress, and I have a nice bit of scandal to retail about you.' One would scarcely think a countenance could express so much, and yet Mrs. Pitwell's did, I can assure you, as she bowed to Mrs. Hamilton's remark. "Was there ever anything so fortunate," Mrs. Hamilton continued; "I mean to keep her entirely to myself, as I have discovered her."

Again Mrs. Pitwell bowed, and this time her face expressed 'not altogether to yourself, I fancy.' In accordance with this last resolution, Mrs. Pitwell communicated to some half dozen of her acquaintances, in less than a week, that morning's incident; but Mrs. Hamilton was one of the upper ten, and all were too much afraid of offending her to interfere with

her new-found seamstress. At length the rumor reached the ears of one who feared nothing so much as sin, and receiving the direction from Mrs. Pitwell's lips, Mrs. Devering went in search of her.

Meanwhile, day after day—evening after evening by the light of the dim candle, poor Elsie stitched and stitched the fine linen—drew the threads of the tiny plaits, and sewed and sewed until her blue veined brow seemed almost bursting. Hour after hour she bent over her work, and still without murmuring, although she had never dreamed that the fine linen would prove so much more tedious than the coarse muslin to which she had been accustomed. The shirts were finished. In a little more than a week, she had earned, with the help of her mother, four dollars and a half. Happy Elsie—happy in earning by unwearied exertions the paltry sum which thousands hourly squander—happier far than any amidst those thousands.

It was now the last of August, and Elsie, after laying aside her work, walked into the secluded grave-yard within sight of their dwelling. A thousand memories stole through her heart as she wandered along beside the grass green graves. She paused near a tablet of stone, and leaning over the iron railing, she read upon it that it was erected to a faithful pastor by his affectionate congregation. Before her rose the mound of emerald turf where her father slept—no stone to mark the place, and dropping upon her knees, she sobbed wildly and passionately.

Time and place were forgotten, all save the memory of her great loss, and she started in surprise when she felt the delicate pressure of a hand upon her shoulder. She looked up through her tears into eyes beautifully mild, but mournful. A bonnet of crape shaded the serene brow, and the long widow's veil fell from the crown.

"Why do you mourn so bitterly child?" said a voice, earnest, but tenderly low.

Elsie's heart was touched by the kind questioning, and she told the inquirer how early she had learned a most grievous sorrow, in tones so pathetic that more than one tear forced its way through Mrs. Devering's lids. She followed Elsie to their neat cottage, and told Mrs. Gray, that hearing of them through a lady of their acquaintance she had come in search of them, and stopped on her way in the grave-yard, where she had found Elsie. She interested herself very much in their plans, and forbade Elsie to make any more shirts for the price which Mrs. Hamilton had offered.

"You shall have as many as you can do at a dollar and a half," she added, "and I will bring ~~them~~ ^{my daughter} around, and if you fit her well you shall leave this plain sewing, for mantua-making is far less tedious."

Elsie's eyes gleamed with pleasure, and she could scarcely refrain from clasping her arms around the neck of her new-found friend, who had mingled so much sympathy with her proffered kindness.

The next day Laura Devering came with her mother, and, despite the trembling of Elsie's hands, the dress fitted admirably. And so dress followed dress, and customer customer, until Elsie was obliged to employ several young girls to assist her, and all owing, as she said, to "dear, delightful Mrs. Devering." Mrs. Devering was indeed a real angel of goodness—never had a fairy a better mode of making a mortal happy. Wherever she went, prayers and blessings followed her, and even the dust of the avenue where her summer residence was situated, was almost sacred to Elsie Gray's enthusiastic temperament. Well might she, and well might many another say, "dear delightful, Mrs. Devering," for the riches with

which she was blessed, were dispensed with a bountiful hand to the deserving.

Years flew by, and in all this time had not Philip and Elsie once met?

Before she left her home she had felt neglected, and she was too proud to seek him when he had apparently avoided her, and so all this weary while had passed, and only once had Elsie gazed upon his face, and then when he bore proudly the honors of his class. Little did he dream that amidst that sea of upturned faces was that of the drooping lily bud, whose form he still yearned to clasp to his bosom. Oh, how eagerly did she drink in every undulation of that deep-toned voice—how it thrilled the pulses of her heart, and made the blood leap madly from vein to vein. But even this was now amidst the memories of bye-gone days, and she pressed through her toilsome path, cheered by the approving smiles of her faithful friend, and the devoted fondness of her precious mother.

It was now five years since they had left their village home, and not once had Elsie heard from Philip since that commencement morn.

Her face was a little, a very little thinner, but the outlines of her form were as faultless as those of some beautiful piece of statuary. She still wore the simple mourning dress, and still fresh in her heart lingered the memory of her departed father.

One day, Elsie was vainly striving to finish her work. Her head throbbed heavily. A carriage whirled along and stopped in front of the cottage. Mrs. Hamilton descended the steps and hastened into the work-room, followed by her eldest daughter.

"Miss Gray, I am in a terrible hurry. Helen has to have this dress made by to-morrow evening," and she tossed a bundle of blue tissue on the table. "It is to be made low

neck, short sleeves, and three folds on the skirt, bound with blue silk."

"Impossible, Mrs. Hamilton, I could not even make a plain dress, I am so much hurried, and besides I am feeling quite ill, and I am afraid I will have to disappoint some whom I have already promised, which you know is always a very great trial to me."

"But you must do it—you had better disappoint others than to disappoint me, for you know I was the first person who employed you. She must have it, and I'll take no denial."

"But I can't, indeed—indeed I can't. I would do it with pleasure for you if I could, but I am too unwell to take any more work."

"I shall leave it, Miss Gray. I shall insist upon its being done. If you are well enough to sit up, you are able to cut one dress I am sure, and you have Miss Helen's pattern, so it will not be much trouble after all. Come Helen, we must go."

"It is impossible—utterly impossible for me to do it," said Elsie, gazing up into Mrs. Hamilton's face with so wan and wearied a look, that it would have melted any heart less selfish and worldly than Mrs. Hamilton's.

"This comes of patronizing young girls and giving them floods of work, and then see how quickly they turn upon their benefactors and glory in disappointing them. I tell you, Miss Gray, that if you do not make that dress, it is the last piece of work I will ever give you; and I tell you, too, that I will publish you all over the city as the most ungrateful creature in the world, and then we'll see how you'll make your living."

So saying, Mrs. Hamilton swept from the room, followed by

her promising daughter, who said, "you did not say half enough, mother. I declare I never saw such impudence. I wonder what these sewing people will come to. It's a pretty pass now if they've got so independent that they can afford to refuse their customers' work."

And why were they in such a hurry for Helen's blue tissue? Had she no other dress? Dress after dress was piled over each other in her wardrobes and closets, but blue was very becoming to Helen's wax doll beauty, and she had not a single blue dress that had not been worn once or more.

They had that morning ascertained that an old acquaintance just returned from his European tour, was to be at a musical party which Mrs. Pitwell was to give, and as he was young, accomplished, and more than all, wealthy, Mrs. Hamilton was anxious that Helen should make an impression; so the dress must be had, even if Elsie Gray, the dress-maker, sat up till midnight over it. And Elsie did sit up, not only till midnight, but until the struggling morning light trembled through the vines. Then for one short—one troubled hour she pressed her head, her aching, throbbing head upon the pillow, striving in vain to woo the sleep that would not come.

She arose and went to work again. The girls sewed diligently with her, and the dress was finished. With a long sigh she left the work-table, and re-arranging her hair, she put on her simple cottage hat and silk mantilla, and kissing her mother affectionately, went out to take her accustomed evening walk.

Trembling and wearied she at length reached Mrs. Devering's cottage.

"My child! my child! how changed you are," said Mrs. Devering, as she met her in the doorway, "how very miserable you look; why, what is the matter? You shall not work any

more—you shall come and live with me, and rest until the warm weather is over," and Mrs. Devering drew her into the wide and matted hall, and seated her upon a Persian lounge, at the same time requesting a servant to bring some wine and cake. Elsie revived after drinking a glass of wine, and told Mrs. Devering of her night's work.

"It was only that: I shall soon be better; but it is so hard to work all day and all night too," she added.

"Shameful! shameful!" exclaimed Mrs. Devering, forgetting her usual prudence.

Mrs. Devering left her youngest daughter with Elsie, while Laura and herself went to their rooms to prepare themselves for the musical soiree.

"You know mamma will set you down as she goes along, so you won't have to walk home," said Emma, "but wouldn't it be grand if we were going to the party, and could see that elegant young man that Helen Hamilton talks so much about. I do indeed believe that Laura thinks a great deal about him, although mamma says it is very naughty for me to say so, but I heard Laura telling Bell Townsend that Helen Hamilton was in love with him before he went to Europe, and that she was certain he did not care a fig for her, and how could she be certain of that, if she didn't think he thought some of her?"

"Your reasoning is not very logical," smiled Elsie, with such a sweet, sad smile, that it entirely transfixed a young man coming up the gravel-walk which wound through the lawn. He was dressed in deep mourning, and his eyes were sad in their expression, but large and brilliantly beautiful. His features were faultless, and his figure was commanding.

There was something about that smile of Elsie Gray's, which made his heart stand still, but as it passed away from her face, leaving that wan, wearied expression, he shook his head

mournfully, and continued until he reached the verandah. His steps fell upon Elsie's ear, and looking up she saw the stranger. No! no stranger to Elsie Gray's heart, for with a wild cry of joy she sprang forward, and then sank back senseless upon the lounge. As that cry rang through the house, Mrs. Devering hastened downward, and found Philip Stewart calling upon Elsie by every endearing word he could think of, to awaken her from her deathly slumber.

"Have I not suffered enough, but that she must die now—die in my arms, my poor, wan, wasted darling! awake for me, Elsie—for my love! Oh, bring me air—bring me water—for Heaven's sake, Mrs. Devering, don't let my Elsie die," and thus incoherently he called upon her, while she lay so pallid, so motionless, that they all trembled, fearing the spirit had departed.

Helen Hamilton's blue tissue was made in vain. The courted and admired Philip Stewart was absent from the party, and none could conjecture the unaccountable cause. A week afterward a merry company went up to Glenwood, and Mrs. Devering was almost as happy as Mrs. Gray and Elsie, and the devoted self-plighted of her childhood. There they learned of the deceit which Mr. Stewart had practised, leading Philip to suppose that Elsie and her mother had gone to England; and then, after his father's death, how he had sought her in vain in a far land, and found no clue—how heart sick he had returned and whiled away the days as best he might, until the eventful evening at Mrs. Devering's. Then from the lips of Mrs. Devering and Mrs. Gray, Philip learned of all the untiring devotedness and self-sacrificing love which Elsie had borne her mother—of all the weary days of toil which she had endured, and, clasping her close to his heart, he blessed God for his angel treasure. Another month, and in the old

church, endeared to her by very many associations, Elsie Gray stood in solemn happiness before the altar, and gave herself with all the trustfulness of innocence and truth, to the one who, by years of unswerving constancy, had proved himself worthy to protect and cherish her with his love.

The parsonage was inhabited, for Mrs. Gray clung to it now that she could again call it hers, and cheered by the almost constant society of Philip and Elsie, her days passed peacefully and happily. Frequent were the visits which they received from their true friend, Mrs. Devering, and when they returned them, there were none but felt proud of entertaining Mr. Stewart and his beautiful and graceful wife; for even Helen Hamilton had long since ceased to wonder what would become of those sewing people.

In the grave-yard at Glenwood, a pure monument of statuary marble marks the spot where Elsie's father sleeps, and one not less costly, erected by the same hands, commemorates the virtues of good Deacon Walters.

Betrayed.

Lines.

SLOWLY stern Winter treads our hill-girt vale,
His regal brow with hoary locks encrowned;
Through leafless trees he breathes his sighing wail,
And the far hills repeat the mournful sound.

The bright-eyed flowers have paled beside the stream,
That winds across the fields its fitful way;
But from the woods I catch a crimson gleam,
Deep as the glowing hues of dying day.

'Tis where the pliant vine entwines the oak,
Then upward climbs, and wreathes from bough to bough,
Falling beside the roof, whose curling smoke
Alone I see above the forest now.

Thick gleam its sprays with coral berries fair—
Its leaves as glossy as June laurels be—
I knew a maid who oft-times in her hair,
Braided those clusters all too carefully.

It is a story long, and full of grief,
That on this page I would not care to tell;
She faded with the Summer flow'rets brief,
When Autumn's frosts first on their beauty fell.

Ah, where is he who cast that fearful blight?
Hath he no share in sorrow he hath wrought?
Can he escape the voice within, by flight—
The memories with such desolation fraught?

Breathe to him, Winter winds, of all the woe
The mother feels within her lonely cot—
Leave the new grave beside the streamlet's flow,
And whisper of the clay he hath forgot!

Oh, haunt him with thy wail, thou Winter wind,
And fill his callous heart with boding fear!
Give him no rest—let him no mercy find
Until he sheds the penitential tear!

Perchance it may some other victim save,
Which even now, his passion marks for prey;
For little cares he, so that in the grave
His sins are hidden from the light of day.

Oh, earth! so fair art thou, we scarce can dream
Of all the secrets laid within thy breast—
The sorrowing lives that know no joyous gleam
Until thy faithful bosom gives them rest.

Rest to the dust, consigned unto thy care—
While far above the spirit wings its way,
Fettered no more by chains it erst did wear
Within its helpless tenement of clay.

Wail on, ye Winter winds, above the dead,
Ye cannot wake her from her dreamless sleep;
Soft is the pillow to her wearied head,
And closed for aye, the eyes that once did weep.

THE ESTRANGED HEARTS;

Tale of Married Life.

CHAPTER I.

"The precocious germs of vanity and of the love of pleasure, choke the precious but more tardy seeds of devoted affections. In the midst of the bustle of the world, marriage itself does not produce the effect it should. Maternity arrives scarcely desired, and seems sometimes only the forced interruption to many pleasures. We believe that such unnatural feelings do not last; but what a loss of happy moments, of sweet sentiments; and what hopes of future wisdom are thus in danger of being thrown to the winds!"—MADAME NECKER DE SAUSSURE.

"In men, we various ruling passions find;
In woman, two almost divide the kind:
Those, only fixed, they first or last obey,
The love of pleasure, and the love of sway."—POPE.

"AND you are really expecting to go, Maggie?"

"To be sure I am; you did not for a moment think that I was going to be such a fool as to stay at home, did you?" was the unrefined and hasty answer.

Howard Dorrance's proud lip curled, as he replied,

"I confess that I have been so foolish as to think that you would for once yield your wishes to mine. You know very well how much I disapprove of fancy parties, Mrs. Dorrance, and had you any regard for me and my opinions, you would

have spared me the pain of requesting you to desist from any farther preparations, for I shall not accompany you."

Margaret Dorrance's eyes flashed, but looking up at her husband, she met a glance as resolute as her own. She had never yet openly defied him; and there was something now in that stern, unswerving gaze, which checked the words that were already trembling on her lips. With a violent effort, she suppressed the passionate emotions of her heart, and answered, with a calmness that surprised herself still more than her husband,

"Very well, sir, it will be as you say, of course."

There was a long pause. Mr. Dorrance had not met the opposition that he expected, and his heart was softened by the compliance which he never for a moment doubted that his wife had given to his request. He moved his chair nearer to her, and his deep low voice expressed much tenderness, as he said,

"I wish, Margaret, that we were better suited to each other."

"I wish we were," she answered, laconically.

For a moment, he was chilled; but, influenced by the kind and gentle thoughts that now held their sway in his bosom, he continued,

"Were I convinced that it would eventually bring you true happiness, my wife, to indulge in the gaiety for which you have so much inclination, I would not seek to deprive you of any portion of it. I would, for your sake, renounce the home pleasures in which I alone find enjoyment; but, Margaret, such constant dissipation as your tastes would lead you into, would not only deprive you of that greatest blessing which God can give—the blessing of health—but your moral nature would become blighted, and the best affections of your heart would wither in the glare and heat of fashionable life. I have seen but too often the effects which it produces, and I would

shield the wife of my bosom from them. Will you not, love, place your hand in mine as on our wedding-night, and promise again to 'love, honor, and obey?' "

For a moment, but only for a moment, had Margaret Dorrance relented. That unfortunate word 'obey,' again aroused the evil within, which her husband's earnest tones had so nearly quelled.

She drew the hand he essayed to clasp, rudely from him.

"You preach well," she said, "but no eloquence can disguise to me your motives. Remember, Howard Dorrance, you are ten years older than myself, and, consequently, you have had ten more years of gaiety. I married you at sixteen—foolish school-girl that I was, to throw away liberty and happiness with a breath—now, at twenty, you would immure me, nun-like, if you could; but I insist upon six more years of experience. Perhaps by that time, the world's pleasures will pall with me, as they have with you, and then I will stay at home and abuse them to your heart's content; but now, you ask too much of me."

A wintry coldness settled on Mr. Dorrance's face, as he listened to his wife's unkind and heartless answer.

"You spoke of my motives, Margaret," he said, "as though they were other than I professed; what did you mean by that?"

"Why, plainly this, if you will have me expose them. It is your jealousy of me, and of the attention which I receive, and the admiration which is paid me at parties, which makes you so selfishly desire to keep me from them."

"Margaret!"

"What?"

There was no answer, and she continued:

"Don't look at me in that way, I beg of you; if you have anything to say, say it out."

"Margaret! you cannot mean what you say! Jealousy!

Selfishness! It was for your happiness full as much as my own, that I have so earnestly sought to give you a distaste for the amusements of fashionable life. I see that *my* love, *my* happiness is nothing to you: everything is to be sacrificed on the shrine of vanity. Ah, Margaret, if you were foolish in *throwing away* your liberty while still a *school-girl*, I was doubly so in committing my happiness into the hands of one."

"I agree with you entirely, Mr. Dorrance; and I wonder that you ever thought of *me*, when that prim old maid, Miss Helen Graham, was so exactly suited to you, and came near dying for you, every one said. She was the very one for you, for she detests parties as much as you can, and is always preaching to me about domestic happiness, and such fol de rol. It is a pity that you didn't fancy her, isn't it?"

Mr. Dorrance's face reddened. He turned away, and paced the room hurriedly.

His wife continued, "They say that before I came home from school, you were very attentive to her; now, seriously, don't you think she was better suited to you than I?"

Mr. Dorrance paused beside his wife, and meeting her upturned gaze, he answered calmly,

"Yes, Margaret, I do."

Nothing daunted by the serious tone in which this was said, and fully convinced that there had never been any idol save herself, on the throne of her husband's heart, and that at any moment she could resume her power, she continued her *badinage*.

"And now, if you had only taken compassion on her, and married her—"

"I wish to God I had!" broke from Mr. Dorrance's lips; and his wife read truly in his now sad, pale face, that with no idle meaning had those words been wrung from his heart.

In a moment she was subdued: she spoke no more taunt-

ingly, for the feelings which tender words had failed to awaken, sprang up in all their strength at the first breath of that passion of which she had so unjustly accused her husband.

From that night, Margaret Dorrance harbored a new guest in her bosom—from that night, she felt in her heart the truth of this Scripture passage, “Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.”

CHAPTER II.

“Vain tears are very apt to breed pride.”

FRIVOLOUS and heartless as Margaret Dorrance may have appeared in the preceding chapter, she was not wholly so. Gladly would she have thrown her arms around her husband's neck, acknowledging to him that of all the unkind things she had said in anger, she had not meant one, could she have been sure that he, with truthfulness, could have said the same.

Often had he forgiven her impulsive words, and she doubted not he would again; but pride kept her from seeking him. She had educes emotions from his breast, which the dust of Time could never bury from her sight; and daily, the knowledge of them grew more and more bitter to her. In assumed levity, she disguised the workings of her heart; and the studied coldness with which her husband treated her, convinced her but the more fully that she had forfeited the love, which, when she possessed, she had valued too lightly.

At length she ceased to reproach herself. If she had done wrong in not studying her husband's happiness more, she had in other respects done better by him, than he by her; she had

given him a whole heart in exchange for a divided one. Thus thinking, she determined upon a course of conduct that should awaken in him the jealousy he had disclaimed.

“If he has one spark of love left for me, he shall learn what jealousy is,” she thought, as, on the evening of the fancy party, her maid arranged her in the becoming Spanish dress she had selected.

Her long tresses, which were of a glossy purplish black, were folded over, high up on her head, and fastened with an immense and elegantly carved comb of the rarest shell. Her velvet dress was relieved by a fall of fine lace around her exquisitely turned throat, and fastened with a single ruby. Jewels glittered on her arms and her fingers, and radiantly beautiful she looked, as standing before the Psyche-glass, she directed her maid in arranging the heavy black lace veil, which resting on her head, fell in careless folds almost to her feet.

But Mrs. Dorrance was apparently dissatisfied, for she glanced from her mirror to the toilet-table, where a profusion of ornaments was scattered in open caskets and cases. Her eyes fell upon her superb bouquet: seizing it, she tore out a crimson japonica, and removing the jewel which had looped back the veil from her face, she replaced it with the flower.

It was all that was needed. Her dress was now perfect, and wonderfully becoming.

With her large dark eyes, and their heavy sweeping fringe, and her rich, but transparently clear complexion, she well represented the nation whose costume she had chosen.

A carriage rattled over the stones, and drew up in front of their mansion.

Mrs. Dorrance parted the curtains, and glanced out. She saw a young man alight, and ascend the steps.

“It is all right, Matty,” said she; “throw my cloak around

me, and tell Mr. Dorrance when he comes home not to wait up for me."

"Mr. Dorrance is in the library, ma'am ; he came in before the clock struck nine."

"Very well; I will pass through as I go out; and, Matty, you will sit up for me. ~~_____~~

You know you can sit with the children after the other servants have gone to bed."

Matty yawned ; and after her mistress left the room, she muttered to herself of the hardship it was to work all day and sit up all night ; but when she went into the room adjoining, where the children were sleeping, the frown upon her face was chased away by a smile, for she loved the dear little ones fondly. Drawing a low chair near their couch, she leaned her head upon a pillow, and was soon sleeping as soundly as they.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Dorrance descended to the library, and paused beside the door. Her heart beat quickly; she trembled at the thought of bearing her husband's displeasure, yet she dared not leave the house without his knowledge. Summoning all her courage she entered the room.

"I am sorry that you are not going with me this evening, Howard, but I looked in to say that you need feel no anxiety about me; your friend, Mr. Graham, is my escort." Her tones were kind; but there was an air of embarrassment unusual to her, that showed her conscience was not perfectly at ease.

Mr. Dorrance looked sternly upon his wife as he answered, "I did not expect this. You told me you would not go to-night."

"No, I did not. I said from the first that I should positively go. You said *you* would not accompany me, and I answered you that of course *that* would be as you said."

"You misled me in that answer, Mrs. Dorrance, and I presume, intentionally."

Her face crimsoned ; but her husband continued,

"I think you will live to regret the step you have taken to-night ; I shall not molest you hereafter."

Closing the door impatiently, she swept from the room without answering.

He heard the sound of their merry voices, as laughing and chatting they passed out—the carriage rattled off, and Howard Dorrance leaned back in his chair, and in solitude and silence brooded over the bitter emotions of his heart.

The present tortured him; the future,—he dared not imagine that; and so he fell to thinking of the past.

What was there in that to bring a deeper gloom to his brow—a deeper sadness to his eyes?

There were memories of wrong and injustice which he had done another—a most cruel wrong.

From that sin he was now gathering its blighted fruit.

Heavier and heavier sank his heart within him, as he recalled, step by step, the infatuation which had lured him on to break his vows to the noble-minded being whom he first had wooed. His breast heaved tremulously, and his strong frame shivered with the storm of thought that swept through him.

“Yes, yes,” he muttered, as he arose, and with a heavy step paced the floor, “yes, yes, I deserve it all! My punishment is just! How gladly would I now exchange the wild and passionate worship which I bore Margaret, for the calm love that once beat within my heart for another. But it is too late! too late!”

He paused beside a crayon sketch of his wife which hung upon the wall; and now his lip quivered with tenderness as he continued,

"Ah, Margaret, how carefully would I have guarded you from unhappiness! how fondly would I have cherished you through all trials and all changes!—God grant you may never need the love which you have sacrificed to your vanity."

He gazed long upon it, noting the faultless oval of her face, the perfect regularity of her classical features—the fascinating expression of her full hazel eyes, and murmuring, '*She is beautiful!*' he turned away.

And now his heart grew cold and dead within him, as he recalled the temptations to which she would be exposed, in the alienation that must necessarily follow the course of conduct which she had chosen to pursue.

He thought of the homage which she would command from the world—the flattery which she would receive, and which no woman can listen to without inhaling its taint; and the reflection smote upon his heart, that his wife, now only frivolous and thoughtless, might become—oh, it was too horrible to imagine!

He resolved that he would make one more effort to save her from that vortex of fashion and folly, which too often plunges in shame and degradation those who have madly trusted to its whirl. He would plead with her for the sake of their children—for his sake; for, as he recalled their bridal days, he could not smother the conviction that beneath all her frivolity and worldliness, there smouldered a flame which might yet spring up to warmth and beauty.

Almost unconsciously, as he thought of his children, he turned his steps to their room. He opened their door. A night-lamp burned dimly upon the mantel, but its rays were strong enough to reveal to him the sleeping babes upon the couch. Babes they still were; for little Harry, the eldest, was scarce three years old, and Ida's second summer was but now approaching.

Mr. Dorrance bent over them, tracing in his boy's fine countenance the features of his wife; while lightly round the plump and dimpled face of baby Ida, fell curls that would have matched his own in boyhood.

As he looked upon them, so beautiful in their dependent and helpless infancy, he questioned whether all his words might not prove powerless, when even 'the profound joys of maternity' had failed to give his wife a fondness for home pleasures.

And now, unfortunately, another change came over him.

"I will not stoop to plead," he said. "In marrying, she assumed the duties of a wife and mother. I will hereafter be responsible for her fulfilling them properly. My name shall not be disgraced, nor shall these children receive a heritage of shame. I have tried kindness in vain, and will now see what a husband's authority can accomplish."

In this mood, he returned to the library; he drew his chair up to his writing-desk, and unlocking a drawer, lifted from it, one by one, the 'souvenirs of the past, that long had lain there hidden and undisturbed.

There were packages of letters, sketches of heads, unfinished landscapes, and beneath all, lay a garland of gay-colored autumn leaves. The scrap of paper which labelled it, bore the words, "From Helen, Egerton woods, Oct. 18th."

Before him rose the noble old forest, where he first had met one whose tastes and inclinations exactly accorded with his own. He recalled the graceful flow of her conversation, the innate dignity of her manners, the loveliness of her truthful countenance, as first it impressed itself upon him then; and, more than all, the well-balanced mind, and the mature judgment, which had afterwards been developed to him, as day after day he lingered by her side. He felt the flush that mounted to his temples, as in contradistinction to such a

being, another vision rose before him,—that of the petted, spoiled, vain beauty, who had left her home that night, little dreaming how dangerous would prove the solitude to her husband.

Arousing from this revery, he opened a folded paper. It contained a pale-blue withered flower, and a sprig of myrtle-leaf, and the words, in his own handwriting, 'Woodlawn, May 20th, Helen.'

Ay, he remembered that evening well; and this emblem of constancy, how it smote him now! "Forget-me-not" the flower spoke as plainly as words could have done, and his heart answered, "By those hours of tenderness, those days of joy, thou art not forgotten! Oh, Margaret, save me from these memories!"

And now, unfolding a sheet of tissue paper, he lifted from it a long tress of soft brown hair, which fell from his fingers in spiral curls as he gazed upon it. There was no writing within. He needed none, for his eyes filled with tears as he looked upon it. Carefully he refolded and closed the paper, almost reverentially he pressed the package to his lips, and then, with a deep sigh, he leaned his head upon his hands, and mused for hours.

The clock struck one—two—still his wife came not, and with impatience added to displeasure, he went down into the parlors, and for another weary hour paced the long rooms to and fro. Not a sound fell upon his ear, save the low ticking of the French clock in the boudoir, and, now and then, the distant rumbling of carriages.

He stood in the centre of the suite of rooms, and looked around him. This home that he had fitted up so luxuriously for his young bride—the drawing-room, with its gorgeous carpet of woven roses, its lofty windows, curtained with satin and heavily-wrought lace, its antique and richly-carved furniture,

and all the exquisite ornaments that art could furnish, or wealth buy—the music-room, with its splendid instrument, its rare old paintings, and its marble statuary—the little boudoir for her own especial use, with its windows of stained glass and rose-colored drapery, its languor-inviting lounges, and its mirror-lined walls—why could she not be satisfied within such precincts, to live for him, even as he had hoped to live for her.

He pressed his hand to his head; it was throbbing painfully, and hot with fever. Drawing aside the curtains of one of the front windows, which extended to the floor, he raised it, slid back the bolt of the Venitian shutters, and stepped out upon the balcony.

The cool air refreshed him; and now he heard the whirl of an approaching carriage. Nearer and nearer it came, and hastily reclosing the shutters, and dropping the window, he stood listening.

On, on the carriage rolled, stopping beside the door, and now there was a quick ring, which Mr. Dorrance answered in person. It was well he did, for Matty's slumber was unbroken. He held the door open, standing in the shade of it, so that he was not observed. He heard Mr. Graham say to his wife, in a low familiar tone,

"I am glad, my dear Mrs. Dorrance, that you have resolved to appear more frequently in the society which you so adorn. Will you hereafter honor me with any commands which you may have? for, I can assure you, that I am but too happy to be entirely at your service."

Mr. Dorrance did not wait for his wife's reply, but stepping forward into the light, he met them face to face. He forgot his usual courtesy, his studied self-possession, as, drawing his wife's hand rudely from the arm on which it rested, he said,

"I will excuse you, Mr. Graham, from all future attentions

towards my wife; she will not go into society hereafter, without my protection."

It was so sudden, so unexpected, that both stood speechless. The next moment, Mr. Dorrance had closed the door upon Mr. Graham, without even exchanging the civilities of parting. And now his wife's dark eyes flashed vehemently, as breaking from his grasp, she entered the drawing-room, and threw herself upon a velvet fauteuil. Her small foot beat the rich carpet nervously, and the soft color of her cheeks deepened, until they glowed like the heart of the crimson rose which her white fingers were now fiercely tearing to pieces.

As her husband followed, she turned her head disdainfully from him. Each time that he essayed to speak, she answered him with scornful, taunting words, until at length stung to madness, he seized her arm, burying his nails in the flesh.

"Good God, Margaret! will you have no mercy upon me? do you not see that you are making a fiend of me?"

She did not scream, although her arm quivered with pain; she did not seek to shake him off as before; she rather exulted in the idea that he had added personal violence to the mortification he had inflicted upon her; by his ungentlemanly treatment of Mr. Graham; so she smiled coldly, and answered, mockingly,

"Your own evil passions, sir, have converted you into the fiend which you allow you are, and which I cannot dispute—no, nor even doubt," she added, as glancing at her arm, which he had now released, she saw a drop of blood trickling down its polished surface. Around it she wound her fine cambric handkerchief, and rising, would have left the room.

Mr. Dorrance stood between her and the door.

"Margaret, you maddened me," he said; "I did not know that I was so violent—listen to me—we must have an understanding."

"I understand you now, thoroughly," she answered; "let me pass."

"No, I will not. You must first promise me that—"

"Must!" hissed Margaret, "must! I shall promise you nothing." Then subduing herself, she added, with more dignity, "When you are over your passion, and can treat me properly, I will listen to you—not before."

"You will listen to me *now*," said Mr. Dorrance determinedly, and clasping her hands, he held them firmly between his own.

"I will not; I will not listen to one word. Let me go; let me go, Howard Dorrance. I will not bear this. You are a brute! I hate you! Oh, heavens! I wish I never had married," and, exhausted by the effort she had made to free herself, she sank back upon the fauteuil, and burst into an hysterical fit of weeping.

But her tears were not salutary. They arose from wounded pride, from mortified vanity, from excess of passion; and when her husband, subdued by them into a calmer state, sat down near her and tried to soothe her, she waved him from her with her hand, sobbing out,

"Go away, go away. I wish I were dead, and then I should be out of reach of your tyranny."

Mr. Dorrance answered not a word, but went straight from the room to his chamber.

And now, throwing herself across the fauteuil, Margaret buried her face in its soft cushions, and, for a few moments, gave way to the most violent emotions. There were no self-accusations mingled with her bitter upbraidings of her husband's conduct. She was the injured one, and she resolved that her husband should confess it, and sue for pardon before she would restore him to favor. What had she done? Nothing. But he! no words were sufficient to express the

measure of his condemnation. A noise startled her. She looked up. Her comb had fallen from her head, bearing with it the heavy veil, and now her rich black tresses fell in masses over her opera cloak, contrasting strongly with its snowy whiteness. She flung back her hair from her temples, which were throbbing painfully; she pressed her small jewelled hands over them, and rising slowly, while her cloak fell to her feet, she caught the reflection of her symmetrical and richly robed form in the mirror opposite. Fascinated by her own wild, gleaming beauty, she drew nearer, crushing, as she did so, her fallen bouquet.

Alas! thus destructively was she trampling down her life's flowers.

"Me!" she said, still looking on her image in the glass. "Is it possible that Howard Dorrance has treated *me* so shamefully? How many times before I was his wife did he promise to study only *my* wishes; and now, because I persevered in the accomplishment of *one* desire, he has vented his passion thus insultingly upon me! paid no regard to my feelings even before another; adding abuse to insult!" and she glanced down upon her arm.

The sound which had before startled her, was repeated. A window-shutter creaked; it might have been the wind; but terrified, she stole from the room, across the hall, and into the library back. The light was still burning there, and the first thing her eyes fell upon was the open drawer, which her husband had forgotten to close. She lifted the gay wreath, and read the name and date. It dropped from her trembling hands, and hurriedly she looked through the other mementoes. Once she thought to tear open a package of letters, but she dared not do that; the ribbon that fastened them was sealed. At length she came to the long curl of chestnut hair, and now her face blanched, and her lips grew pallid. Wrenching it

apart, she would have thrown it upon the coals; but suddenly the expression of her countenance changed, a smile of triumph flitted from her eyes, and she replaced it carefully in the paper; as she did so, she looked towards the door. It was ajar, and the blood crept chillily through her, from head to foot, as she met Edward Graham's eyes bent upon her. With his finger upon his lips, he approached her with noiseless footsteps.

"Do not be frightened. I will explain to you in a moment how I came here. There, sit down; you will be ill, you look so now, with your white face and pale lips. My dear Mrs. Dorrance, let me tell you how I worship you, that I may have some excuse for intruding upon you as I have done."

Margaret's voice was hoarse, as she answered,

"No, you must tell me nothing; what would *he* say, if he were to find you here? Go—go, I beg of you, I tremble to think of it."

"I will go, if my absence will relieve you any. Oh, Margaret, if I dared to plead with you to go with me! Why will you stay to subject yourself to such treatment as I have witnessed this night? Dear Margaret, will you not let me protect you from him?"

Mrs. Dorrance's mind was pre-occupied? She evidently did not understand his meaning, for she answered calmly.

"You are very kind. I am sorry that you have shared his anger with me; but you must excuse him for my sake. I never saw him so rude before. As for me, I could have forgiven and forgotten all, had it not been for this," and she pointed to the table; "see there, Mr. Graham, he does not love me; he never has; there lie the hoarded mementoes of a deeper love. Tell me, for you must know, was my husband ever your sister's professed lover?"

Edward Graham's thin lips were compressed tightly, and

his gray eyes glittered with a steel-like brilliancy, as he answered,

"Yes, Mrs. Dorrance, when he first saw you, he was Helen's betrothed."

"I will be revenged upon him," she said quickly, while her eyes flashed with their fire.

A half-suppressed smile wreathed Graham's lips as she spoke; and when she arose, and taking a pair of scissors from a work-basket near, and approaching him, asked permission to cut a lock of hair from his head, he could not restrain the exultant glow which lit up his features.

She laid the hair idly upon the table, as she would, had it been a feather or a scentless flower, and then he saw, that in his eager haste, he had gleaned hope for the advancement of his purpose, where there had been none for him.

"I must beg you, as the friend of my husband," here Graham's eyes resumed their steel-like glittering, but the unconscious Margaret continued, "not to expose our unhappiness. I know not how much you have seen, nor how you saw it, for I thought the door closed upon you, as I came into the house."

"I will explain to you," interrupted Graham. "When your husband shut me out so rudely, I observed, that one of the drawing-room shutters had been but slightly closed; and still remained unfastened. I sent the hackman off, and, stationing myself upon the balcony, I watched, fearing that Howard might have been to the club, and returned under the influence of wine, and that you might suffer from his violence. I could not account for the change in his manners in any other way. I saw all, and after he had left the room, I would have come to you, but at each attempt to open the shutter wider, I saw that I alarmed you. When you went into the hall, I crept care-

fully and quickly in, and divining that you had gone to the library, I followed you. You know the rest."

"How imprudent!" was the exclamation that escaped Margaret's lips.

A frown darkened Graham's brow. "I am nothing to you, Mrs. Dorrance," he said impatiently; "you do not even seem to consider me a friend."

"How can you say so, Mr. Graham?" and she extended her hand. "I have always thought well of you; but you must see how imprudent you have been to-night—what a position you have placed me in if my husband should appear now. I wish he would though! I wish he would!" she added eagerly, "I would not explain one word to him; he would suffer what he deserves to suffer!"

"Thought well of me!" repeated Edward Graham, "you have thought well of me, you say; Margaret Dorrance, if your whole heart was freighted with love for another, if his voice was the only music that your ears cared to listen to, his smile your only sunlight, would you be satisfied that that one should only think well of you in return?"

Mrs. Dorrance's large eyes first dilated with surprise, then dropped beneath the steady and burning gaze that met her own.

"Mr. Graham," she said, "I am a wife, and I cannot listen to such words; I beg you to leave me now. Had I ever dreamed that your kindness to me arose from other feelings than those of friendship, I should never have met it as I always have."

He did not turn his eyes from her, as he answered,

"Yes, you are a wife—an unloved wife, these papers bespeak you—your own heart tells you that it is so. Margaret, listen to me; you said but now, that you would have revenge—you cannot love one who so tyrannizes over you, while his heart is devoted to another—you cannot love—"

"I do, I do love him," broke out Mrs. Dorrance, "I love him but too well; but he shall never know it; I will convince him to the contrary," and she sighed heavily as she thought that by that evening's conduct, and by her harsh and hasty words, she had already, perhaps, too well convinced him.

She crossed the library to the door, and opening it, said,

"I would have you go this moment;" and as he approached, she added, "if you ever wish me to consider you in the light of a friend again, do not speak another word to me of love. I will bury the past within my own bosom, and trust you will give me the same promise."

He did not answer; but he raised her hands to his lips, and in another moment left, cursing in his heart the precipitate haste which would now place her upon her guard towards him. The front door swung to heavily after him; and Mrs. Dorrance went down to the drawing-room, and bolted the shutters which she thought Richard had so carelessly left unfastened.

And now, falling back upon the same fauteuil where she had thrown herself an hour before in such a storm of passion, she gave herself up to reflection. She saw the dangers to which she had exposed herself, and she no longer wondered that her husband would have shielded her from the world and its temptations. And now, her conscience once awakened from its slumber, failed not to accuse her of her errors. The veil was stripped away which self-love had thrown over all, and humbled at the sight, she would have gone to her husband with penitent confessions, had it not been for the relics of the past which the open drawer had revealed to her.

"I cannot doubt that he *has* loved me," she said to herself, as she recalled many incidents of their married life, "I cannot doubt it, and it is *I* who have driven him back to memories of his first love. But he wronged me in concealing *that* from me; had I known his heart had once been another's,

I should have been more careful of it; but I was too confident of my own power. Now, if I should tell him that I had done wrong, that I saw my errors, how he would exult over me, always holding up my first love as a sort of bugbear to frighten me into submission. No, he shall not do that. I will adhere to my first purpose; he shall think that *I too* have mementoes."

So fostering a spirit of revenge, she put out the lights, and went back to the library.

Taking a slip of paper from her own writing-desk, she wrote upon it, "Edward. Midnight—*Amor et constantia*." Then enclosing the lock of hair which she had severed from Graham's head, she laid it in her unlocked drawer.

She went up to her children's bed-chamber, and, after awakening Matty, she stole softly into her own room for her night-dress. What was her surprise to find her husband still up, when she had supposed him asleep long ago. He was standing beside the mantel, and his face was as white and rigid as the marble upon which he leaned. Her heart accused her; but she would not listen to its better promptings.

"He is the one to make the first concessions," she said to herself, but she waited in vain for them. He saw her gather her things together and leave the room, without making the slightest motion to detain her.

There was no sleep for either that night; both were conscious of error; each imagined the other guilty of a wrong.

Howard Dorrance had been aroused from the revery in which he had indulged, after leaving his wife, by hearing the shutting of the front door. Hastening to the window, fearing that his wife, in her impetuosity, was fleeing from him, he had seen Edward Graham leave the house. Struck with surprise, and supposing, of course, that his wife must have

admitted him, he had tortured himself with suspicions, until his brain was in a whirl.

Thus were two hearts, each fondly loving the other, (one from the faults of education, incapable of making the sacrifices which love required—the other, forgetting to make allowances for the tendency of that education,) now still farther separated by a whirlpool of pride, jealousy, and passion.

CHAPTER III.

"Her vengeful pride, a kind of madness grown;
She hugged her wrongs; her sorrow was her throne!"—BULWER.

"So pr'ythee come—our fête will be
But half a fête if wanting thee!"—POPE.

IN the weeks that followed, Margaret Dorrance had ample time to regret her obstinacy. The breach that separated her from her husband seemed daily to widen. He gave her no opportunity for explanations; but treated her with studied coldness whenever they met. Her apartment he had ceased to share, since that fatal night.

She felt now how much easier it would have been to have yielded to his wishes—even to have renounced all society—than to bear the penalty which her perverseness had brought upon her.

Often had she been upon the point of throwing herself at his feet, and begging for a return of his love; but then pride would hold her back with its iron grasp.

Oh, how truly has it been said, that "pride has to be conquered as a man would conquer an enemy." Few there are that realize how it plants the thistle and the thorn in the gar-

den of the affections—how it turns the heart to a desert, and unseals the Marah, which, with its surging flood, sweeps away all holy affections.

Margaret felt but too truly that the difference which had separated her from her husband, had also removed her farther from her God. She could not call upon Him as before, when, looking upon her children and her husband, she had acknowledged His goodness and mercy to her, in giving her such blessings. Now, with the selfishness of an impenitent heart, she accused Him of injustice; and recalling the gloomy doctrines which had been early impressed upon her memory by the pious mother who was now no more, she thought if she was fated to be an unloved wife, she would at least learn to bear it with stoicism.

Thus day after day she wandered farther from the kingdom of Heaven; the thorns of earth wounding her, the bitter waters of her heart overwhelming her, and pride only strengthening her to endurance.

At length came an invitation to a party, given by one of her oldest and most intimate friends.

Margaret had neither inclination to go, nor spirit to prepare herself; but Emily Walton would take no refusal. Tableaux were not then out of date, and she was preparing to have them on a large scale. No one but Margaret came up to her ideas of a Rebecca, and so she coaxed Mrs. Dorrance into yielding her reluctant consent.

The day arrived, and all the morning Margaret had been oppressed with an unaccountable sadness. She went into the nursery to divert her mind with her children.

Ida was asleep, but Harry had just been brought in by his nurse from a walk, and his attention was engrossed by a new toy.

"Come here, Harry," said Mrs. Dorrance; "come sit in mamma's lap."

"No, me unt, me done wan to, me sit in me own lap."

"Oh, Harry's a naughty boy to speak so to mamma! Well, never mind; when poor mamma dies, and is buried up in the cold ground, then little Harry will feel badly."

The tender-hearted fellow dropped his toy, and burst into a sob, the big tears rolled down his cheeks, his breast heaved, and he said reproachfully,

"O! no do right to talk so to me; done ~~on~~ see how bad ~~on~~ make me feel?"

His mother was ready to clasp him to her heart, when suddenly his whole countenance changed. Resuming his former independent tone, and at the same time picking up his toy, he said,

"Well, me done care; *me* never mind; when *ou* die, me papa get me *new* mamma very quick."

Margaret was so vexed at this sudden turn that she felt like shaking the boy; but controlling herself, she left him to the nurse, who was mightily pleased at the spirit evinced by his answer.

And thus every little event of that day seemed to have a tendency to depress her more and more; and when the hour approached that Mrs. Walton had promised to send her brother for her, she stood shivering, although beside a glowing fire, feeling that she would be willing to die, could she but once more rest her head upon her husband's breast.

She had ordered her own carriage that night, and, at the appointed hour, it was punctually at the door.

Mr. Walton had not come. Oh, the relief, if she should not be obliged to go!

Once more she went to her boudoir—the darling little room, where she had passed so many happy hours with her husband,

he reading aloud to her their favorite books; while she, pillowed upon a lounge, listened, wondering if ever human voice had equalled his in its richly modulated tones.

Now, she stood there alone. Alone! and oh, so wretched! Whichever way she turned, the lofty mirrors reflected back a pale face, with eyes that tears had robbed of half their brilliancy.

How strange it seemed!

Her dress of amber satin, with its berthas of costly lace—the delicate-colored wreath of natural jessamine flowers that encircled her head as a coronet—the embroidered demi-skirt of lace, looped up with ~~black lace~~ jessamine buds; so much taste evidenced, so much luxury scattered around, and with all, such worlds of misery looking out from the depths of those hopeless eyes.

The door-bell rang. The servant who answered it ushered a gentleman into the drawing-room.

Mrs. Dorrance advancing, met Edward Graham.

"Mr. Graham! To what accident am I indebted for this unexpected call?"

"Mrs. Walton commissioned me last evening to call for you to-night, Mrs. Dorrance. Her brother, she said, would be unavoidably detained.

Mrs. Dorrance's lips smiled; but her eyes changed not from their dim sorrow, as she answered,

"As Emily has not kept her part of the compact, I am released from mine. I shall not go to-night, Mr. Graham, and am sorry to have given you this trouble. I will not detain you one moment longer."

"But, Mrs. Dorrance, your friend made me promise that I would not return without you; indeed you must go; your absence would cast a shade over the whole party."

"I am not vain enough to believe *that*, Mr. Graham," she answered, with something of scorn in her manner.

"I did not say it with any intention of flattering you, Mrs. Dorrance; it will most assuredly be so, for Mrs. Walton is relying upon you to personate several characters, and without you, the whole series must of course fall through."

"I cannot help it, Mr. Graham. As Emily did not send her brother for me as she promised, I am released from attendance. You need not urge it, for even did I wish to go, you know my husband has objected to my receiving attentions from you."

"But, Mrs. Dorrance, your husband has taken off that interdiction," interrupted Mr. Graham, eagerly, and, as he spoke, he glanced through the suite of rooms, ~~if~~ both remained standing in the centre of the drawing-room. His voice might have been a semi-tone lower, as he continued:

"I met him to-day, and asked his consent to wait upon you this evening: he replied promptly, that he had no objections. I hope now you will not consider yourself justified in disappointing your friends."

Mrs. Dorrance could not account for the sudden suspicion which entered her mind that Mr. Graham had not spoken the truth. To be sure, she had ceased to regard him as a friend since the night he had endeavored to persuade her to forgetfulness of her duties as a wife; and associating him with the first cause of her alienation from her husband, it was no wonder that she felt a fear of his trying to separate them still farther. She fixed her eyes earnestly upon him.

"Mr. Graham, is that strictly true?"

"Upon my honor it is. What reason have you to doubt my word, Mrs. Dorrance?"

"I thought it possible," she replied, "that this might be one of the occasions for falsehood, for which fashionable life grants free and full absolution; but if it is as you say, I will not disappoint Emily; it would not be right, I suppose, for me to do so."

She prepared herself to go out to the carriage.

"You are not deceiving me?" she said.

Mr. Graham opened the door. As he followed Mrs. Dorrance into the hall, his quick eye caught a glimpse of her husband just coming out of the library. He answered, in a raised tone,

"I told you, Mrs. Dorrance, exactly what your husband said."

They were gone. Margaret had not seen the one imploring, despairing look, that was cast after her. She had not a dream of the tempest of agony with which a 'full grown heart,' freighted with love for her, was battling throughout that weary night.

Could she but have divined it, how joyously would she have retraced her steps! with what explanations of, and concessions for, the past—with what promises for the future, would she have dispelled that momentarily increasing storm.

"False-hearted, crafty, subtle, as I believe him to be, yet has he told her all, and she has chosen to go. Now, as I said, so shall it be, though it break my heart-strings."

These were the only words that escaped her husband's lips. And what had he said?

It was true that Edward Graham had met him, and asked his consent to wait upon his wife; but he had told him that it was to a theatrical exhibition. It was true that Mr. Dorrance had answered he should make no objections, but he had also added, "If she consents to go with you to-night, she shall return to my house no more."

The party was over. In all her characters, Margaret had seemed to excel herself. As Corinne, the whole company looked upon her with breathless astonishment, wondering to see such depth of expression, where before they had noted only mere regularity of feature and brilliancy of complexion.

Whispered words of admiration followed her everywhere when the tableaux ceased; but heartsick and weary of all—the yearning for her husband's presence creeping into her breast more and more, to the utter extinction of all other emotions, she welcomed with eager joy the announcement that her carriage was in waiting.

Mr. Graham was of course her escort. He was very much animated, and profuse of praise of the parts she had so well sustained. She answered him only in monosyllables. Indeed, her mind was so preoccupied with thoughts of her husband, resolving that she would that night confess all her wretchedness to him, that she did not even observe the direction which the carriage was taking.

At length they stopped. The footman flinging open the door, said, "Shall I ring the bell, sir?"

Margaret glanced up to the house. It was her father's dwelling.

"What does this mean?" she said quickly, "drive back to my own residence—what are you thinking of, Richard?"

"Of my master's orders, madam; he directed us to leave you here."

There was an insolent tone in the footman's voice which was very galling; but collecting herself, Mrs. Dorrance replied with dignity,

"You know my father is in Europe, Richard—there is no one here but his housekeeper—I am sure, there is some misunderstanding. Tell William to drive back, and then if your master still insists, I will make no objections."

"We can't do it, indeed, we can't, Mrs. Dorrance," answered Richard with more gentleness. "Mr. Dorrance told both Bill and me, that he would turn us out of his service, if we failed to obey him."

Mrs. Dorrance threw herself back in the carriage.

"My God! what is there left for me to do! my heart is broken!"

Mr. Graham bent his head, and whispered a few words in her ear.

She sprang from his side, as if he had been a serpent, and rushing up the lofty marble steps, rang the bell, peal after peal, with her own delicately-gloved hands.

The shutters were closed all the way up, but now one in the second story opened, and a voice called out,

"What in goodness' name is wanting at this time of night?"

"It is I! I! do you not know me?—Margaret, Margaret Dorrance. I beseech you, Mrs. Brown, let me in quickly; I shall die if you do not."

The moments that elapsed before the door was opened, seemed to her an age, as she stood there with her opera cloak fluttering out in the wind, and the cold night air striking full upon her unprotected arms and breast.

Edward Graham had followed her, and now he said humbly,

"Before we part, Mrs. Dorrance, say that you forgive me."

She stamped her foot in frenzy as she answered,

"Go ask forgiveness of God—you need it: He may forgive you, but I never will."

The door opened, and closed after her as she went in. The carriage rattled off, and Edward Graham turned from the steps—his hypocritical, remorseless heart too utterly lost to all good emotions to feel other than disappointment at the thwarting of his designs.

CHAPTER IV.

"The spider's most attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable, to man's slender tie
On earthly bliss—it breaks at every breeze."—YOUNG.

MORNING found Howard Dorrance still in his library—his haggard face and bloodshot eyes too well attesting the strength of the storm that had spent its fury upon him, throughout those long night watches.

He had kept his word, but in so doing he had wrenched his heart until every beat was but a throb of pain.

The conviction, which in his morbid reveries had fastened itself upon him, that in his wife's unfaithfulness, he was to receive the punishment of his broken vows to Helen Graham, seemed to have crowded from his mind all thoughts of a possibility of his having in any way misjudged her.

Even had his conscience accused him of too great severity, could he not find occasion to justify himself in her coldness?—in the marks of favor which she had given to his hated rival?—in the choice which she had made but the night before, in defiance of him?

As the morning hours wore on, a letter was brought him: a servant in the hall awaited an answer.

He broke the seal. It was from his wife.

Upon its pages he read such protestations of innocence, such burning words of changeless love for him, such adjurations for mercy, that his heart melted into forgiveness for the errors she confessed. He wrote hastily his answer, promising to be with her immediately; he folded the sheet; he looked in vain amidst his own papers for an envelope, and rising went to the drawer of his wife's writing desk. The first thing his

eyes fell upon was the enclosed lock of hair. He could see what it was through the thin paper, and seizing it, he opened it with the fond hope that he might find it his own, so earnestly had she assured him that to him alone had her heart's love been given. He read, "Edward—midnight. *Amor et constantia.*"

Staggering back, his face grew pallid, and his teeth ground fiercely together.

He threw the note he had written in reply, upon the coals; he took an envelope from his wife's drawer, and enclosing in it the letter she had written to him, directed and sent it back to her by the servant.

He was weak no longer, his heart was troubled with no more vain yearnings. The woman who could call upon God to witness her innocence of any other love save that she bore her husband, while her breast was filled with a guilty passion for another, she who could thus mingle treachery and deceit, could no longer hold any claim upon his heart. He would have spurned her from him as if she had been a worm, had she thrown herself in his way. Yea, he thanked God that he was strong now,—that his weakness was all over. He had done with picking flowers by the wayside, he had now to make himself a path through thorns and briars, and manfully would he toil on over them. If they lacerated him, none should know it; if he grew weary and faint, he would heed it not. On, on, pausing not even to look back into the past, until toil-worn he should welcome the only refuge from ceaseless sorrow which the world can give—the grave.

Such were his thoughts. That very day he wrote a letter to his aunt Egerton, the only relative which death had spared him, begging her to leave Woodlawn, her place upon the Hudson, and come to his city home to take charge of his children, while he should travel in Europe.

She had not visited him since his marriage, nor had he taken his young wife to her home; for a coldness had sprung up between his aunt and himself, on account of his treatment of Helen Graham, who was her devoted friend. It was at her place that he had first met her. But now he wrote so humbly, acknowledging his sin, and telling her of the severe punishment which had been visited upon him for it, that Mrs. Egerton could not refuse his request.

There was nothing to keep her at her own home, except her attachment to the beautiful spot; for she had no family, having been left a widow but a few months after her marriage.

She immediately made her arrangements to leave Woodlawn, until the summer weather should come on, at which time she purposed returning with the children and their nurses.

Two weeks more, and she took from Howard Dorrance the charge of his mansion, while he continued his preparations for travelling.

CHAPTER V.

"Her hands were clasped—her eyes upturned,
Dropping their tears like moonlight rain.

* * * * *

Yet was there light around her brow,
A holiness in those dark eyes,
Which showed—though wandering earthward now—
Her spirit's home was in the skies.
Yes, for a spirit pure as hers,
Is always pure, e'en while it errs;
As sunshine, broken in the rill,
Though turned astray, is sunshine still." MOORE.

MARGARET DORRANCE moved about her father's house like an automaton. Since the day her letter had been returned to

her, without one word of answer, she had shed no tears: she seemed petrified with grief.

Her face became pale and wan, her eyes seemed hourly to grow more cold and dim, her voice lost its sweet tone, and her form its roundness.

The return of her father was all now that she apparently desired. A faint hope dwelt in her heart that he might be able to effect the reconciliation, which she had despaired of seeing accomplished in any other way.

At length came the terrible news that he had died in the steamer upon his return home, when they had been out but two days. His body had been buried at sea.

The kind clergyman who had called to break this distressing news to her, was surprised to see with what apathy it was received.

He could not read in those cold, stone-like eyes, of the heart that his words had plunged down, down into the depths of despair, to that lowest deep where the star-rays of hope never penetrate. He could not divine that that strange-toned voice was the echoing of a spirit wailing its own dirge. He could not know how, when the door had closed upon him, she had dropped like a stone to the floor. In the death-like swoon that followed, she had been unconscious, for a brief period, of the griefs which were feeding upon her.

When she revived, there was still no alteration in her demeanor; through all the bustle that followed of preparing her mourning dresses, she was the same: her sharpened features seemed to have hardened into marble.

Mrs. Brown, with tears in her eyes, looked upon her as she moved from room to room, appearing so much taller from her thinness and her sombre garments, and she would mutter to herself, "Lord love the child, if her father had come back and found her thus, he never would have known her."

Margaret had heard through her dressmaker of the gossiping which had followed her separation from her husband.

As usual, in such instances, the censure rested upon the wife, the husband being only blamed for having too long borne her imprudent conduct. His spirit was commended in having at length sent her home to her father's, thus refusing to countenance longer her extravagancies. This was the commonly received explanation; but as always, there were two sides to the story; and Mrs. Dorrance had many devoted friends, who warmly defended her, until at length chilled by her repeated refusals to see them, they too shook their heads mysteriously, and gave ear to the rumors that were afloat.

From the same source, she had heard that Mr. Dorrance was going to Europe, and that his aunt was to have the charge of the children.

And now every day she looked through the morning papers, to see if her husband's name was among the list of passengers, in the different steamers, that was given from time to time.

One morning her eyes fell upon his name; something of the wild light of old flashed from them as she read, "Last night, the youngest child of Howard Dorrance, Esq., was ~~of~~ suddenly seized with convulsions. Dr. Abernethy Jones was immediately summoned, who suspected, from peculiar symptoms, that the child was under the influence of some powerful narcotic. He extorted from the nurse a confession, that the infant, having been restless and fretful for several nights, she had given it laudanum, being unaware of its great power. He promptly applied the usual means for the counteracting of its effects, and the child was relieved before the family physician arrived. The nurse, who had been but a few days in the family, was immediately discharged. Dr. Abernethy Jones is a promising young physician, who has been

very successful in his practice. He resides at No. 141 Blank Street."

Margaret dashed the paper upon the floor.

"My child! my child!" she screamed, as clasping her hands, she raised her eyes to heaven. "My baby! oh God! have mercy upon me and lead me to her!"

The thought that darted through her brain that moment; was it an answer to her prayer? "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

She flew to her room, she habited herself in her coarsest materials: a dress of black cashmere, and a heavy shawl of the same color. As Mrs. Brown had adopted a mourning dress for Mrs. Dorrance's father, in whose service she had been for years, Margaret hastened to her, and disclosing her plans, borrowed her coarse black straw bonnet, and thick serge veil.

How her heart palpitated as she threaded street after street, until she came to one in the suburbs of the city, where she remembered having heard that there was a large hair-dressing establishment kept by females. She found the place easily, and to the woman in waiting, she communicated her desire of disguising herself, at the same time pressing upon her a bank note of considerable value to insure secrecy.

Margaret was taken into a private room. She sat down, and directed her long exuberant tresses to be shorn close to her head. The woman, with more forethought, suggested that she should spare as much of it as possible, by drawing it off from her forehead, and up from the back of her head, and fastening it there, contrive to cover it with the false hair she should select, and plain muslin mourning caps.

Margaret entrusted everything to her. The woman only cut off about half the hair; the rest she managed to hide with a cap of brown Holland, which she was some time in making,

and to which she fastened the perruque of flaxen hair that Mrs. Dorrance selected.

Commissioned by Margaret, she then went into an adjoining store, and purchased half a dozen plain breakfast caps, suitable for mourning.

They were made of thick lawn, and after trying one upon Mrs. Dorrance's head, there was nothing left which could possibly lead to a suspicion of the metamorphosis.

Margaret was satisfied that no one could detect her, as she saw what a change the light hair produced; but now arose another difficulty in the attainment of her purpose. Without references or recommendation, it was impossible that she could obtain the situation for which she had resolved to apply.

She was well-nigh discouraged, when the thought struck her that Helen Graham, who had always been ready to advise her for her good, might still be willing to befriend her, if she should confess to her her whole history; and over her husband, no one would probably have more influence than Miss Graham.

Resolving that she would immediately apply to her, she bent her steps to her dwelling.

CHAPTER VI.

"No conquest she, but o'er herself, desired;
No arts essayed, but not to be admired;
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinced that virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so composed a mind;
So firm, yet soft; so strong, yet so refined." POPE.

"Yes, and he too! let him stand
In thy thoughts untouched by blame.
Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim?

That was wrong, perhaps—but then
Such things be—and will, again!
Women cannot judge for men.

* * * * *

Thy brown eyes have looks like birds
Flying straightway to the light:
Mine are older." E. B. BARRETT.

HELEN GRAHAM was in her thirtieth year. She was not beautiful; but her thoughtful, pensive cast of countenance never failed to interest. Few could tell in what her charms consisted, for her features were quite ordinary. Some there were who acknowledged the spell of mind upon mind; and they attributed to the right cause the sway which she exercised over all who came within her sphere.

She was not one of those of whom Keble has beautifully said,

"There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs,
None loves them; but, oh vain and selfish sigh!
Out of the bosom of His love He spares,
The Father spares His Son for them to die."

No, for upon that bosom had she alone leaned for strength, when the earthly temple, in which she had garnered too many hopes, was shattered before her eyes. She forgave freely the hand that wrought its destruction; she learned to look calmly upon the ruin; ay, more than that, she grew to thank God that in the crucifying of her earthly affections, she had been drawn nearer and nearer unto Him.

Little knew she in her resigned and placid life of the revenge which her brother had vowed, of the recompense which he had resolved upon working out. It was a sin of which she could never have dreamed—too terrible for her belief would have been the thought of his usurping the power of Him who has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

When she heard the rumors of Howard Dorrance's and his wife's unhappiness, and afterwards of their separation, she said to herself, "There has been blame upon both sides;" and earnestly she wished that she might be a mediator between them. She called on Mrs. Dorrance, but received the unvarying answer, "Mrs. Dorrance sees no one." So week followed week, and no opportunity occurred.

One afternoon she was summoned into the parlor, to a person who was awaiting her there. Upon entering she was struck with the singularity of the face of the new-comer. She noticed the anomaly of exceedingly light hair and jet black eyebrows and lashes. There was something also in that thin face (of a deadly whiteness from the contrast of the black bonnet), that riveted her gaze upon it; while she taxed her memory to recall why it should so haunt her with the feeling that she had seen it before.

The young woman seemed embarrassed by the scrutinizing look which Miss Graham fixed upon her, as she approached.

"You know me, Miss Graham?" she said as one would assert a thing, not question.

"No—I—do—not," Helen answered slowly.

"Thank God! then *he* will not discover me."

"Mrs. Dorrance! is it possible that this is you, so changed? how you tremble! poor thing, what has induced you to assume this disguise?"

Briefly, Margaret told her history, only reserving that portion of it, which would be painful to Helen, as involving her brother; and now, Miss Graham learned for the first time of the jealousy from which the young wife had suffered. Her heart ached as she saw the wretchedness which Margaret had brought upon herself, though she did not scruple to condemn Mr. Dorrance for his severity and his haste.

Through Miss Graham's sincerity, Margaret was led to see that the esteem which her husband had manifested for Helen, bore no comparison with the deep, all-absorbing love which he had lavished upon her in their early married days.

Helen Graham appreciated the thorough change which had been wrought in the thoughtless woman of the world, to inspire in her such self-devotion as she now purposed to carry out; choosing to perform the menial offices of a servant, rather than to endure a longer separation from her children.

Willingly she wrote a note to Mrs. Egerton, commending her in the highest terms—spoke of her as a gentlewoman who had known better and happier days; and suggested that she should be employed rather as a nursery-governess, having the entire charge of the children, and the control of the servants who should be needed to wait upon them. She begged of her to engage her at once, as in so doing, she would perform an act of charity, which she promised to explain to her at some future day.

Mrs. Dorrance was to bear the name of Ann Hastings. She left with the note immediately, her heart full of gratitude to Miss Graham for her prompt assistance.

It was near twilight when she reached — Place. Inquiring for Mrs. Egerton, she was shown into the sitting-room. She waited what seemed a long, a very long time to her. Then the door opened, and her husband stood before her. Her heart beat violently.

"Mrs. Egerton is engaged," he said; "perhaps I ^{will} ~~shall~~ answer as well."

She handed him the note without speaking.

As he turned towards the light, to read it, she ventured to let her eyes rest upon him. She saw that the traces of suffering were as evident in his countenance as upon her own.

He finished the perusal of the note.

"I regret to say that Mrs. Egerton has engaged a young woman; but my child is very ill, and we may need other assistance. I will mention this to her, and you might call again, say at two o'clock to-morrow."

Margaret arose, and staggered rather than walked to the door. He advanced to open it for her. Their eyes met. She felt faint and sick, almost guilty, such a searching gaze did he fix upon her. His eyes glanced to her hair, and his countenance then settled back into the same sad, gloomy expression it had worn before.

As she went out into the open air, her heart leaped with joy that she had not been recognized.

The next day she returned at two o'clock, and was engaged by Mrs. Egerton.

CHAPTER VII.

"A watchful heart
Still couchant—an inevitable ear;
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch."

WORDSWORTH.

"Punished for our sins we surely are, and yet how often they become our blessings, teaching us that which nothing else can teach us."

ALTON LOCKE.

THE mild, odorous breath of spring stole through the open casement into the lofty apartment where Margaret, known only as Mrs. Hastings, sat bending over her charge, who was now convalescent.

Ida, when awake, would not suffer Mrs. Hastings to leave her sight; if she was obliged to absent herself, the little sufferer would moan for her until her return. Mrs. Egerton often said that she was sure the child would never have recovered, had she had a less patient and devoted nurse. The physician said so also. Mr. Dorrance said nothing. He suffered steamer after steamer to depart without him, watching whole days and long evening hours by the bedside of his beloved child.

Harry was the only one who seemed to have taken a dislike to Mrs. Hastings. She would often coax him to come to her, but he would only edge himself farther off, until he reached a corner of the room, where, with frowning eyebrows, he would look up from under his long lashes, and make mouths at her, in his roguish, independent way.

This pleasant spring day Mrs. Egerton had availed herself of the warm atmosphere to take Harry out upon a drive. She had not seen Miss Graham yet, to thank her for procuring so competent a nurse; and of course she had not a suspicion of

who Mrs. Hastings was, never having known her nephew's wife.

In the mean time Ida slept, and her mother bent over her, her heart full of thankfulness to the kind Heavenly Father who had spared her child to her.

During her weeks of continued watching, the religious instruction of her early youth had come up before her with renewed freshness. The noble sentiments and devoted affections of her heart, which had seemed to be extinguished by vanity and the love of pleasure, had been rekindled, and they now shed their holy light through her soul. All her interest in life had revived, now that she had taken hold of its duties. She only needed a return of her husband's love, to fill the cup of her earthly happiness—a happiness deeper and more rational than life had ever before yielded her.

And now while she watched the slumber of her innocent babe, she recalled, as she had done many times before, the errors for which her punishment had been so severe. Her vanity, her pride, her obstinacy, she saw in such a glaring light, that involuntarily she passed one hand over her eyes as though she could thus shut it out.

A footstep fell upon her ear, and glancing up she saw Mr. Dorrance looking at her. The expression of his eyes changed suddenly; she thought she detected in them a shade of sympathy at first. He said,

"Mrs. Hastings, has my aunt told you that we shall go into the country in another month?—to her place on the Hudson?"

"No sir," she answered, her eyes dropping under his steady gaze.

"I suppose you would prefer remaining with your city friends to going so far with us?" he continued.

"No, no, not for a moment—I have no friends—that is—I

mean that I love your child so well, sir, I would follow her to the ends of the earth," she answered very much embarrassed.

There was a long silence.

"Mrs. Hastings, have you heard my history?"

"I have, sir."

Another silence, during which she walked to the window to conceal the burning glow upon her cheeks.

"I wish you would sit down, Mrs. Hastings, and listen to it from my own lips. I would like to know if it is as you have heard it."

"Indeed, sir, I know the whole. It must be a painful subject to you, I would not recall it," she said, as she resumed her seat.

"No need have I to *recall* it! It is ever present with me. Will you tell it to me as you have heard it?—it is a relief to me to talk about it to you."

Her heart beat fast; she summoned all her courage.

"Your wife, sir, as I understand, was young, giddy, and vain; she did not study your happiness as she ought; you grew cold towards her; she thought that she discovered that you did not love her as fondly as you did another—" Mr. Dorrance gave a start of surprise. Mrs. Hastings continued, "she grew proud, and very wretched; she would have acknowledged all her errors, and begged for a return of your love, if she had not felt that you had deceived her; and so things grew worse and worse, until they terminated in a separation."

"You have not told all; will you let me finish the story?"

"Certainly."

"I worshipped my wife! My affection for Helen Graham was calm as a brother's love; but when year after year passed, and my wife grew more and more regardless of my wishes, I did recall the calmer emotions I had felt for Helen, with something like regret. One night, after my wife had sent me

from her presence with harsh, galling words, she admitted clandestinely, a man whose character I despised—a subtle, intriguing man of fashion, whom I had forbidden to pay her farther attentions. I know not how long he remained with her—stop, hear me through,” he said, as Mrs. Hastings, with white lips, rose and attempted to answer him. “From that hour I steeled my heart against her—God knows with what difficulty! That man came to me, he asked me if I would allow him to wait upon my wife to some theatrical exhibition, where they were both to take a part. I answered that I should make no objections; that she could do as she chose, but that if she went, she should never enter my doors again.—She went.”

Again Mrs. Hastings essayed to speak, and again Mr. Dorrance prevented her. He continued,

“That night I sent her to her father’s home. In the morning there came a letter to me from her. It softened my heart to forgiveness; for I was fool enough to believe her protestations of innocence. I wrote an answer, saying that I would come to her immediately. I went to her desk for an envelope, there I found a lock of her lover’s hair; and in her own writing an acknowledgment of it as such. Good God! I know not what sustained me with that damning evidence before my eyes! Woman, can such things be forgiven? Answer me: in the Heaven which you believe in, is there a place for such treacherous souls?”

Mrs. Hastings had remained standing. She trembled from head to foot at Mr. Dorrance’s violence.

“It was not so, it was not so!” she answered energetically; “Oh! could you have believed all this of one who never had a feeling of love for living man but you? I did not know that earth had such fiends as that wretch Graham has proven himself to be. Mr. Dorrance, I know your wife; if I convince you that she is still worthy of your love, as far as her truth-

fulness to you is concerned, will you forgive her errors, and receive her back to your love as she yearns to be received?”

“I will, so help me God!”

Mrs. Hastings resumed her seat, and, suppressing her emotions as much as she was able, she proceeded to give a full history of everything that had occurred. When she came to the lock of hair, explaining the motives which had induced his wife, still speaking of her as a third person, to enclose it and lay it in her drawer, he drew nearer to her, and seizing her hand, pressed it fiercely between his own. His eyes glowed with the intensity of his feelings; and when all was explained, he caught her wildly to his breast, and straining her tightly to it, sobbed like a child. He seemed delirious with joy.

In vain she endeavored to release herself.

“Margaret! Margaret!” he cried, “My own good, pure wife! may God bless you as you have blessed me this hour, and may He forgive me for the injustice I have done you.”

She threw her arms around him—she laid her poor, aching head upon his broad breast—she also begged for forgiveness.

Oh! that was a holy and a happy hour.

When the first violence of their emotions subsided, Mrs. Dorrance questioned at what part of the history she had betrayed herself.

“My poor Margaret, did you think you had deceived my watchful eyes? I knew you, darling, from the moment you stood trembling at the door, when you brought me the note of recommendation from Miss Graham. I knew you, and hundreds of times since has my love been upon the point of betraying itself. Oh, my precious wife, I thank God for the misfortunes that have revealed our hearts to each other.”

And great reason had they both to thank Him; for very seldom is it, when pride and jealousy and suspicion sepa-

rate two hearts, that any after reconciliation can entirely root out the weeds which have sprung up in rank luxuriance under their baneful influence. More frequently the breach widens with years; each grows to think the other the aggressor, and that complete isolation takes place which it is so terrible to contemplate.

In society, such instances are constantly occurring; and if in any one case the difficulty could be traced to its foundation, I doubt not the cause would be found to be as trivial as was the first event in the story I have narrated.

Women do not sufficiently comprehend the responsibilities which they take upon themselves in the married life. Instead of looking upon marriage as 'a career of devotion,' as 'an exercise of virtues often difficult,' they expect the homage of the lover to be continued; and, disappointed at the outset, they indulge themselves in 'sentimental reproaches' until there is danger of their happiness suffering shipwreck; for men soon weary of the 'little scenes' in which women so often squander their eloquence.

Again, there are instances where the wife has faithfully performed her duties, and yet she sees a change gradually taking place in her husband. The rose-colored tint with which she had invested the future, gives place to a cold and leaden hue as the love of the chosen one seems to diminish, absorbed by the world and its pleasures. But even then there is hope. Let her watch occasions for making sacrifices; let her show that her husband's happiness is still her predominant study; above all, let her avoid reproaches; and no one heart in which the flame of love has ever burned, will long remain proof to such devotion.

From this long digression we will go back to Mr. and Mrs. Dorrance.

Aunt Egerton was horror-struck upon her return, in find-

ing the timid and retiring 'Mrs. Hastings' seemingly entirely at home in her nephew's arms.

Howard Dorrance attempted no explanations in words, but he pulled off the close lawn cap, and the flaxen *perruque*, and as Margaret's dark hair fell around her, Mrs. Egerton could not fail to recognise some traces of the beautiful crayon in the library, which she had so often studied with interest since she had become an inmate of that dwelling.

Impulsively she folded Margaret to her heart, for the sufferer had won a place there, to the extinction of all prejudices, by her gentle, patient ways, and unwearied devotion to her sick child.

Harry also knew his mamma now, and no longer refused to come to her arms.

There was a happy party at Woodlawn that summer.

At Margaret's earnest pleading, joined to Mrs. Egerton's kind persuasion, Helen Graham accompanied them, participating in all their pleasures with her unselfish heart. Her brother had gone to Europe.

The world said that it was very strange that the proud Howard Dorrance should receive back his wife; but the world never knew how much they rejoiced in their brief separation, as an event ordered by their all-wise Father to bring them nearer than ever to each other, and to Him.

Autumn.

AUTUMN is here. His russet mantle's fold
 Trails over all the woodland groves around,
 Sweeping bright leaves of scarlet and of gold,
 Like flashing jewels to the cheerless ground.
 The Katy-did has ceased her plaintive tale—
 The Whippoorwill has sought a Southern zone;
 Alone, the corn bird screams from distant vale—
 Then listens to the low wind's answ'ring tone.

The grass-grown path beside the forest wood
 Is nearly hidden by the withered leaves;
 And far around the frost-touched weeds are strewed,
 While brown have grown the farmer's stacks of sheaves.
 The river murmuring o'er its rocky bed,
 Smiles up as *gladly* to the greenwood spray,
 As if it sought the falling leaves to wed,
 And bear them from their forest home away.

The wild flower shiv'ring on its slender stalk,
 Meets the rude blast and sways to rise again,
 Spreading its petals fair by woodland walk,
 Fearless of drenching dew or beating rain.

AUTUMN.

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Not so its sister plants in garden bowers;
 They drooped and died, afraid of Winter's cold,
 All save the Artemisia's clustering flowers,
 And here and there a stately Marigold.

'Midst all of Autumn's ever mournful sounds,
 The cricket chirps his never ceasing lay;
 And wild bees buzzing o'er their daily rounds,
 Hasten to bear their stolen sweets away.
 The laborer, *plodding* homeward from his toil,
 O'er fields where gleaners gathered all the day,
 Finds a few scattered sheaves upon the soil
 And, with a light heart, keeps his humble way.

Once at his home, his cheerful wife will meet
 With *loving* smiles his true and fond caress;
 While little ones will gather 'round his feet,
 And thus sweet happiness his hours will bless.
 Ah! bless'd be God for all the garnered love
 That makes our earthly pilgrimage so bright,
 Leading our thoughts to mansions fair above
 Where never falls the darkness of the night.

THE HAPPY THANKSGIVING;

New England Tale.

"Yet in those flute-like voices mingling low,
Is woman's tenderness—how soon her wo!"

WERE you ever in Glenwood, gentle reader?—in that loveliest little gem of a glen imaginable? No, I dare say, you saw nothing inviting, as the rail-road cars hurried you through—nothing to lure you from your velvet seat, and so you were whirled onwards, without ever dreaming of the vine embowered cottages which were scattered through the shaded streets, scarce half a mile from the station, at which you paused but a few moments.

Ah, you little dreamed of the beauties you were leaving behind you, or you would not so have hurried through dear Glenwood. You still remember, do you not, where the Gothic stone-colored depot stands—and the road just curving to the right, losing itself in the darkness of the old arched bridge which spans the fretting, murmuring Warrinocoe?—and the wealth of forest trees which skirt its banks, flinging their shade far over the mossy rocks, and spreading their swaying boughs

in clasping coolness above the green sward, where the humble daisy and dewy-eyed violet nestle lovingly together?

Ah, in all our glorious old Bay State—throughout the length and breadth of New England, there is not a lovelier spot than the valley home of my childhood. The road which passes the depot, curves again to the right, sweeping down past a fine old mansion which has been the home of the Moudesleys for generations. The seven noble elms which skirt the wayside, were planted by Marie Moudesley's father, and in their shade she grew from a free and frolicsome child, to a thoughtful and dignified school-girl. Not another one in the village walked with so stately and yet so graceful a step!—not another one could wreath the braided hair about the head in so queenly a circlet! No wonder then, that Marie was the pride of her circle, the belle of the village, and the darling of her old parent's hearts.

Days flitted by into weeks—weeks glided into months—months vanished into years, and Marie numbered sixteen, with her large dark eyes undimmed by sorrow, and her heart unshadowed by disappointments or regrets. Then came a strange family to Glenwood, a proud, aristocratic family, by the name of Wolcott, who brought new ways and new customs, and established a code of etiquette in our quiet rural village; and Marie Moudesley's dark lashes learned to droop under the steady gaze of Herbert Wolcott's penetrating eyes; and warm heart-blushes mantled her cheeks when his deep-toned voice, clear as the notes of a silver bell, fell upon her ears.

For a while, the course of true love seemed to run smooth, for not one obstacle impeded the lovers, and day after day they met, evening after evening they passed together, until at length the troth plight was exchanged between the young couple, with the full and free consent of both families. How could the Wolcotts object to the broad lands and time-honored names

of the Moudesleys, or the Moudesleys refuse so near a descendant of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, particularly when so well endowed with this world's goods? This last consideration, it must be confessed, had more weight with Mr. Moudesley than any other; and when the Wolcott's met with reverses, it was not strange to those who knew him; that his opinion of the family should be modified by the change. Herbert Wolcott, the son of the bankrupt, was no longer a suitable lover for the heiress Marie, the idolized of his heart, the apple of his eye.

Mr. Wolcott's misfortunes had come very suddenly upon him, but the proud family were not humbled by the blow. Full of courage and of strong confidence in his own powers, Herbert resolved upon banishing himself awhile from all so dear to him, and seeking his fortune in some distant city, for with the enthusiasm of youth, he fancied, that to be found it needed only to be sought.

It was late one beautiful evening in June, when Herbert Wolcott parted from Marie at the latticed gate of her father's spacious ~~lawn~~ *lawn*. There was a sad look resting upon her beautiful features, and her eyes were dim with the tears she was battling with. Beneath the folds of her muslin dress, her heart was beating nervously, yet with a firm voice she whispered her farewell, while Herbert pressed the hand he held fervently to his lips, and strove to conquer the weakness which had already filled his dark-blue eyes with a misty love-light. It was in vain, for his voice was tremulous as he said,

"Remember, Marie, every week I must hear from you—every week, or I cannot bear this separation."

"Yes, Herbert, every week I will write," answered Marie, her low voice now hoarse with emotion.

"And darling, if your father should object, as I doubt not he will, remember that in the sight of God we are as much

one as if we had stood before the altar—remember this, dear Marie, and let nothing deter you from fulfilling your promise, for my happiness, my very life depends upon it."

"Marie, child, come in!" cried a rough voice from the door-way, and with a slight pressure of the hand he held, a whispered 'God bless you,' Herbert parted from his betrothed bride, and with a sad heart, retraced his steps to the centre of the village, while Marie glided through the shrubbery to the open door, where her father was standing.

"Was that Herbert Wolcott?"

"Yes, father."

"Hum! so he is still after you," said Mr. Moudesley in the quick tones which Marie never liked to hear—tones, which in speaking to her, he but seldom used.

She looked up with an expression of surprise into her father's face, but she evidently thought that the subject was so plain, that it needed no answer.

He led the way to the old fashioned sitting room, where a light was burning in a heavy silver candlestick, upon the massive mahogany side-board, and seating himself upon his cushioned and high-backed chair with puritanical dignity, he motioned to Marie to stand nearer to him. Mr. Moudesley's voice sounded fearfully distinct to his daughters ears, as he said:

"Marie, you must think no more of this Wolcott,—'like father, like son,' is an old adage, and I have heard this week the report confirmed that the old man has lost every cent speculating in the lead mines—he deserves to have lost it for risking it in such fol de rol things, and you must never think of Herbert again, do you hear me, Marie?"

"Yes, father, I hear, but"—

"But! no buts to me, my word is the law in this house;

now go to bed, and remember that I forbid you from this time forth to see or to speak with young Wolcott."

Still Marie stood motionless,—the large tears rolling from her lashes, and leaving their traces all down her crimsoned cheeks.

"Come, Marie, go to bed," said Mr. Moudesley, in a softer tone of voice, "you have always been an obedient child, and I have great pride in you, and in your well-doing—good night, child."

Marie turned from the room—she dared not answer her father. His word was indeed the law in that house, and when once he had formed a resolution, no persuasion could induce him to change, even had Marie or her mother possessed sufficient courage to make the attempt.

CHAPTER II.

"The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more."—OTHELLO.

THE sweet breathed Summer had almost departed. Side by side with the glorious Autumn she stood,—hands linked in a loving embrace and the sorrowful sighs of parting echoing through glen and wild-wood. Marie had written to Herbert, telling him of her father's commands, of her unhappiness, and of the necessity of their giving up the proposed correspondence.

"It will be better for us in the end, dear Herbert," she wrote, "for it would only anger father if I were to write you as I promised—and from a child, I have feared his displeasure more than any thing in the world. We must bear the sepa-

ration patiently—we both know how very dear we are to each other; too dear to doubt each other's constancy."

The letter she had sent that very week, and not one line had she as yet received in answer. She had watched, she had hoped for one, but she had watched and hoped in vain. One afternoon, Marie and her mother were sitting near the windows of the sitting room, busily employed in their sewing for winter. Marie was so wrapt in her own thoughts, that she scarcely heard the remark her mother had addressed to her.

"Do you not think so, Marie?"

"Think what, mother?"

"You are strangely inattentive, my daughter. I was saying that our family was so small that I thought we might ask the Lewises, on Thanksgiving day."

"And why the Lewises, mother? I think we might have a more agreeable addition."

"But your father is very anxious to have them agreeable to you, Marie—he thinks a great deal of Joel."

"Joel! mercy, mother!" exclaimed Marie, comprehending in a moment the reason of her father's anxiety.

"He is a very promising young man, Marie, and very much attached to you, his mother tells me."

Marie bent her head over her work, but she did not trust her indignant tongue to make any answer. There was quite a long silence, interrupted only by Marie's short sighs—then Mrs. Moudesley spoke again, and her tones, which were always sweet and gentle, now seemed doubly so to her daughter,

"My child, this long silence upon the subject nearest to your heart, has often pained me. I should love to have your full and unsolicited confidence. I fear your attachment for Herbert still continues—am I right, Marie?"

"Oh, yes, mother, it does, and it always will, for I could never be happy without his love. Think how different he is

from the one you have just mentioned, and tell me, if you blame me, that I cannot change. Do not let father think of sacrificing me to such a man—do not let him, for I should rebel, I should forget my duty, I am sure I should.”

Mrs. Moudesley had no time to answer, for the door leading into the back part of the house, was opened by Mr. Moudesley, who with no very pleasant expression walked up to the fire-place, and tossed a letter into the flames. A sudden suspicion flashed across Marie's mind. Could it be possible that was her letter. She remembered now, that it was not the first time she had seen her father throw a folded letter upon the fire; but before, it had awoke no surmises. Now, the peculiar look which he cast upon her, convinced her that it must be so, and it seemed to her as though the throbbings of her heart were as audible as the ticking of the house-clock in the corner opposite. Her hands trembled so violently she could not sew, and her eyes were burning with the hot tears she was striving to force back. It was a relief to her, when her father left the room. Her mother observed her agitation, and with an instinctive delicacy, she gathered together her sewing and left Marie alone.

It was nearly twilight—the rain which had been threatening all day, now poured from the misty heavens, and the wind moaned and sobbed about the casement like a wailing child.

Every breath of the rising blast blew clouds of golden leaves from the swaying elms, and Marie, leaning her forehead against the window, unconsciously watched them eddying and whirling in one continued stream to the cold damp earth below. Suddenly she cast a timid glance about the room—there was no one to observe her, and she moved noiselessly to the large fire-place, and anxiously peered amongst the embers to see if one fragment—one vestige of the coveted letter remained. No, nothing, and with a sob of disappoint-

ment she turned away; her mother's favorite chair was close beside her, she leaned back in it, and watched the bed of coals where her lover's words had perished. From behind the huge back log, a thin blue smoke was curling up—the wind swept down the chimney, and blew the smoke one side—Marie bent eagerly forward. She could scarcely suppress a scream of joy, as she drew the smouldering remains of the letter from its hiding-place, and soiled as it was with the ashes, and the oozing sap of the green log, she concealed it in the folds of her dress, and stole to her room. It was too dark to read the half-erased words upon the scorched paper, and wrapping it in an envelope, she replaced it in its hiding place, and with a lighter heart than she had felt for weeks, she descended the stairs, and awaited a more favorable opportunity. After supper, Marie took a light from the table, and turned to leave the room.

“Sit down awhile, Marie, I have something to say to you,” said her father.

Involuntarily she placed her hand upon her bosom where her letter was concealed, and tremblingly awaited her father's words. But he said no more until the table was cleared, and Mrs. Moudesley had drawn her chair to the little stand, where she was now busy with her knitting.

“Joel Lewis is a very sensible young man, Marie.”

She made no answer.

“A very sensible, and worthy young man,” he continued; “he has requested permission to address you, and I expect you to receive and encourage him.”

“I cannot do it, father, I should only be acting a lie.”

Mrs. Moudesley looked up from her knitting—not sure that she had heard Marie aright. Mr. Moudesley knit his brows, and Marie was almost surprised at herself for her resolute answer, and at her father for his calm reception, of what, she well

knew, he would consider obstinate and undutiful. The calm was but the precursor of a storm.

"So you have been '*acting a lie to me*,' Marie, while I supposed you were obeying me to the letter. I repeat to you I expect you to encourage him, and as he wishes a speedy marriage, I shall insist upon you making yourself ready by the first of the year at the furthest. Do you understand?"

"I do," answered Marie, now pale with affright; "but, father, wicked as I may appear to you, it would be still worse for me, in the sight of God, to wed one for whom I have not one sentiment of esteem or love."

"You have said enough," interrupted her father: "I give you until to-morrow to decide whether you will obey me or leave this roof."

"Mr. Moudesley! my husband!" ejaculated Mrs. Moudesley, in terrified tones, "do not speak so severely, I beg you."

"Will you uphold your daughter in her undutifulness?"

"No, no—I would not do that, but remember how young she is—how—"

"That is no excuse for her. Leave the room, Marie, and do not appear before me until you can obey my wishes."

Not unwillingly did Marie leave. She closed and locked the door, and sat down by the light to read the fragments of the long expected epistle.

Her surmises were correct. Letter after letter had been written. He did not chide her for not answering him, but he begged her to be true to him, to let no commands, no persuasions change her.

"Remember, dearest," he wrote, "that your father's consent has been once given. With him rests the sin of endeavoring to separate two plighted hearts. Then do not let your strict ideas of duty lead you to sacrifice our happiness to his avariciousness."

"Perhaps you will feel unkindly towards me for writing so plainly, but I write not without reasons. Foster writes me that Lewis boasts of having won you from me—that you have jilted me. I know it is not so, but I tremble when I think that your father advocates his cause, for I know that with you his word is law."

Much more in the closely written letter did Marie decipher; but there were very many words which she could not read—many lines which were entirely effaced. She folded it, and sat down again to think over the exciting scene of the evening. When she arose she was firmer than ever in the resolution to let no threats induce her to become false to Herbert.

CHAPTER III.

"But thou hast yet a tale to learn
More full of warnings sad and stern."

MARIE'S continued obstinacy, as her father called it, was visited by him with the severest displeasure. Much against her mother's wishes, preparation was immediately made for her departure from home, and the last of October found her domesticated in a boarding-school, in the eastern part of the State of New York. Her mother grieved much at their parting, and Marie clung around her neck, almost willing, for her dear sake, to yield up her own hopes of happiness.

But the parting was over—and home-sick, and heart-sick, for the first few weeks, Marie moved like an automaton amidst the strange faces and scenes that surrounded her. She felt to the full extent the punishment her father had inflicted.

Deprived of a home where she had enjoyed every comfort and luxury—where a mother's affectionate looks and gentle words had met her at every step, for the cold, dull routine of a country boarding-school!—it was indeed a change! In her dreams she saw that mother, sorrowing and grieving for her—the pale, tearful face turned intreatingly towards her, and more than once she faltered in her resolution for that cherished mother's sake. "Try for my sake, Marie, for all our sakes, to overcome your repugnance to your father's choice. We shall never be happy until you do, for neither time nor persuasions can alter him." These had been her mother's last words, and she pondered over them many a time, when her companions thought her busy with the book her eyes were upon.

One afternoon, at the close of the school, the waiter came to Marie's apartment, and told her that a cousin from New England was awaiting her in the parlor.

Could she have been sent for? Oh how eagerly she hoped it was so, as she flew down the stair-case. She opened the door—the next moment found her weeping in Herbert's arms.

When she became more composed, she told him all her troubles, all her temptations, and he entreated her to fly with him, but he entreated in vain.

"I will promise never to marry any one else, Herbert," she said firmly, "but I should never expect to be happy or prosperous, if I were to commit such a wilful act of disobedience. You surely did not come with such a hope!"

"I did, Marie, and I thought you had received such harsh treatment from your father, you would feel justified in placing your happiness in other hands. O, dearest, trust it with me: I will pledge myself to compensate you for all the sacrifices you may be forced to make."

It would be folly to say that Marie was not tempted, but

her sense of duty gained the mastery over her inclination, and Herbert left her, disappointed and discouraged.

At the hall door, Mrs. Warren, the principal teacher, met him.

"We should be happy to have you stay and take supper with your cousin," she said.

"I thank you, I must return to the hotel, but if Marie is not engaged, I will give myself the pleasure of passing the evening with you."

"She can omit her studies for once," replied Mrs. Warren.

After supper, Herbert returned. Marie's cheeks were flushed. She was ill at ease, for she knew she was deceiving her excellent teacher.

Herbert felt that the end justified the means; and he was by turns agreeable to Mrs. Warren, and sociable to Miss Pitt, an assistant teacher, while Marie was treated with cousinly indifference. When he left, the secret of his politeness was very evident to Marie. He bade her good bye, said it was doubtful whether he should have time to see her again, and then, as if a sudden thought had struck him, he added,

"Perhaps, Marie, your teachers would allow you to ~~go~~ *drive* over with me to the next town. I am going to see a brother of my father, who is settled there as minister."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Warren and Miss Pitt in a breath, "is Parson Wolcott an uncle of yours?"

"He is," replied Herbert; "would you object to Marie's riding over with me?"

"Oh, no, by no means. Parson Wolcott is quite a favorite of ours, he is one of our references."

"Well, Marie, I shall call for you at nine—will you be ready?"

"I don't know—that is, I think not," answered Marie, very much agitated.

"Do not refuse me," whispered Herbert, "we shall not meet again if you do."

"You had better go with your cousin, Miss Moudesley, it will make the ride pleasanter for him, and I would like Parson Wolcott to hear a little about the prosperity of my school this winter."

Parson Wolcott was a widower, Mrs. Warren was a widow, and for once (?) self-interest blinded her, for she knew that if Marie accompanied her cousin, it would open the way for more frequent visits from the parson.

The next morning at nine, Herbert and Marie, in a cosy little sleigh of fairy-like proportions, glided away from the door of the boarding-school, and took the road to the lovely little town of ———.

"Why are you so quiet this morning, Marie?"

"Because, I feel that I am not doing right. I am disobeying my father, deceiving my teachers, and doing injury to myself by disregarding the dictates of conscience."

"Three most uncommon and heinous crimes, dear one; but there is one far worse, which I will this day save you from, that of breaking my heart."

"What do you mean, Herbert?"

"Why I mean that we are in the most excellent State of New York, a real Gretna-Green State, and before nightfall I am bound to put an end to all our unhappiness."

"Oh, Herbert, you will not—you cannot take such advantage of my unwilling consent to go with you."

"Let me reason with you, Marie," said Herbert; and long and ably he did reason—combating all her arguments, appealing to her love, and influencing her in every way he could think of. "It will only insure us to each other, Marie," he said. "I will not claim you until your father consents, or until I am sufficiently independent to support you as com-

fortably as you have always lived." His persuasions more than his arguments prevailed, and when he reached his uncle's, he lifted his no longer unwilling affianced from the sleigh, and led her blushing and trembling into the warm and pleasant parlor, where his uncle was awaiting them.

"I received your father's letter, my son," he said to Herbert, "and have been expecting you for two or three days. This morning yours was brought me, and I remembered that this is the Massachusetts Thanksgiving Day. I have ordered my housekeeper to prepare a suitable dinner for us. Will you change your name before dinner?" he said, turning to Marie, "and shall we have a family party of it?"

Marie consented, through her tears, and the ceremony was performed. In a few hours they were on their return, both anxious to reach Mrs. Warren's before evening. Marie was happier than she expected to be. Herbert was so loving, so unrestrainedly devoted in every word and look. Already she began to grieve over the hour of parting, but at the same time she rejoiced in the thought that if life was spared the parting could not be forever—no cruel commands could now destroy the indissoluble tie, and with a closer grasp she pressed the hand which rested around her waist. Too soon for both they entered the little village and drew up at the door of the large old house. Herbert lifted Marie and bore her in his arms to the steps—the door was ajar, he pushed it open and entered, deposited Marie upon the matted floor, kissing her tenderly as he parted from her.

"Good bye for an hour, my sweet little wife," he whispered.

"Villain! rascal!" sounded a hoarse voice close beside them.

"Oh heavens, Herbert! it is my father!" screamed Marie, and, cowering in one corner, she covered her face with both hands.

"You may well tremble, for you shall rue this day, if an old man's curses are of any avail. May God turn your love into hatred—may you live to despise each other as I despise you both now—may your children die in want before you—may you beg your bread from door to door, and every one turn from you as I turn from you now, and always shall—may you—"

"Oh father! dearest father!" interrupted Marie, as she threw herself at his feet, and clasped her arms about him, "for the love of heaven do not say any more! I will leave him—I will do any thing, but do not let me hear you, father, *my father*, utter such dreadful curses upon your children."

"Children! I have none—I disown you from this moment," he replied, his face purple with rage, "let go of me—let go of me, I say—do you hear me?"

Marie made no reply—she still clung to him—her bonnet thrown back—her black hair dishevelled—her white face turned up with so appealing a look that Herbert thought no heart could resist her. The next moment flung from him rudely and passionately, she lay motionless and senseless upon the cold floor of that cheerless hall.

"You have killed your child!" said Herbert, as he bent over and raised her in his arms. "Marie, dearest Marie, listen to me! Speak to her, Mr. Moudesley, if you are not a fiend. She is not to blame—it is I—I alone. I told her you would forgive us."

"Never, God help me," said he, between his closed teeth; "let her die now—better than she should live to beg, as she will if she goes with you."

"Devil!" said Herbert, as he cast a look of scorn and contempt upon the revengeful and passionate countenance before him.

He bore his senseless burden into the parlor, and laying

her upon a sofa, he untied her bonnet and cloak, and chafed her hands and forehead, calling for help.

Mrs. Warren, followed by some other members of the household, came to his aid, and Marie, in their experienced hands, soon opened her eyes and looked wildly about her.

"My father! where is he?—oh, Herbert! do not let him leave me angry. I shall never—no, never be happy, if you do."

Herbert bent over and whispered a few words to her. She bowed her head upon her hands and wept bitterly. Meanwhile, Mr. Moudesley, thwarted in all his plans, retraced his steps to the hotel. He had heard something of Herbert's journey west, and had followed him as speedily as possible to prevent his daughter from meeting him. It would be impossible to describe the rage which he was in, when he found upon his arrival in the afternoon stage, that Herbert and Marie had left for an adjoining village in the morning. He did not doubt their intentions, but he knew that they were now beyond his reach, and moodily he sat down in the parlor of the boarding-school; striving to smother the anger which was raging in his bosom. Plan after plan suggested itself to him, but none of them were feasible; and he had risen to leave, when he met them in the hall.

Mrs. Warren never forgot the experience of that day, and ever afterwards the *cousins* of her scholars underwent a rigorous examination.

CHAPTER IV.

"Long have I striven
With my deep foreboding soul,
But the full tide now to its bounds hath riven,
And darkly on must roll."—MRS. HEMANS.

FOUR years—four long years of toil, of sacrifice, but never ceasing love, had passed since Marie's marriage. Herbert had redeemed the pledge he had made, but it grieved him to the soul, and blighted all his joy, to look upon her wan and pallid face—her fragile, wasting form. Many, very many times had he, for her sweet sake, regretted his precipitancy; but he knew regrets were in vain, and manfully he bore it all, and strove in every way to compensate his beloved for her sacrifice.

Marie felt his tenderness—she well-nigh worshipped him for it, but the arrow within her bosom rankled with its poisoned point, and ever in her ears sounded the dreadful curse of her unreasonable father. She earnestly longed for that father's forgiveness, cruel as he had been. She pined for her cherished mother's smiles, and found the affection of her darling husband, the prattling of her noble boy, and crowing of her infant daughter, incapable of filling the aching void.

The winter and spring glided away as the preceding ones had done, and midsummer found Marie worn with watching beside the couch of her first-born—her boy. Their room was in an inferior boarding-house, in a narrow street of the most thickly populated portion of the city. With every economy they had found it barely possible to live from year to year, and they were not prepared for sickness.

Marie's heart was almost broken with anxiety; she remem-

bered her father's curse, and hardly dared to pray that it might be averted. One morning when the little sufferer slept, she knelt beside him and prayed earnestly for life for her boy—for forgiveness for herself from her earthly parents. She arose—her pleading tones had awakened the slumberer.

"Mother, did Doctor say I *must* die?" said the little fellow, and he fixed his dark, misty eyes upon her. She bent over him speechless with grief, and the large tears fell in showers upon his pallid face.

"Don't cry so, mother dear, it will only make it harder for poor Willie to leave you. I shall find the way up to God, dear mother, though the blue sky is so far, so very far off; and I will ask God to send for you and papa, and little sister, and dear grandpapa and grandmamma, that you love so much."

His mother buried her face in the pillow, striving to smother her wild sobs, while little Willie stretched his thin and feeble hand, and patted her head caressingly. They were interrupted by the entrance of the physician. He divined the cause of Marie's weeping, and strove to encourage her.

"Change of air, Mrs. Wolcott, might work wonders; suppose you try a few days somewhere in the neighborhood of the city."

Her reply was only a deep groan. She knew it could not be—that her husband had already overdrawn his salary to pay his increasing expenses, and her heart bled afresh at the thought of their destitution. When the physician left, she sat down at her table and wrote:

"Mother—mother, you will not turn from me in this hour of terrible anguish. My boy—my noble Willie—my father's namesake is dying beside me for want of air—the pure fresh air, which you revel in. Oh, mother! listen to me! I am almost mad with fear—with anxiety for him, my first born. He is my pride, my darling; but oh, if he can but live, I give

him up willingly into your hands. Come and take him from me; I will never see him again—only save him from death. I cannot see him perish for want of the fresh air which was everywhere around me when I was a child."

Thus disconnectedly did she write. The letter was folded and sent. Another week passed slowly, hour by hour, to Marie. She would not leave the bedside of her boy.

When late one evening Herbert returned from his business, he found his wife sitting, as was her wont, by the side of Willie's couch, her head resting upon the same pillow, her arms thrown lovingly about him, one little hand clasped close in hers. Beside them, in her wicker cradle, the baby slept. The flickering lamp shed a feeble glare about the apartment. He bent over his wife—both so deadly pale it did not look like sleep.

"Thank God," he said, as he saw the chesnut curls of his boy wave with the breath of the mother. "My poor pet," he murmured, as he stooped to kiss her transparent forehead, then pressed another upon the pale, *cold* cheek of his child.

He started back, and tottering to the nearest chair, sat down clasping his hands, and rocking to and fro in the first agony of his sudden bereavement.

"My boy! my boy!" was all that escaped through his closed lips; Marie moved restlessly, and opened her eyes upon the face of her dead child. She gazed around wildly, then sank down upon her knees, exclaiming, "Oh, God! the punishment of my disobedience is more than I can bear!"

All that weary night, the mourning parents watched beside that treasured form. Beautiful in death was the child of whose glorious loveliness the father had been so proud. Thickly the waving curls clustered about his broad brow, and the long dark fringe of the eye-lids rested upon the marble cheeks. The expression of the chiselled lips was as serenely

sweet as ever, and the father's heart yearned to hear once more the welcome which had ever greeted him. He threw his arms about his wife, and pillowed her head upon his shoulder, mingling their tears and sighs, though the hearts of both were too full for words.

How gently fell the first rays of morning light upon the sweet face of the departed! how transparently pure and beautiful he looked in his dreamless repose! It was not strange that the parents should so mourn and grieve over their blighted bud.

The little one in the cradle awoke and called loudly for its mamma. Marie lifted the child, and strained it wildly to her. Who can tell how bitter—how agonizing were the thoughts which crowded to that mother's breast, as she repeated to herself that fearful malediction, "May your children die in want before you!"

That morning a letter was brought her—she recognized the tremulously written superscription, but it had come too late, and she laid it unopened in her work basket. A week afterwards, when the first stunning weight of grief had given place to a resigned melancholy, she remembered the letter, and wondered at herself for so long letting her precious mother's epistle remain unopened. She broke the seal, and two fifty dollar bills fell into her lap, but the sheet was blank.

"Oh! could she not have written one word to me! her only child!" sobbed Marie; then she remembered her mother's perfect resignation to her father's wishes, and she doubted not that he had forbidden her to write. Through her blinding tears she at length discovered, upon a folded corner, written in an almost illegible hand, these few words, "My poor, dear child." They spoke volumes to Marie's lacerated heart, of the ceaseless fountains of a mother's love and sympathy. That morning she wrote to her mother thus:

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,—Your kindness came too late,—my little Willie is an angel! Oh, mother, it was so hard to give him up; it is so hard now to realize that he has gone! I look around; his little crib is empty—his toys no longer scatter the floor. I listen for his sweet-toned voice; but it is lost to me forever. Dear mother, pray for me that I may not murmur or repine. Willie used often to talk about you, and my dearly loved father, and he said when he got to heaven, he would pray to God that we might all meet him there. Little Maude, who is just beginning to talk, calls for 'buzzer Illie,' and peeps under the tables and beds to see if he has hidden, and then lifts her large blue eyes, (so like yours, dearest mother,) wonderingly to mine.

"I return you one of the bills; I cannot use it for myself, I only asked for Willie's sake. With the other, I shall make the desolate home where we have laid him, as pleasant as I can. The little marble column Herbert has ordered, will bear this simple inscription, "*The Grave of Willie Moudesley Wolcott.*" Oh, I tremble when I think that perhaps before another year, my blue eyed Maude may sleep beside her brother. Entreat of my father; beg of him to forgive me. Perhaps I have not suffered enough for my disobedience, but for Herbert's sake, whose only fault is in loving me too well,—for my sweet Maude's sake, beg of my father to send me his forgiveness—I will ask no more.

MARIE."

CHAPTER V.

"And art thou not still fondly, truly lov'd?
Thou art! the love his spirit bore away,
Was not for earth! a treasure but removed,
A bright bird parted for a clearer day—
Thine still in Heaven!"

FIVE years have passed since Marie was banished from her father's house, and now we will return to the old fashioned sitting-room, and see the change which Time has wrought upon its inmates. A portion of the room is occupied by a bed, the curtains of which are closely drawn. The deep breathing of the occupant, the ticking of the house clock, and the purring of the cat upon the rug, are all the sounds which break the stillness. In a high-backed chair, near the bed-side, Mrs. Moudesley is sitting. Her hair is silvery white, and parted plainly over the forehead, where Time has set his signet.

Well might Marie have written that Maude's eyes were like her mother's, for they were indeed strikingly similar—the same deep blue, the same sad and thoughtful glance.

The expression of Mrs. Moudesley's face shewed that her thoughts were pleasant ones; and how could they be otherwise when she was hourly expecting the return of her only child—the child ~~which~~ for five long years she had yearned to see.

Sickness and suffering had finished the work in Mr. Moudesley's bosom, which Marie's letter had commenced. He had sent for Herbert, begging ~~of~~ him to bring his wife and child immediately, before it should be too late for him to see them again, and the answer had announced that they ~~should~~ arrive on this very day. It was nearly sun-set when the stage drew up in front of the dwelling. Marie did not pause until

In case of protracted illness a bed was sometimes put up in a room on the lower floor.

she had rushed through the well-known hall, into the sitting-room, where she would have thrown herself at her mother's feet, had she not caught her in her arms.

The low sobs which echoed through the room were not of grief but of thrilling joy. Little Maude sat quite neglected in her father's arms, looking thoughtfully and poutingly upon the scene before her, and half a mind to cry, because mamma was crying.

Mr. Moudesley parted the bed-curtains with his wasted hands, and looked upon the meeting he dared not interrupt. Tears chased one another down his wrinkled face, and a half suppressed groan escaped him. In a moment Marie was kneeling beside him, covering his hands with kisses.

"Oh father, dearest father, forgive me," was all she could say.

"Rise, Marie, your poor father has much more need of forgiveness from his injured child. I did not know how necessary you were to my happiness, but five long years of obstinacy have taught me that I cannot live without you. Will you forgive all I have made you suffer, Marie, and make my dying hours more comfortable?"

"Oh, father! father! do not talk so—you, must not die—we could not be happy without you. It was I that was alone to blame, for I should have waited for the consent you would at last have been willing to give."

"Where is Herbert?" said Mr. Moudesley. He came to the bed-side, bearing his little Maude in his arms.

"Ah! I have lost my namesake," said the old man, "I did not deserve to have one. Herbert, my son, can *you* forgive me?"

"I have forgotten, father, that I have ought to forgive," said Herbert, as he pressed the sick man's hand warmly.

Herbert and Marie sat down, one on each side of the bed,

and tried to cheer and encourage their father. Little Maude slipped down and toddled off by herself.

"Oh, we will nurse you so tenderly, dear father, you will soon be well; and Maude shall prattle to you, and caress you, and make you feel young again. Where is Maude, Herbert?"

"Oh, Grandmamma has taken her to the cake-closet, where the acquaintance is progressing rapidly," he replied, laughing.

From that day Mr. Moudesley did indeed get along famously. The very next morning he said that he had slept better than he had for years, and in a few days he was able to sit up and hold his little pet in his arms.

He was soon well enough to wander from room to room, and in the warm days he indulged himself in strolling about the grounds.

Maude was constantly with him, amusing him with her prattle; only when she talked about "*poor buzzer Illie, down in the deep dround*;" then he would bury his face in his hands and sob like a child. Mrs. Moudesley expressed but little of what she felt in words, but the serene placidity of her face, the deep loving eyes, spoke volumes.

At length the great yearly festival, Thanksgiving, came, and the Wolcotts, instead of the Lewises, were invited to return from church with them.

There was more than one within the church walls that day that noticed the great change in Mr. Moudesley's countenance—more than one that read there that he was a better and a happier man.

Herbert's parents, with the remainder of their family, returned with them to their home. The large old parlor was thrown open for the company, and the ruddy light flashed back from the dark wainscoting upon the faces of a happy group.

The eyes of two were moist with unbidden tears—they were those of Marie and her father. They were thinking of the buried Willie—the angel child looking down upon them from Heaven.

In the long dining-room the sumptuous dinner was served. Next to her grandpapa, in a high chair, sat little Maude—her tiny fingers busy with the wish-bone of the turkey, which grandmamma had given her, and her plate heaped with every delicacy.

"*Is dis tansdivin, danpapa?*" said the little pet, looking earnestly up in his face.

"Yes, darling, *this* is Thanksgiving—the first Thanksgiving-day, Maude, which your grandpapa ever sincerely appreciated."

"*I'm dlad for tansdivin. I wish buzzer Illie was here.*"

It was too much; there was not a dry eye at the table, but Marie and her mother felt that Willie's death had been sanctified to all.

Many thanksgiving festivals have passed since then, and Marie's parents are still spared to them. Herbert is the pride of their hearts. Mr. Moudesley would not know how to live a week without his superintendence of the large farm.

Little Maude is as great a pet as ever, and often goes with her parents to the lovely little grave-yard of Glenwood, where Willie's remains have been removed.

Joel Lewis is married to the wealthiest girl in the valley. Speaking of his *two loves*, he remarked to a friend, that the last suited him best *any how*, for their farms joined.

Mrs. Warren and Parson Wolcott, still occupy their respective spheres. She has never quite forgiven him for the part he took in robbing her of a boarding scholar.

The Dying Wife.

"For death itself I did not fear—'tis love that makes the pain."—E. B. B.

OPEN the casement wide, and give me air,
And let me look once more upon the sky—
Once more upon my earthly home, so fair!
Once more, before I die!

How gently doth the south wind fan my brow—
Kissing the tresses damp with Death's cold dew;
How sweet the clust'ring flowers on yon green bough!
The far-off heaven—how blue!

More beautiful to me the earth doth seem
Now that I feel the parting hour is near:
More terrible the sleep without one dream,
The grave more dark and drear.

Clasp close the hand that hath not strength to press!
Kiss—kiss the lips that soon will be so cold!
Say when I'm gone, you will not love me less
Than in the days of old!

Beloved! it is a bitter thing to die!

To feel the pulse grow weak, while love is strong—
To know that dim and dimmer grows the eye,
That watched thy smile so long!

Ah! earth hath been to me too much like Heaven—
Thy love hath made me prize my life too well!
But earthly treasures are but lent, not given,
As thy fond tears do tell.

Then let me die! I would not live to see
Thy smile wax less—faint and more faint thy tone;
Life would be worse than death, dear love to me,
If thou, my life, wert gone.

Then let me die! the resurrection morn
Shall wake me from my long and dreamless rest,
And by thy side in Heaven (both newly born)
Shall ~~I~~ ^{we} be ever blessed.

For there is neither death, nor sorrow there,
And God is love; and love to us is given
To make our earthly life more passing fair,
And more of bliss our Heaven.

Farewell! farewell! I know my end is near,
Bend down beside me till I feel thy breath;
God bless thee, love, when I'm no longer here,
Oh! this indeed is death!

Emma Dudley's Secret.

CHAPTER I.

"Prythee, if thou love, tell me."

"I love thee not."

"Why, then, I care not for thee."—KING LEAR.

"I WISH you would give your consent, Cecil. If you don't I shall go without it; for I have such a passion for riding on horseback."

"Ah, yes, no doubt you have a passion for riding; for women have passions for everything expensive—you have a *passion* for dancing, and consequently a *passion* for parties, and, therefore a *passion* for fine dress, but I never hear you say that you have a passion for being a good housekeeper, or a passion for making your husband happy, or in short, a *passion* for anything useful and economical. Now, Emma, in the present state of things, I can ill afford extravagancies of any kind; and even if I could, I would never consent to your riding, until I became anxious to have your neck broken."

Emma pouted her beautiful under lip, but maintained a most provoking silence.

Mr. Dudley knew that he had spoken hastily and pettishly, and now in a milder tone of voice, he said,

"Believe me, Emma, I would rather gratify you in almost anything else, but you must give up this whim to please me."

Still Emma made no answer, but rocked to and fro in her little chair, as though her life depended upon a certain number of movements in a moment. Mr. Dudley was a nervous man, and this constant rocking, together with her silence, annoyed him.

"Emma, I wish you would stop rocking," said he, in a short, quick tone.

"I will, Mr. Dudley," she replied, and gathering up her needle-work, she attempted to leave the room.

"Now Emma, don't go off in an ill-humor, but sit down and have a quiet talk with me, and I will convince you that I am right in this matter," said Mr. Dudley, with tender earnestness, as he took hold of his wife's hand.

"You will convince me that you are obstinate, and that is all you will succeed in doing, Mr. Dudley!" replied his wife, in a very chilling tone of voice, at the same time attempting to withdraw the imprisoned hand.

But Mr. Dudley retained firm hold, and closing the door, he drew her gently toward a seat.

"Will you not yield willingly in this one thing to me, Emma?"

Mrs. Dudley pouted, and her face wore a very indignant expression, but she made no answer.

"I want to have you take this kindly, Emma, for you know how much I love you, and how very painful it is to me to refuse any request which you make."

"If you loved me, Cecil, you would not refuse a trifle so pertinaciously. 'Actions speak louder than words,' is an old adage, and a very true one, I believe."

Mr. Dudley leaned back in ~~his~~ chair, drawing a long sigh, as his wife continued—

"There is Mrs. Bill Howell—her husband never thinks of refusing anything to her: she told me so herself the other day, and laughed at me, when I said that I did not believe you would listen to my going. I am not nearly as extravagant as she is, and I am sure you are as well off as Bill Howell."

"He is the best judge, Emma, of what extravagancies he is able to indulge in; but don't quote that woman to me, for I never liked her, and have always disapproved of the intimacy between you."

"No, I know you never like any of *my* friends. If I were to do as you wish me, I should immure myself within these walls, as closely as a nun in a convent, and never look through the lattices without a thick green veil over my face."

"Now you are unjust, Emma," replied Mr. Dudley, "I do not wish you to go to either extreme, but there is a medium between being in the street constantly, as Mrs. Howell is, and the seclusion you speak of."

"Well, Mr. Howell is the right kind of a man," interrupted Mrs. Dudley; "he insists upon his wife's going out every day, and he takes her to operas and concerts—they go to ten parties where we go to one, and he never spends his evenings away from her, as you do from me, till one and two o'clock in the morning."

"Unkind and unjust again, Emma," sighed Mr. Dudley, "you well know how gladly I would remain at home with you, were it not for my business, but *that* I cannot neglect, even for my own happiness."

"Ah, it does very well to make your business an excuse, but I don't believe that you spend one-third of your evenings *at your office* ~~there~~, and Mrs. Howell says, she doesn't believe you are there at all."

"Confound Mrs. Howell," said Dudley, rising to his feet. "I wish that woman hadn't such a long tongue; you are as

easily influenced by her as a vane by the wind, and instead of being the warm-hearted, loving little wife which you used to be, you are as fond of fashion and folly as any heartless woman of the world. It is all owing to your intimacy with her—I predicted it from the first.”

“Go on—go on, Mr. Dudley, and abuse me, and my friends as much as you think proper, for I shall only love them all the better for it,” replied Mrs. Dudley, in a sneering tone of voice.

Cecil Dudley looked sternly and steadily into his wife's face, and flushed with excitement she returned the gaze boldly and without quailing. With a feeling of disgust which he had never before experienced toward his wife, Mr. Dudley turned and left the room.

CHAPTER II.

“Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus-spirits.”

“It is not in the storm nor in the strife,
We feel benumbed and wish to be no more,
But in the after silence on the shore,
When all is lost, except a little life.”—BYRON.

THE morning of the following day found Emma Dudley in her luxuriously furnished parlor in earnest conversation with her friend, Mrs. Howell. The ~~small~~ tête-à-tête upon which they were lounging, was opposite a large mirror, and certainly two more beautiful countenances were never reflected upon its gleaming surface. Through the rich crimson hangings of the lofty windows poured a flood of ruby light,

subdued, yet full of warmth and beauty, and the velvet carpet, and costly furniture were bathed with the glowing color.

As they sat side by side, their beauty was of so different a cast, it was difficult to tell which was the most lovely.

Emma Dudley, scarce twenty, with a complexion clear as a lily's, yet radiant as a rose—eyes of darkest hazel, shaded by their long, silken fringe of jet, and raven hair banded over a forehead of brilliant purity, was a being to love passionately, and even so had Cecil Dudley loved her from the moment they had met. Madly and wildly had he devoted every hour of his leisure to the winning of her love; and when in a few short months they were wedded, he gazed with mingled emotions of joy and pride upon her beautiful face, forgetting that her disposition—her tastes—her intellect were all as a sealed book to him. In love with the beautiful casket, he rested not until he called it his. Ah! little dreamed he, that beneath its jewelled lid a serpent lay encoiled; whose fangs should one day pierce his heart.

Emma possessed the elements of a noble nature; but they were all but overgrown with the weeds which pride and vanity had fostered. Had Cecil been less exacting—had he made her character his study, far different would have been the record of this portion of their lives.

This morning a wrapper of garnet cashmere, trimmed with velvet, fitted her graceful form, and frills of the finest lace drooped over the small, blue-veined hands.

Mrs. Howell, with her transparent and pure complexion—her large, blue eyes—arched eye-brows and auburn ringlets, had by far a too innocent expression to have justified Mr. Dudley in his dislike. And Anne Howell's face was an unerring index of her heart. With a joyous disposition, a fondness for mirth and pleasure, were mingled all the high feelings of a noble and sensitive nature. Open and pure as the day,

she scorned deceit, and would have been the last person to suspect it in her friend.

Mrs. Howell dressed well, but not extravagantly, and this morning the dark blue velvet bonnet, and cloak of the same, which enveloped her person, were both suitable and becoming. It was the last month of winter, and at the suggestion of her husband, she was to commence, in a few days, a course of riding lessons. Not wishing to go by herself, she had requested Emma Dudley to accompany her, and Emma had willfully misrepresented her remarks to her husband, and was now in the same manner misleading her friend.

"There is no use in my saying anything more to him," she continued, after a short pause, "he is as obstinate as he is close—only to think of his objecting to it, because it was so expensive! I hate meanness, and I have half a mind to go without saying a word to him until the bill is sent in."

"Oh, no, Emma, that will not do at all—you ought not to think of such a thing for a moment. I presume he has some other motive for not consenting."

"Yes, you always take his part, but if you knew what he said about you, you would scarcely take the trouble to defend him, I think."

"Oh, I know he doesn't like me, but then we both know it is because that he loves you so well, that he is jealous of your love for me; and so I don't mind what he says."

"Well, you would mind if you knew—we had a regular quarrel about you yesterday, and he went off without his breakfast, leaving me to eat mine by myself."

"Now you have excited my curiosity—pray what could he say?"

"Why, he said that you were like a vane, always perched up where every one could see you, and that he did not want me to take you for a guide in any thing; but I told him that

all he could say against you would only make me love you the more, and then he left me, and I have not spoken to him since."

Mrs. Howell's face crimsoned as Emma Dudley repeated the misrepresented remark.

"Why, Emma, I don't see what could make him so unkind toward me—doesn't he know that our physician has ordered exercise in the open air for me every day? Do tell him this, dear Emma, and tell him that Willie insists upon my going whether I feel inclined or not."

"I have told him a thousand times, but there is no use in talking to a man as jealous as a Turk, and twice as selfish—he won't listen to reason about any one, and I have made up my mind to let him take his course, and I'll take mine."

"Don't talk so, Emma, for depend upon it, you will only widen the breach already formed. Do everything in your power to please him. Acquiesce in every wish, and he will become ashamed of his unreasonableness. You will then have your reward in your own happiness, and in finding him more indulgent and less selfish."

"Ah, it's well enough for you to preach, but I am not agoing to practice, it would only make him more whimsical than ever."

Mrs. Howell sighed—she felt, more sympathy for her friend than she dared to express, and when she left, her last words were—

"Do as I wish you to, Emma, and you will be all the happier for it." She turned to descend the marble steps, and met Mr. Dudley face to face—he had heard her last remark. He bowed coldly, and she answered it as coolly, as she passed on.

"Well, and what does *your friend* wish you to do now, Emma?" said Mr. Dudley, in a pleasant tone of voice, his

arms encircling his wife's waist. Emma pushed the arm from her, and replied chillingly—

"I do not know as it is of any consequence to you, Mr. Dudley."

"*It is* of consequence, Emma—of life-long consequence. If she is persuading you to act contrary to my wishes, and you listen to her persuasions, you will find that it is no light thing to trifle with my happiness; but I know you too well, Emma, to think that you will—do I not, darling?"

For a moment Emma was softened—it was but for a moment, and forcing back the tears which had started to her eyes, she replied—

"I shall follow my wishes, and you are at liberty to follow yours."

"Are you determined to take these lessons in riding?"

"I am."

"Will you wean yourself from me forever, Emma?—think before you answer, I entreat of you."

"If such a thing as my taking lessons in riding will wean you from me, your love is not worth having."

"Ah, Emma, it is the principle—not the thing itself. You will not wring my heart by persisting—will you, darling? Look at me, and see how full of love are my eyes for you, and tell me you will yield in this one thing for me."

Emma smiled scornfully as she answered—

"If *paying* a bill of twenty-five or thirty dollars will so *wring* your heart, there cannot surely be much love in your eyes, excepting the love of *money*."

Cecil Dudley's face became of an ashy paleness, for a moment he was speechless, then he said—

"My God, Emma, this is more than I can bear. You have never loved me as I have loved you, but we have found it out too late."

He opened the door, and passed up the staircase to a room used as a library—locked the door, and threw himself upon a sofa.

Twice during that long day, Emma Dudley went to the room and listened, but not a sound—not even a breath could she hear. She felt that she had gone too far, but her pride would not allow her to seek a reconciliation, and impatiently she awaited the time when he should come to seek her, and make the first advances. But she waited in vain.

The next morning, Mr. Dudley appeared at the breakfast-table, with a *pale* face and blood-shot eyes. He drank his coffee in silence, and pushing the untasted muffin from him, arose and left the room.

Had Emma followed the impulses of her better nature, she would have hastened after him and thrown her arms about his neck, but the pride within her heart held her back.

Weeks of mutual estrangement passed, and Emma began to yearn for the love she had so recklessly thrown from her. She denied herself to all her friends, and in solitude pondered over her errors. Reflection convinced her of her unworthiness of his love, and she despised herself for the deceit which she had practised toward him, and her warmest female friend.

The latent good which had so long lain dormant was at length awakened; but the sun of her husband's love was withdrawn, and there was no light or warmth to develop the beauty of the germ.

One evening, at twilight, Emma sat by the open window in her room, fanned by the gentle spring breezes. Oh, how she longed for her husband's presence!

"If he were only here now," she mentally said, "I would tell him all." Suddenly, as if he had divined her wish, he stood before her.

"Emma, you are not happy!" he said.

"No, I am miserable, Cecil," she replied, sobbing.

"Well, I have been making arrangements to travel—my brother will take care of my business, during my absence; but it will be necessary for you to return to your parents, for I am not able to support so much style—you will no doubt be happier there."

Emma was astounded. Not once had she dreamed of a separation, and scarcely had Cecil retreated from the door, when burying her head in the pillow, she sobbed till her brain seemed bursting. Then the strong pride of her nature came to her aid, and haughtily she arose—for one moment leaned her head against the richly carved bed-post, then murmured—

"No! no! I will never go home again! I sent back like a disobedient child to my father's house?—never—no! never while I have strength to work for a living!"

Fastening her chamber door, she proceeded to take her dresses down one by one from the wardrobe, and hastily folding them, placed them in a large travelling trunk. One by one she opened her bureau drawers, and filled another trunk with the contents. Her travelling dress she had left hanging in the wardrobe, and now she placed a straw bonnet and green veil beside it—a heavy, long shawl, and her gaiters. She drew her watch from her pocket—it was past nine, and enveloping herself in a shawl and hood, she descended the staircase, and passed from the hall into the street, leaving the door ajar. A few minutes walk brought her to a hack-stand—here she engaged a driver to take her to the New York boat—the nine o'clock line, on the following morning, and then hastily retraced her steps.

Mr. Dudley had not yet come in, and gathering a few little articles from the parlor, she returned to her room. Her husband's miniature she deposited in her trunk; but from her daguerreotype she removed the glass, and with a towel erased

every feature excepting the eyes—then replacing the glass, she laid it on the dressing-bureau.

She heard her husband's steps upon the staircase, through the entry, and her heart throbbed wildly as she listened, to hear if he should pause at the door; but he passed on as had been his wont of late, and she heard the door of the adjoining chamber opened—shut, then fastened.

Heart-sick, she cast herself into a luxurious chair, and with gleaming eyes gazed around her. The brilliant light of the gas illuminated every corner and niche of the large chamber. Her eyes roved restlessly from the lace embroidered curtains of the windows, to the costly ~~and valuable~~ *and unique* furniture upon every side of the room.

A magnificent cheval glass reflected her entire figure, but she scarcely knew the countenance that so steadily met her gaze. The dilated pupils of the eyes—the crimsoned cheeks—the banded hair thrown rudely back over the small round ears—the naturally pouting lips, compressed until they seemed but as "a line of coral," had indeed changed Emma's face, but the expression so thoughtful—so resolute, was far more beautiful than the unmeaning smile which she had worn in her days of vanity.

It was nearly morning when Emma started from her dreamy reverie, and turning the key of her escutoire, sat down, and wrote hastily,

"Cecil, I am going to leave you, but not in anger. I part from you with a heart as full of love as upon our bridal morn, but oh, so mingled with agony, that every fibre seems stretched to its utmost tension. Do not hate me—I will yet be worthy of your love, if years of toil and privation can make me so. I will not upbraid you in my parting hour, but, Cecil, think how young I was when we were married—how fond of society, and answer to yourself if it was not wrong to keep me so

secluded. But I am blaming you, when I alone am to blame—forgive me, however, for all I have ever said or done to displease you—I have already suffered enough.

“One more question, and I have done. Have you not been too severe with me of late? Ah, had you been more willing to forgive, this cruel separation would never have been.”

She folded and sealed the letter, which was moist with her fast falling tears—then wrote another, and directed it to her mother.

The morning light now struggled through the lace hangings, and Emma darkened the room, and sank back pallid and exhausted in her chair. A step near her door aroused her—she arose, and turned the key, and looked out—it was only a servant passing with water to his master's room.

Disappointed she threw herself upon the couch, and her eyes, heavy with watching and weeping, closed. All her misery was for the time forgotten, for she slept. Again a footstep aroused her. Springing to her feet, she saw through the open door her husband's form. “Cecil,” she called, but in a voice so feeble, it failed to reach his ear. She followed him down the stairs—she was so near him that the folds of her muslin wrapper touched him as he passed—“stop a moment, Cecil,” she gasped. He turned around, and cast such a ~~glance~~ look upon her, that she shuddered, and turning hastily, retraced her steps.

That look gave her strength to finish her remaining preparations, and when at eight o'clock she descended to the breakfast room, and found her husband had already gone, she felt a strange relief, and without tasting the food, she gave one farewell look through the suite of rooms, and hastened up the staircase again.

After putting in her purse the money, which for the past

few weeks her husband had left from time to time upon her bureau, she locked the trunks, took the keys, and putting on her shawl and bonnet, stole noiselessly to the front door. The hack was not in sight. The servants were all at their breakfast, but she trembled with fear lest some of them should appear before she should have gone. Just then a carriage turned the corner of the street, and stopped as she had directed, a few doors below. She beckoned to the man. He came and removed her baggage from the room to the hack, and as yet she was undetected. Tremblingly she closed the door, took her seat in the carriage, and rapidly over the paved streets was whirled along to the river side.

CHAPTER III.

“Now speak to me again!—we loved so well—
We loved—oh! still, I know that *still* we love!”

MRS. HEMANS.

AFTER Cecil Dudley left the house, the memory of Emma's look so haunted him he could not rest, and he retraced his steps to his dwelling, trying to stifle the thought that he had been unnecessarily harsh toward her. He went directly to her room, and tapped gently at the door. There was no answer. Clasp the silver knob, he turned it gently. She was not there. The doors of the wardrobe were open, but it was empty. On the dressing-bureau his quick eye espied the letters—he broke the seals, but they gave no clue to her destination. Wild with grief, he threw himself upon her bed, and sobbed like a child. Keen as was his mortification, it was as nothing in comparison with the remorse which that one

upbraiding sentence caused him. He had been to blame—he had expected too much of one so young—so petted and admired. Himself sick of the folly and heartlessness of the world, he had expected her to renounce it before a single pleasure had palled. Bitterly did he lament his short-sightedness, for he saw the very course he had taken, was calculated to wean her from him and to foster deception, but he had discovered it too late! Then came thoughts of the world's sneer—he should be pointed out as "*that Mr. Dudley, whose wife had run away from him,*" and perhaps some would even dare to breathe injurious reports regarding her character. Maddened with the thought, he rushed wildly from the house, and hastened to Mr. Ellis, his wife's father.

Scarcely less great was the agony of the parent, but it came with such a stunning weight, that for a time it stupified him. Mrs. Ellis went immediately around to her daughter's house, while Mr. Ellis and Mr. Dudley visited all the depots of the different lines, but found nothing which could guide them in determining which she had taken. After a day of ceaseless anxiety and useless toil, Mr. Ellis returned with the nearly heart-broken Cecil, to his desolate dwelling.

Mr. Dudley entered his wife's chamber. This time he took up the miniature and opened the case. The gleaming eyes looked reproachfully upon him, and with a cry of agony, he sank upon the floor.

Mr. Ellis immediately went for their family physician, leaving his wife with Cecil. When they returned he was bled, but he awoke delirious.

"Those eyes!—those eyes!" he would scream, "take them away, they burn my heart!—they will kill me! take them away!"

Then again he would talk long and earnestly, pleading for forgiveness—telling how devotedly he had loved—how madly

he had worshipped, but the one alone whose voice had power to soothe him, was far away, suffering even more intensely than himself, for her reason was not dethroned. The excitement which had so buoyed her up the night previous to her departure, forsook her immediately after she left the house. She then felt that all that she held dear in life was buried to her. She wondered at her pride, and longed to throw herself at his feet, and plead for forgiveness. But she had gone too far; she could not return.

After she reached New York, she ordered her baggage to be removed to a North River boat, which lay side by side with the one she was on.

"That doesn't go up the river to-night, Miss; but that one further along goes in a few hours—shall I put your baggage on?" said the porter she had addressed. Mrs. Dudley bowed her head and followed him. She entered the ~~saloon~~ saloon of the Knickerbocker, and taking a berth, laid down and tried to sleep, but there seemed to be no rest for her. Hours she lay motionless, with the damask curtains drawn closely around her, her open eyes fixed upon the one little window, and her head throbbing with intense pain. At supper time she drank the cup of tea which the unusually kind and thoughtful chambermaid had brought her, and this acted as a quietus upon her excited nerves, and she slept.

It was morning when she awoke amidst the bustle and confusion of a stoppage at a city wharf. She had intended to have stopped at some small, country town, and disappointed she turned to the chambermaid—

"Does the boat go no further?" she said.

"No, we have reached Albany; but she goes back to the city to-day."

Mrs. Dudley arose, gave her baggage into the care of the first hack-driver who spoke to her, and followed.

"To what hotel shall I drive, Miss?" he said.

"It is of no consequence—any," she replied.

The carriage at length stopped in front of an ill-looking, dirty, third-rate house, and Mrs. Dudley felt a repugnance to enter it. A stage was directly in front of the door, and she asked where it was going.

"To Springfield," was the reply.

She ordered her baggage to be put on, and took a seat in the stage, which already held several passengers. She was pale and exhausted, and a matronly looking lady upon the back seat insisted upon her taking a place beside her. Emma leaned back in one corner of the coach. Weary and desolate she did indeed look. The remaining passengers were a gentleman, a young girl about fourteen, and an elder brother of the last. Mrs. Dudley gleaned from the conversation of these two, that they were returning to school, after a vacation of four weeks, and that the elderly lady was the principal female teacher. Emma's drooping eyes become more expressive as she heard her remark to the young girl whom she called Helen, that she would be disappointed in not finding her old music teacher.

"Why, has Miss Atwood been getting married?" inquired the girl, in a sorrowful tone of voice.

"No, but she is so ill that her physician gives no hopes of her recovery." They talked a long while about her many virtues, and at length Emma interrupted them by timidly asking if they had as yet procured a substitute.

"We have not," the lady answered; "do you know of any one suitable?"

"I was on my way," answered Emma, "to find employment as a teacher in music, and as I am alone, I should find much relief in being able to engage myself with you." Her

voice was tremulous as she paused, and they noticed her agitation.

"Why this is very fortunate," remarked the lady, in a kindly tone of voice; "have you been accustomed to teaching?—you look very young."

"No, I have never taught," replied Emma, crushing back her tears, and striving to check the convulsive motion which was almost choking her.

"Well, you can at least stop at Glenwood with us, and if you like the place we shall no doubt agree in other matters."

Emma made no reply, but she looked her thanks, and the kind-hearted lady saw that her heart was full—so full that she dared not trust her voice. After a few moments of silence, unbroken save by Emma's half-stifled sighs, the lady again spoke.

"I think we should feel better acquainted if we knew each other's names, my dear—mine is Mrs. Easton; and what shall I call you?"

Emma's face was painfully flushed—this was her first temptation to deception since her new resolves, but she struggled with it and obtained the victory.

"Mine is Emma Dudley," she replied, but her answer had been so tardy, that Mrs. Easton felt a sudden feeling of distrust creep into her bosom, and she questioned whether it was right for her to engage, or even encourage one she knew nothing about, for the pupils whose welfare was so dear to her. But the tearful eyes, and compressed lips of the fair young being plead their way to her heart, and she resolved that she would throw out all distrust, until some act should convince her that she was indeed unworthy.

When Emma mentioned her name, the gentleman opposite, fixed his large grey eyes upon her.

"Are you from Philadelphia?" he said.

This time Emma answered without the least hesitation.

"I am."

"I once knew a Dudley from Philadelphia—he was a class-mate of mine at Yale, and as noble a fellow as ever lived."

"There are many families of that name, I expect," replied Emma, in a faltering tone of voice, but her heart whispered to her that the one the stranger meant must be his whose name she bore. She pressed her hand against her heart to quiet its painful beatings, the stranger remarked—

"His first name was rather an uncommon one, I think you would remember if you had heard it—it was Cecil—Cecil Dudley—did you ever hear of such an one?"

Emma's face was as pallid as death, but she answered firmly—

"He is a relative of mine, sir; please say no more about him."

The gentleman looked musingly at her—thinking that Cecil Dudley must have grown strangely cold-hearted and worldly, to allow so young and fair a relative to seek her own living. He leaned back, whilst Emma doubled her veil over her face and tried in vain to suppress her sobbing.

It was late in the afternoon, when the driver stopped at S. Falls, to mend a portion of his harness, which had given way. Gladly the young Helen and her brother bounded from the stage, followed by Mrs. Easton and the stranger, while Emma pleaded her fatigue as an excuse for not joining them. But as she looked from the window of the stage and saw the beautiful view, she resolved upon following. The air was mild and delicious, but as she stepped from rock to rock, over fissures so deep and dark that you could see no bottom, she almost wished that she could slip between them and forget her misery in death. Her companions were already out of

sight. She looked around upon the masses of waving green that clad the sloping hills upon every side—then her eyes rested upon the pure sheet of water, mirroring every floating cloud, and the far expanse of azure, until suddenly with wild leaps plunging downward, throwing far up the wreathing foam and rainbow spray it gathered in its fearful descent, it lost itself in winding chasms and vaulted passages. Emma leaned over the very topmost crag, and gazed far down into the abyss. She looked upon the mirrored semblance of the tumult within her own bosom. The restless waters whirling and eddying in one continued vortex so far below, lashing and foaming against the rocky barriers upon every side, was indeed a true counterpart of the strugglings of her spirit.

She had too long suffered herself to act from impulse to obtain the victory at once—too long been the victim of her own pride to endure with humility.

To and fro, like the withered leaf upon the surface of the water below, was her heart borne by its struggles—now engulfed by the memory of the love she had lost—now rising strong with resolutions to win it back, and again plunged deeper than ever into the dark abyss by its utter weakness and inability to escape from its loneliness and misery.

The cool air fanned her fevered brow, but it bore no healing on its wings to minister to a sick and struggling heart, which still beat with painful throbbing—bringing the lost and mis-spent hours of the past before her, and anon, like the changing panorama of a dream, summoning weird forms from the misty future, which beckoned her on to still increasing misery.

Emma had laid a volume which she brought from home with her upon the very summit of the rock—she moved it slightly, very slightly, but down the sloping surface of the rock it slid, and was soon lost to her sight for ever.

"Ah! had it been me," she sighed, and a thrill of regret shot through her heart as she thought how speedily would her sorrows have been terminated.

"If I but dared," again she murmured, and she drew herself still closer to the edge from where the slope commenced.

She looked wildly about her—up to the blue sky mocking her in its brightness, and down to the wreathing arms of the waters below wooing her to their embrace, and scarcely conscious of her own terrible resolve, she moaned to herself, "oh, Father, forgive!" and loosening her hold, she felt without terror or dismay that she was slowly, but surely sliding to the gulph below. The last sounds that fell upon her ears were those of mingled screaming, rising far above the roaring of the torrent—a feeling of sudden pain—a dizzy faintness, and all was over.

But the pain had not been occasioned by the jutting crags. It was by the grasp of the strong arm of her preserver, and now he bore her drooping form over the rocks, followed by the little group who with pallid faces had watched the stranger as he cautiously stood near, and grasped her in a moment of peril.

They entered a little, brown cottage, by the road side, and after applying the usual restoratives, Emma opened her eyes upon the tearful faces beside her.

"My poor—*poor* child!" said Mrs. Easton. The warm blood mantled Emma's pure face as the affectionate tones fell upon her ear, and pressing the extended hand, she wept passionately.

Glenwood was but a few miles from the falls, and they continued their journey, reaching the grove embowered village at twilight. A strange calmness stole over Emma's heart as the stage wound through the elm skirted road, and deposited them

at the gate of the beautiful grounds which surrounded their boarding-house.

CHAPTER IV.

"—— and thou, oh! thou,
Dost thou forget me?
Thou comest not!—through the silent night e'en now,
I that need prayer so much, awake and pray
Still first for thee. Oh! nearest, dearest friend,
How shall I bear this anguish to the end?" MRS. HEMANS.

THE first month of Emma Dudley's engagement as a teacher passed wearily and heavily to her. How calmly she looked back now and reviewed the feverish haste with which she had rejected the then humiliating present for the unknown future.

Ah! deeply did she regret the wretched pride which had kept her from confessing her faults to the husband who had been so kind and lenient to her many errors. How plainly they rose before her—those same errors which had led to her self-banishment! With patience and without murmuring she bore the penance she had inflicted—her life became one of continued effort, but she faltered not in the painful path she had chosen.

"I will become worthy of him," was her constant thought, and this gave her strength to persevere when her delicate frame was wearied, and her spirit faint with the self-reproach which constantly nestling in her bosom, stung her heart to its inmost core.

Daily from its wounded depths arose prayer and thanksgiving, that in the wildness of her grief, when her mind had been shrouded in darkness and bitterness, and she had sought

the quiet of the grave—that in that terrible moment a hand had been outstretched to save her from such a fearful sin.

Twice, by merchants who had left the village to purchase summer goods in New York, she had sent long letters to her mother, telling of her occupation in her village home, but as they were mailed from that city, her parents received no clue to discover her retreat.

Mrs. Easton had proved a most excellent friend. She was fully convinced that there was some secret connected with her protégé's past life, but with a delicacy which Emma appreciated, she forbore alluding to the incidents of the day of their meeting, and *Emma's secret* remained untold, and even unconjectured.

Alone in her school-room Emma sat. She taught drawing in the afternoon, and her music lessons were given in the morning. It was nearly sunset, and Emma had remained to finish several drawings for her pupils. She heard from afar the bugle horn of the stage-coach with which the driver always announced his approach to the village.

She leaned her head upon her hands and wept. With the tears, came memories of the love ~~done~~ who had always caressed her more fondly when any light grief had overshadowed her joyous spirit—yearning memories which would not be stifled or subdued.

"Ah, Cecil," she sobbed, "what have I done? how can I live through this separation, my husband? and I!—I alone, am to blame?"

A door opened from an adjoining room, and Mrs. Easton passing through, drew a seat beside Emma's.

"My child, you know me too well to think I have come to you with any motives of curiosity. I heard your violent weeping, and I hesitated in disturbing you, but I overheard what I know you did not intend or wish me to know, and I came

to tell you; and to beg of you to make me the confidant of your troubles—will you not tell me, and let me sympathize with you?"

"I cannot—I cannot," sobbed Emma, "they are all my own fault, and I deserve no sympathy—you would only despise me if you knew."

"I have studied your character for a month, Emma, and I am sure you could never have done any thing intentionally bad—nothing for which I could despise you. I offer you my warmest sympathy for your sorrows, whatever they are—will you accept them?"

"No, I thank you, dear, kind, good Mrs. Easton, but you do not know."

"No, Emma, I know I do not, neither shall I, unless you confide in me," and Mrs. Easton drew her tenderly towards her.

Emma's heart opened at once, and clasping the hand of her friend, she poured out in broken words the history of her married life.

Mrs. Easton was astonished at the recital—astonished that Emma could have so resolutely banished herself from such a home—astonished at the want of knowledge of the world, which she had shown in braving its opinion. Her heart bled as she thought of the undreamt of mortifications which were in store for her sensitive spirit—the many hours of unavailing regret which her impulsive act would ever cause her.

She saw at a glance the agony of the husband—the keen mortification of the man of the world—and the distorted view which Emma had taken, forgetting in her own wretchedness the misery she was inflicting upon others; but although all this immediately presented itself to her mind, she hesitated in inflicting new pangs in the heart of the already sufficiently suffering Emma.

Suddenly a shadow flitted past them, and raising their eyes they both rested them upon the tall form which darkened the doorway—how pale was the strikingly handsome face! A step further and Emma sprang into the outstretched arms. With wild sobs she clung around his neck; and Cecil, weak from his previous illness, and overcome with the excitement of the meeting, staggered to a seat; where supporting her in his arms, he bent over her with the fond look of other days.

Mrs. Easton left them alone; and it was well, for oh, there was so much to say. In that hour they read more of each other's heart than many married couples have read in a lifetime. How bitterly Emma chided herself for causing that wan and pallid brow!—how tenderly Cecil folded his wife to his heart, resolving she should never know cause for grief again!—how filled were both their hearts with happiness that their troubles were so soon over!

Again and again she questioned him. He told her of all the agony he endured when he found she had gone—of his severe illness, of the forethought of her parents, who had immediately discharged the servants before they had time even to suspect the absence of their mistress. The physician and an old nurse, who had been for years in their family, had been their only confidants, and so well had every thing been managed that not one out of their immediate family suspected her absence.

"But how, Cecil, came you to think of finding me here?"

"Can you not imagine, my dearest?"

"No, I have tried in vain to think."

"During my illness a letter was sent to me, which not having my place of business upon, was advertised before I received it. When I opened it I found it from an old college friend——"

"Ah, Cecil! and you know the whole?" interrupted Emma.

"Yes, darling, I know all—all the wretchedness which my poor little wife must have endured before she could have yielded to such a dreadful temptation; but let us bury the past and live for the future; for this bitter lesson will not be a useless one. My friend wrote me the particulars of his meeting with you, when, where, &c., and asked if you were a near relative. I, with your father, immediately made arrangements to travel—we left home the next day, and your parents are now awaiting us in New York, where we shall join them, and spend the summer together in travelling. Shall we not be happy, Emma?"

"I do not deserve such happiness," she replied, her dark eyes glittering with tears.

"And I, Emma, feel as though I hardly deserved you for not understanding you better—oh, how much misery would have been saved both had we made each others dispositions our study. But it is too late for regrets, we have at length learned how dear we are to each other, and I am thankful we have learned before it was too late."

They made immediate preparations to leave on the ensuing day.

Mrs. Easton rejoiced in her young friend's happiness, and felt greatly relieved when she found that owing to her parents forethought, she would not have the causes of mortification which she had anticipated. On the ensuing morning they parted, and Emma's secret remained safe with Mrs. Easton.

Her meeting with her parents was extremely touching. They wept over her, chiding her through their tears, but Emma was so changed, so humbled, so penitent for the past, that their words of censure changed to expressions of the

deepest and the purest love. They forgot the torturing anxiety of the past four weeks in the blissful meeting.

In conversing with them, Emma realized for the first time the suspicious nature of the step she had taken—how narrowly she had escaped the sneers of a world ever ready to suspect—and she felt renewed thankfulness for the misery she had escaped.

Their summer was spent in journeying through the most beautiful portions of the North, and late in the season they returned to their elegant house in town.

Mrs. Dudley's friends came thronging to see her; among the first Mrs. Howell.

"Well, Emma," she said, after their salutations were over, "do you not feel repaid for devoting yourself so constantly to your husband during his illness?"

"I was not half as devoted as I ought to have been, Anna," replied Emma, sadly.

"I am sure you could not have been more so—every day that I called I received the everlasting reply, 'Mr. Dudley is very ill, and Mrs. Dudley sees no one!'"

"That was all very true; but I cannot bear to think of his illness, we have been so happy since."

"Ah, I know that very well. I saw the Pelhams the other day—they met you at Niagara, and they said they should have taken you for bride and groom, you were so devoted to each other."

Mr. Dudley entered.

"Mrs. Howell I am delighted to see you. Emma has talked a great deal about you during our absence, and I am glad to find she has a friend who gives her such excellent advice—I am sure she has profited by it, and perhaps now will be able to give you some lessons in return—is it not so, Emma?"

She smiled her reply, and Mrs. Howell looked equally delighted, for it was the first really cordial greeting she had ever received from Emma's husband.

"Truly he is changed," she thought, as she left them that morning. "I do not know a happier couple in the city, and yet before his illness I thought they would not be able to live together another year."

The Approach of Winter.

THE tattered robes of autumn cling
About the trembling forest trees,
Falling at touch of wild birds' wing,
Or sighing of the troubled breeze.
The glorious beauty of her prime
Has faded from the woods away—
A stranger from a northern clime
Woos the sad earth to slow decay.

He hangs her brow with jewels rare—
He wraps her form in ermine white,
And gems a queen might deign to wear
Gleam from its folds in changing light.
In vain is all the wealth he brings;—
She sadly sighs for days ago;
For autumn's bright and beauteous things—
For summer's laughing, joyous tone.

At his embrace her breast grows chill;
She shudders as he clasps her round—
The pulses of her heart stand still—
A pale bride, frightened at each sound.

THE APPROACH OF WINTER. 285

Alas! she mourneth not alone
The hours that are forever past;
The joyous days forever flown,
Too brightly beautiful to last.

I know of eyes now dim with tears;
I know of breasts grown strangely cold;
For wintry smiles and chilling fears
Have changed those loving eyes of old.
Oh! would that summer in the heart
Might ever hold her gentle reign;
Or if stern winter claims a part,
She would resume her sway again.

But no!—unlike the changing years,
When once her radiant form has fled,
In vain you woo her smiles or tears—
In vain you mourn the buried dead!
Ah! cherish, then, your summer days—
Your autumn glories as they fly;
Too soon will come the wintry rays,
When all their beauties fade and die.

Records of A Summer Tour.

GENESEE FALLS.

On thy wild banks, oh, lovely Genesee,
I stand entranced! gazing with calm delight
Upon thy leaping waters, foaming white
Like wings of angels in their purity.
From the abyss curls upwards the thin spray,
As incense from some massive temple shrine,
Bathing in tenfold beauty shrub and vine,
And lingering there as though they wooed its stay;
Below, the stream glides onward tranquilly,
Mirroring upon its fair and placid sheen
The crested cliffs, with all their wealth of green,
Until it meets Ontario's inland sea:
There—there it falls most peacefully to rest,
Like some worn child upon its mother's breast.

NIAGARA, ABOVE THE CATARACT.

River of banks, and woods, and waters green,
With all of beauty to attract the eye,
Why leaps my heart, as past thy shores we fly?
Art thou not quiet as an infant's dream?
Pure as its thoughts—unruffled as its brow,
When circled by its mother's arms in sleep,
While o'er it she doth still her vigils keep?
Then wherefore leaps my heart so wildly now?
Hark to that roar!—deep as the thunder's tone,
And in the distance, see the sun's last ray
Falling on clouds of never-ceasing spray.
In its wild beatings, is my heart alone?
Thou glidest on to meet that battling flood,
Fearless as warrior to the field of blood.

NIAGARA, BELOW THE CATARACT.

Within a temple's towering walls I stand!
A temple vast! the heaven is its dome!
No corniced crag was hewn by human hand,
Nor by it wrought this tracery of foam.
The inlaid floor of emerald and pearl,
Heaves at the hidden organ's thunderous peal;
While round and up, the clouds of incense curl,
Shrouding the chancel where the billows kneel.
Ah, bow your heads! It is a fitting place
For solemn thought—for deep and earnest prayer;
For here the finger of our God I trace,—
Beneath, above, around me, every where;
He hollowed out this grand and mighty nave,
And robed His altar with the ocean wave.

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER.

Down, down we glide these "thousand isles" between,
 (Lovely as fairy-land to dreaming child,)
 Sweeping past shores, now fringed with verdure green,
 Now clasped by rocks, and tangled forests wild.
 Anon, like arrow from an aim that's true,
 We dart adown the rapid's fearful whirl,—
 The rough "Cascades,"—the less exciting "Sue,"
 Where 'round the rocks the foaming waters curl.
 And so the day glides on. At eve we near
 The wild "La Chine,"—peril on every side!
 Our hearts stand still! our cheeks grow pale with fear!
 One plunge! the brave boat safely through doth ride!
 On where the purple hills so grandly loom,
 All heedless now of twilight's gath'ring gloom.

THE FATHER'S CHOICE;

A

Story of New England Life.

CHAPTER I.

"Give and forgive, do good and love,
 Lightening the load of daily life."

"DEACON STANLEY has failed."

"Bless my heart! You don't say so!"

"Yes, *I did say so*, and you heard it plain enough."

"Well, don't be cross about it—you know I didn't mean anything. Come, don't look so grum."

"I shan't look any thing else for the rest of the year, I guess. I've lost ~~3000~~ dollars by the rascal, and I can't afford to laugh at it, Mrs. Hunter."

"Well now! do tell, John! that *is too* bad; but, for mercy's sake, don't call him a rascal—he's a good, pious man—a deacon, and I reckon it's been more his misfortune than his fault."

"Let him pay me my money, and then I'll believe in his piety. Old, canting hypocrite! if he thinks he is going to

25*

* three thousand

cheat me, he is mistaken. I've got my eye-teeth cut, and I'll fix him."

"What'll you do, John? Now, don't be hasty."

"Do! I'll send him to jail; that's what I'll do! the swindler! He shall lie there, till he rots, if he don't make my losses good!"

"Oh, father, father! how dreadful to hear you talk so!" interrupted a young girl, who had not before spoken, but who had been listening intently to her parent's conversation.

"Shut up your mouth, you vixen! What do you mean by preaching to your father? Humph! things have come to a pretty pass now-a-days. When I was a child, it would have been as much as my ears were worth to have spoken that way to either of my parents."

Julie Hunter cast her eyes upon the floor at this rough reproof, while her cheeks burned, as her father continued—

"He knew well what was before him when he came to me, wheedling me into putting my name on to his good-for-nothing notes. Yes, confound him, he shall pay every red cent of it; and look you here, Miss Julie, if you have another word to say to that son of his, I'll lock you up. Let me catch you now, will you?"

Julie made no answer, but she mentally resolved that she would take good care not to be caught until her father was in better humor.

And *who was* Mr. Hunter?

That he was an illiterate and hasty tempered man, and greatly wanting in refinement, you already know, but that he was the rich Mr. Hunter, of Huntersville, you have had no reason for imagining.

His father had been a teamster, and by great frugality amassed a snug little sum, which his only child, the present Mr. John Hunter, inherited. The latter, having a tact for

business, and being possessed of a good judgment, soon doubled his property by successful speculations, and at length swelled it into an enormous sum by purchasing a tract of land with remarkable water-privileges, which, after the erection of several manufactories, rapidly grew into a large town.

Huntersville, busy and bustling as it was made by the numerous operatives of the factories, and incessant as was the everlasting clash of machinery, was nevertheless a most lovely town—

"Dimpled close with hill and valley,

Dappled very close with shade,

Summer snow of apple-blossoms running up from glade to glade."

I spoke of Mr. Hunter doubling his property, forgetting to add, that he doubled himself about the same time. His better half (decidedly better) was a good-natured, easy sort of a body, content to take the world as it came; devotional in her feelings, and always looking up to her husband as her lord and master. And a pretty exacting master he was; but she was such a model of wifely obedience and submission that the bit was not at all galling to her. To be sure, it was a great change from being the drudge of a large household, as she had been, to the position she now occupied; and good reason had she for gratitude to Mr. John Hunter, who, in justice it must be confessed, really loved his wife, as well as it was possible for a man to love in whom the animal so much preponderated.

A daughter was the only fruit of this union, and Mr. Hunter, although he grumbled ~~at first~~ at first, because she was 'a good-for-nothing girl,' became in the end vastly fond of her, notwithstanding she was as much unlike either parent as it was possible to imagine. She always seemed to exert a refining power upon her father when in his presence, and very

seldom had he spoken as harshly to her as when she interfered in reference to Mr. Stanley. He looked upon her beautiful face with pride, for very beautiful was Julie. Her abundant hair was of a rich chestnut-brown, her face of oval contour, her eyes a soft and liquid hazel, and their dark lashes were unusually long and silken. Her cheeks were ever as bright as June roses, and the winter-green berries, that grew so thickly in the pine woods around, were not of a deeper crimson than her curving lips.

Basil Stanley thought that the houris of Mahomet's paradise could not have been more lovely—and the young colleague of the old village minister thought so too.

Very little sympathy did Julie find at home, in her soul's aspirations, but Basil, with his

"Sublime significance of mouth,
Dilated nostrils full of youth,
And forehead royal with the truth,"

was the very one to understand and share the feelings of her inner life.

Dream on, sweet Julie Hunter—never were maiden's thoughts more pure and innocent than thine. Dream on—imagining the happiness which perchance a sorrow-blighting world may refuse to yield thee. "To dream of a sweetness is sweet as to know," but the awakening! then and there is the bitterness!

Deacon Stanley, the father of Basil, and the one of whom Mr. Hunter had spoken with such severity, was not merely a professor, but a possessor of religion, and sensitive and high-minded as he was, had it not been for the consolations that religion afforded him, he would have fallen under the sudden blow that deprived him at once of his hard-earned gains. He was a merchant, and something of a farmer in a small way, but finding his income insufficient to meet the expenses of the

collegiate education he was giving his son, he had attempted to extend his business. It was then that he became involved, but sanguine of final success, he represented his affairs to Mr. Hunter in the favorable light in which he saw them, who consented to indorse for him. But the relief was not lasting. Loss followed loss, and when the crash came, Deacon Stanley found himself ruined. Basil was at home during the college vacation at the time, and he resolutely sat himself to work to see if there could not be some adjustment of his father's deranged affairs, which would enable him to continue his business in the hope of ultimately paying every obligation.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE going on with my story I must beg you to go back with me to the day of Basil's return from college. He had not heard a whisper of his father's misfortunes, and his first visit, after his arrival home, was to Julie. It was a lovely afternoon, and Basil had no difficulty in persuading her to take a ramble through the woods with him to Tower Rock. A charming path was that, for the feathery ash, the spreading beech, and the graceful elm, interlaced their boughs together, casting a deep shadow over it even at noontide, and at intervals, there were fallen logs overgrown with moss, and close beside them nestled clumps of wild-violets, forget-me-nots and anemones, and ever came up the cool sound of the mountain stream that gurgled down through the woods to mingle its waters with the river. This path at length led them across the little brook, and through the pine thickets, carpeted with moss and the running evergreens, until it terminated at the base of a huge pile of rocks, that formed a cliff

overhanging the river, and to which had been given the name of Tower Rock. It was not easy of ascent, but when once its summit was gained, no lover of nature but would feel fully repaid for the labor. At its foot, the dark waters of the river swept sullenly past, receiving its sombre hue from the gloomy trees that here upon either side bordered the banks. With few exceptions, there was nothing to be seen but the cedar, the hemlock, and the pine. Beyond, swell upon swell, and billow upon billow, rose the mountains, till in the distance they were lost in the dark blue waves that blended with the sky. Behind the rock, separated only by the forest through which Basil and Julie passed, lay the village, with its white houses scattered amidst the trees, extending about half a mile below Tower Rock, where the river makes a sudden bend, and then sweeps in a westerly direction. It is below this bend that the munufactories are situated. A spur of mountains forms the valley upon the eastern side, gradually approaching the western range, until about a mile below the village it suddenly terminates, the river alone separating the mountain walls. This opening is called 'The Gorge,' and here the scenery in every direction is wildly picturesque.

To return to Basil and Julie—they seated themselves side by side upon the rock, and silently drank in the beauty of the scene around them. Basil was the first to speak.

"You had something to tell me, Julie—I hope your father is not averse to our speedy union."

Julie blushed vividly, and Basil continued, his eyes fixed tenderly upon her drooping face.

"You know I mean at the end of another year. In August I shall graduate—the future looks brightly before me. My father's business must be greatly improved. I shall go on with my law studies under Squire Barker, who has promised me,

since I was a child, that I shall practice with him as soon as I am admitted to the bar."

Julie raised her fine eyes appealingly to her lover's as she answered—

"You will blame me, Basil, but I have not had courage to tell father yet, and he does not even know that we are engaged."

Basil's strong sense of rectitude caused the flush of displeasure which now swept over his face, and intense as was his love for the beautiful being beside him, he could not restrain the chiding words that rose to his lips.

"This is not right, Julie—it is all wrong. You would not let me go to him, as I desired before I left, promising that you would obtain his sanction to our engagement. I wondered that you never spoke of it in your letters. How could you let it be so long?"

"Ah, Basil, do not look at me so reproachfully"—she rested one hand upon his shoulder and looked up in his face, as she spoke—"and do not require me to tell him even now. Our love seems like such a sacred thing to me—so sacred, that I would shut it out from every eye but yours. I have thought many times that I would do as you wished me to do about it but my courage soon failed me. You do not know father and mother, Basil—they are so different from your parents. I love them very dearly, but I know they would laugh at me, and ridicule me, if they knew what had passed between us, and *that*, I could not bear. Don't tell them—promise me you won't."

It seemed impossible that he could resist such looks and tones as were hers, but he answered promptly—

"You must not fetter me with a promise, Julie, that my spirit would rebel against. I should scorn myself if I could stoop to concealment—no, my own Julie, when you reflect, you would not wish me to so lower myself in my own esteem, as

to consent to practice that system of deceit which would necessarily follow."

"I don't see why there must be deceit, Basil," and now Julie's eyes were fast filling with tears.

"Don't feel badly, darling, but listen to me," and Basil, clasping her hand tenderly between his own, went on to explain the restraint which he should be under when at her father's dwelling, and the numerous unpleasant positions in which he should be thrown; but Julie was so evidently distressed, that he finally agreed to delay the interview with her father for a couple of weeks, hoping that she would see the necessity of it in the meantime.

Then they talked of other things. Basil told of his advancement in his studies, of the books he had read since they parted, of the hopes he had for the future, and Julie's eyes beamed with admiration upon her lover, as she listened to the ~~flow~~ flow of his language. Finally, he questioned her, of 'the fair-haired, blue-eyed stranger,' of whom she had made such mystic mention in her last-letters; and blushing and laughing, Julie confessed that Mr. White, their minister, had a new assistant, who glanced at her from his desk, not unfrequently, and walked with her from church after service, and made long morning calls, and often accepted her mother's general invitation to sup with them, whenever it should be convenient—at which time his stay was prolonged until late in the evening. In short, Julie acknowledged that she had a new lover in the person of a tall, slender youth, of unprepossessing countenance, who bore the romantic name of Mortimer Rivers.

Thus they sat until the gorgeous sunset flooded the whole landscape around them with a rosy light. Through the golden haze of the atmosphere, the distant mountains glowed with a purple radiance, and Basil and Julie watched the sun as it

sank behind them, while slowly the rich crimson and amber clouds faded from their beauty, and the cold, grey hue of a spring twilight settled over all, save their hearts, which in their tranquil love were unshadowed by any forebodings of evil.

Then they retraced their steps, through the pine glade and the forest to Julie's home.

In less than a week from that night, Basil, to his great astonishment, discovered his father's embarrassments, for the simple reason, that it could be kept from him no longer. Ambitious as he had been to share the honors of the graduating class, he renounced all, and diligently set himself to work, as we have seen, to arrange his father's accounts, to the best of his ability.

CHAPTER III.

MORTIMER RIVERS had been three months at Huntersville when his sister arrived. She had been invited by Mrs. White, with whom Mortimer boarded, to pass a few weeks with them.

Angeline Rivers was older than her brother. She was a girl of no ordinary qualities—no common character—~~but on~~ inheriting the strong passions of her father, which had been developed and strengthened by the defects of her early education. Her mother, a woman of superior talent, died while Mortimer was an infant. Mr. Rivers, ~~after the lapse of ten or twelve years became insolvent.~~ after the lapse of ten or twelve years became insolvent. He was detected in a forgery, and sentenced to

an imprisonment of a number of years; but the first morning after his confinement, he was found dead in his cell—he had committed suicide. Their uncle, a brother of their mother, had taken them to his home; but Angeline rebelled against the wholesome discipline of his household, and wilful and headstrong, she separated herself from them.

By making use of her uncle's name, she obtained a situation as assistant-teacher in a flourishing institution, where she had sufficient time to pursue her own studies. Her insatiable thirst for knowledge, and her wild, eager ambition, caused all difficulties to succumb before her. As a linguist, her powers were remarkable; and in every thing that she undertook, she succeeded beyond her wildest hopes.

Their uncle endeavored to impress upon Mortimer the necessity of applying himself to some trade; but Angeline would not listen to it. Her salary was large for one of her age; and by practising the strictest economy, and giving music lessons out of school hours, she saved enough to pay her brother's expenses while preparing for the ministry.

A few days after her arrival at the parsonage, the brother and sister were sitting in the little parlor which adjoined Mortimer's sleeping apartment, and which he occupied as a study. Angeline could be 'all things to all men;' but now, as she sat alone with her brother, she was herself—a cold, calculating, worldly woman.

"I tell you, Mortimer, just what you are—you are a fool, and no better. If you had managed rightly, you might have been engaged to her by this time; but, no—you were content to worship at a distance, and now that young Antinous will carry her away before your eyes, and you will have no more spirit than to sit and cry after her."

"I am afraid it will be as you say, Angeline."

"Afraid! how I hate that word. If I ^{were} ~~was~~ a man, I would

never use it; and if I ^{were} ~~was~~ in your place, she should be mine, despite a hundred such as Basil Stanley."

"What? if she even loved him—as I fear she does?"

"Yes—let her love him, but teach her to love you better. You don't know women, Mortimer, as well as I do. Trust yourself to me, and promise to do what I require of you, and you will yet be master of her splendid fortune."

"Hush, Angeline!—it is not for her fortune that I worship her so madly. She is the purest and loveliest creature that I ever saw; and if she had not a cent in the world, she would be as dear to me as she is at this moment."

"*But she should never be your wife, as she shall be now!* Look at me, Mortimer—you think you know me well; but you do not dream the one half that I would do, before you should marry a poor girl—I would see you die, inch by inch, before my eyes first! There—don't shudder with your woman's heart! do you think I have nothing to revenge? What has caused all the privations, the struggles, and mortifications of our lot?—poverty! Why have I, for years, lived a life of self-denial, heedless of the thorns over which my daily path lay, but to reach the goal which now is within sight? For this, I toiled while you studied: for this, I forced you into the path which you would have avoided—for I knew that a minister could choose from the wealthiest of his congregation, and be certain of success. Now, affluence is within your grasp; and if you will not stretch forth your hand, I will stretch it for you. Upon those who have looked down upon us, we will look down in turn."

Angeline's gray eyes glowed as she spoke, and a bright flush lighted up her sallow cheeks; but she was answered only by a deep-drawn sigh from her brother. He was thinking of the lessons which the meek and lowly Saviour taught; and which

none can study, even be it with unworthy motives, without receiving their blessed influences into their hearts.

That night, at supper, the calm face of the good old minister seemed unusually sad, and his wife's mild eyes were frequently filled with tears. Angeline's face grew sympathetically long, as she questioned if they had met with any sorrow.

Mr. White's lips quivered, as he answered,

"I have witnessed a very sad sight, Miss Rivers; one that I shall carry down to the grave with me in memory—for never can I forget it. The cruelty of man to his fellow man is beyond belief. Our good Deacon Stanley was this afternoon arrested in my presence, while I was visiting him to confer with him upon the subject of his misfortunes; and despite the entreaties of his wife and the sobs of his young children, who clung about him to the last moment, he was conveyed to the county jail, about ten miles distant."

"Where was their son? where was Basil?" said Angeline, eagerly; forgetting in her excitement the quietude she usually affected before them. "Why did he not go in his father's place?"

"He begged that it might be so; but Mr. Hunter would have consented to no substitute, even had the law allowed one. Basil was not the only one who interfered; but he grew more obstinate with every fresh entreaty, and when the young man found there was no mercy in his father's stern creditor, he imprudently braved him—speaking such withering words, that Mr. Hunter writhed beneath them. His face first darkened with passion, then paled to an ashy whiteness, while oaths—such as my ears never listened to—broke from his lips. I never saw such fearful anger before—God grant I never may again!"

The wild gleam that darted from Angeline's eyes, when she

found Mr. Hunter had been the cause of Deacon Stanley's arrest, was unobserved; or, if noticed, thought to be the natural indignation which one would feel at such a circumstance. But very different was the true cause. The sympathy which she was still capable of feeling for such an outrage, was swallowed up in the exultation of the thought that her labors would now be lighter. The way seemed clear before her; and, in the sufferings of the Stanley family, she saw only another step gained in her brother's speedy advancement to fortune.

CHAPTER IV.

Two letters were interchanged between Basil Stanley and Julie Hunter, and then all intercourse ceased between them.

Basil's read thus:

"DEAREST JULIE,—With a breaking heart I release you from your vows—there is nothing left for me to do but this. All happiness is denied me for ever on earth. Happiness! how like a mockery the word sounds! Oh, Julie! my heart is frozen within me—and I, so happy a few short days ago! Do you know—do you realize, Julie, that we can never meet again? Yes, I know you do. Even now you are suffering for my rash words! They have told you what I said—how I boasted to your father's face, that he could not rob me of your love; but, did they tell you that I was made insane with agony by my poor father's aggravated sufferings?—that, raving, I knew not what I said?—Julie, darling, forgive me—send me your blessing! and it shall give me strength to toil night and day until my father is free. Years, long years!

must his gray hairs blanch in those prison walls before that can be. Would that I could sell myself!—willingly would I do it, if he might only breathe the air of freedom. These are my last words to you, Julie—I have given my solemn promise that they shall be! On this condition has your mother promised to give them to you. Bless you—God bless you, darling! and may another love you as fondly as I have done, and cherish you tenderly as I had hoped to do.

“BASIL.”

Mr. Hunter, enraged at finding that Julie loved Basil, carried out his threat of locking her in her room. Six days had she been confined there, when her father was obliged to leave the village on business. It was during his absence, that Mrs. Hunter, whose sympathies were all enlisted upon the side of the lovers, consented to deliver Basil's letter. In so doing, she had disobeyed, for the first time, her husband's commands. Julie wrote in answer:

“MY OWN BASIL,—I will accept of no release from you. If I cannot be yours ~~on~~ earth, I will in heaven. Let us be true to each other—true to God, and we need not fear the separation here, when we have an eternity before us. Basil, do not curse my father—his sin will yet be expiated, whether through my sufferings or his, I know not; but if he be brought to repentance, it is all that I ask. Praying God to keep us both in the path of duty, and to sustain you, dear Basil, through your great affliction, I am,

“Yours for ever, JULIE.”

Oh! how Basil blessed her faithful heart, as he read this! how thickly rained the tears upon the dear words, which he dwelt upon, until his own heart gathered the strength it so much needed.

That night he saw his treasured mother, his young sisters and brother, go forth from the dwelling which had so long been their own. He supported his mother's steps, he tried to speak hopeful words to her, as she looked back for the last time upon their home—now theirs no longer. A carriage, sent by a kind neighbor, conveyed them to the cottage they were for the future to occupy.

Heavy was Mrs. Stanley's heart as she left the dwelling endeared to her by so many memories of the past. There had she been brought when a bride, by the husband of her youth—under its roof had her children been born, and by its hearth had they all knelt in morning and evening prayer for many a day. There was not a room in the house but which, from some association, she clung to with peculiar tenderness. There was not a shrub in the yard but she had planted and watched over, and now they were hers no longer. Yet she would have relinquished all without a murmur, could her husband have been restored to her—her innocent husband, who had passed so many days of toil, so many nights of sleepless anxiety, to rest at last upon a dungeon's floor.

From their cottage-home went up that night the earnest tones of prayer from Basil's lips—beside him his mother and the children knelt. It was the first time that he had led their family worship. When his voice, so tremulous with feeling, ceased, and he arose from his knees, his mother fell upon his neck, and thanked God that he had given her such a son.

CHAPTER V.

ONE evening, a few weeks after this, Julie Hunter found herself alone with her father, upon the broad piazza, that ex-

tended in front of their house. It was the first time, since Mr. Stanley's arrest, that Mr. Hunter had shown his usual affection for Julie; but now he drew her down upon his knee, and called her his good daughter, and patted her cheeks, and kissed her, as, before that sad occurrence, he had been in the habit of doing.

"I have always been a kind father to you, have I not, Julie?"

"Yes, dear papa," and she swept back his dark hair with her white hands, and kissed his forehead fondly.

"Well, my daughter, I have a request to make of you now—one that my child must not refuse me."

"I am glad you have, father, for I have one to make of you."

Mr. Hunter's brow darkened, but he answered promptly,

"Very well, Julie; if you promise to fulfil my wishes, I will agree to grant your request."

"I promise, father," said Julie, eagerly and resolutely.

"Place your hand in mine, my child." Julie did as she was bidden—"there, now repeat after me; as true as there is a God in heaven—"

"Oh! no, no, father," interrupted Julie, "I could not swear. You must believe me, father. I promise you solemnly that I will do whatever you wish, if you will only take Mr. Stanley out of jail, and release him from his debt. What is three thousand dollars to you, father, with all your wealth? Think of his poor wife and children!"

Mr. Hunter did not answer. Julie continued.

"You know father, what the golden rule is—oh, I have marked so many passages in the Bible that I want to read to you—shall I run and get it now, and will you come in the parlor with me?"

"No, no, child, not now. Do you know that you are asking me to do a very hard thing, Julie?"

"But, dear father, you will be so much happier after it is done. Just think how mother and I would feel if you were taken away from us, and carried to a jail. Oh! father, how dreadful it would be! Won't you go right off this very night, and bring poor Deacon Stanley home?"

Mr. Hunter brushed a tear from his eyes; but he strove to hide his tenderness, by looking searchingly at his daughter, as he asked her,

"Is it for Basil Stanley's sake that you ask me this?"

"No, father, indeed it is not—it is for your own sake. I want to see my father do something that would make me proud of him, and that would make him happier than he is now; for, dear father, you have not been happy lately, have you?"

"No, I have not, Julie; but it was all their own fault. I only wanted to frighten the deacon into paying! for I thought he had the means; and then they must all interfere, asking me if I wasn't ashamed of myself, and daring to dictate to me—Minister White, Squire Barker, and the rest of them. I soon let them know I wasn't afraid of them; but, Julie, I will go for him to-morrow; I will bring him back, and tell them it was your doings, as it will be, my child. But I couldn't have done it, if you had wished it for Basil's sake—the insolent boy! braving me to my face, as he did! I wish I had him in jail—I'd keep him there."

"Ah, no, father—don't talk so. You will forgive him one of these days, for he did not know what he was saying; you will forgive him, and learn to love him dearly, too."

"No, I never will—so help me God, I never will forgive Basil Stanley."

Mr. Hunter arose, and paced the portico with his hands folded behind him, and a knit and lowering brow. The evil within was stronger than the good—and it had gained the mastery.

Julie leaned over the balcony, and rested her head on her hands. Her tears dropped noiselessly down upon the flowers below—"would her father never forgive him? he had spoken so positively; but no, she would hope—he had a good heart, and she was sure he could not bear resentment for ever. He had heard her first request so calmly, and not stormed and raved, as she had feared that he would; but she had chosen a good opportunity. What was it that her father desired of her? Perhaps it was to give up Basil for ever! Oh! she could not do that; but still she had promised—promised solemnly; and whatever it was, it must be fulfilled."

Thus she mused, until her father aroused her from her reverie.

"Don't let me hear Basil Stanley's name again—you understand me, Julie. I hate the boy!" and Mr. Hunter closed his teeth firmly as he spoke.

"Very well, father; if you say so, it must be so; but what, dear father, am I to do for you, who have been so very indulgent to me to-night?"

Mr. Hunter took his daughter's hands between his own, and relapsing into his former tenderness, he said,

"Don't think that I am anxious to get rid of my daughter; no, for you shall live here just the same as ever; I couldn't get along without seeing your merry face—but I want you to be married this fall."

"Married!" said Julie; "I married! dear father, you are surely jesting!"

"I don't jest about such things, Julie. I am getting old, and I want to know who is going to have my large property. I want some one who will not squander it, and who will at the same time make you a good husband. You must know that I feel some anxiety as to who is to have all my money when I am dead and gone."

"Don't talk so, father," said Julie; "don't talk about dying—though to be sure," she added, in a breath, "I want you to live, so that you will be prepared to die any moment. I want you to forgive and forget all past offences, and—"

"Hush, Julie—not a word of Basil, unless you want to anger your father again."

"I would not do that for any thing, dear father. Then your request is, that I marry in the fall; and you will, of course, leave the selection to me."

"No Julie; my request, which you have given your solemn promise to fulfil is, that you marry Mortimer Rivers this coming fall."

Julie was stunned—not a word escaped her lips.

Mr. Hunter waited in vain for an answer. He might have read it in her ~~pale~~ face and quivering lips. At length he said,

"I expected you would tell me that you loved another."

"I do," syllabled Julie, through her closed teeth.

"And that one," added her father, "rather than see my daughter wed, I would chop off my right arm."

Julie shuddered. Her father continued.

"Mr. Rivers is very fond of you. I have mistrusted it for a long time; and I joked him this afternoon about it, when he confessed all. I promised him you should be his—you should have seen his joy then, and heard the promises he made to study your happiness; then, you couldn't have helped loving him. Zounds! I didn't think he had so much feeling!"

Julie sighed, and shuddered again.

"The night air is getting chill—we will go in the house," said Mr. Hunter; "and, Julie, console yourself with the thought that girls never marry their first love; and devilish glad some of them are that they don't; eh, mother—can't you

“speak from experience?” he said, turning to his wife, who was sitting in her arm-chair, in the room they had just entered.

Mrs. Hunter confessed that she had once fancied herself in love before she had seen her present husband.

“There’s encouragement for you, Miss Julie! And, Mistress Hunter, what do you think my little ring-dove has cajoled me into? can’t guess, eh? Well, a pretty nice round sum she has wheedled out of her old father this night. She’s been teaching me the golden rule, bless her pious heart! and to-morrow, my lady, I am to go off to Stonefield-jail, and bring back the deacon, and make him a present of his debt beside.”

“Now, John—now, dear John, it isn’t possible you are going to be so good as that?” said his wife, as she took her spectacles off to wipe the streaming tears from her eyes.

“Isn’t it possible, you good-for-nothing, old, contradictory woman?” (All these adjectives were frequently used in an endearing sense by Mr. Hunter, and his wife was quite used to them.) “Did you think there was no good in me? that I would let the Deacon stay there when I found he had’nt got the money? I tell you, I only wanted a good excuse to let him out, for I haven’t slept soundly one night since he went. Bless you, woman, I aint quite the old boy you take me for!”

“No, no, John—I always said you were the best hearted man in the world. Only to think of it—well, well! I shan’t be the only happy one to-morrow.”

“No, I suppose not; but there’s one happy one that you don’t know anything about.”

“Who’s that?”

“Why, our Julie, ma’am, is to be married in the fall.

Now—guess who is the happy one? and who only deserves such a treasure?”

Mrs. Hunter replaced her spectacles, and glancing across the room to where Julie sat with her hand pressed over her eyes, stammered out at last,

“Well, I’m sure, I—I is it—er—er—Basil Stanley?”

“You old fool! if you can’t guess better than that you may hold your tongue. What put that cursed name into your mouth?”

Mrs. Hunter always answered her husband—sometimes, as now, when he did not want any answer.

“Why, he was her first love, you know,” she finally replied.

“First love—hang it! And what was the name of *your* first love, Mistress? and what *became* of him?”

“Peter Smith,” answered Mrs. Hunter, humbly. “He took to drink, you know, and died in the poor-house.”

“Well, ma’am, we will let Peter Smith and Basil Stanley keep company. Mrs. John Hunter’s daughter shall follow her mother’s example; and I hope she may be as happy with Minister Rivers for her husband, as her mother has been before her.”

“I hope she may,” said Mrs. Hunter, meekly; but her tones were sad, for her quick ear had caught the sound of a sob, and she knew Julie too well to doubt the strength of her attachment to Basil.

When Julie reached her room that night, her first act was to draw Basil’s letter from her bosom, over which she bent with eyes so dim and misty with their tears that she could scarce discern the words. She paused beside these lines, ‘Would that I could sell myself! Willingly would I do it, if my father might only breathe the air of freedom.’ Should she rebel any longer? when, through the promise she had that night given, all would be accomplished for which Basil had

been willing to sell himself away from her forever! For his sake—for his happiness she could do much; but, oh! would not a life of slavery be preferable to her lot? the wife of a man for whom her heart beat with no affection, while that heart was irrevocably given to another. She questioned of herself whether even religion could sustain her in such hopeless misery. With such thoughts she dropped upon her knees in prayer—she besought God to give her strength to meet her inevitable fate without struggling—she prayed that it might have the effect of weaning her more from earth, and drawing her nearer to heaven; and she implored that, if it might be, her days of trial might be few, and her home soon be in that land where sorrow and tears are unknown. Basil was not forgotten; but her voice faltered, and was at length drowned by her emotions, as she pleaded for all the blessings of life to rest upon him. When she arose from her prayer, she felt that great as was the sacrifice, her heart was fortified to endure it, while her earthly reward should be in the happiness she should bring to Basil's family.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM one window of the cottage at 'The Gorge,' night after night, the feeble radiance of a single lamp might be seen glimmering out in the darkness. It was from Basil's room. His troubled mind would not allow him the rest he needed. In vain he resolved scheme after scheme for his father's release. The small compensation which he now received for his services as book-keeper, was scarcely sufficient for their daily use. He knew that his father's friends were

exerting themselves to procure the amount of Mr. Hunter's claim; but he also knew that sympathy and money were commodities that differed entirely in their nature, and that all who felt for him in their hearts could not be expected—to use the words of a well-known character—'to feel in their pockets.'

The house and farm, which had been mortgaged to one of Deacon Stanley's city creditors, were bought in by Squire Barker; and, although he paid its full value, there was only five hundred dollars left after the claim upon it was satisfied. Before the Deacon's arrest the goods in his store had been appraised; but they were levied upon for another claim, and there was nothing left free but the store itself, which no one seemed inclined to buy. A worthless affair it did appear to be, with its loose, brown clap-boards, and its leaking and moss-grown roof: so it was no wonder that it was difficult to raise the balance of the sum to pay off Mr. Hunter.

Deacon Stanley seemed to have been peculiarly unfortunate, for when he first started in the mercantile business he had met with severe losses; but being less ambitious then, he had kept on slowly but surely. One of his losses had been particularly aggravating: the little fortune that his wife inherited after her father's death he had received in cash, and the pocket-book, in which the bills had been stored only the previous day, mysteriously disappeared from his store. There was no discovering any trace of it. To be sure, an Irishman, who was a stranger in the village, had been loitering about Deacon Stanley's premises, and the Deacon had given him *work* ~~it~~; but he did not seem to be very fond of ~~it~~, and was soon missing. He was traced to an adjoining town; but here he was idling about in the same way, without money or decent apparel, and although he was strongly suspected, they failed in bringing any proof against him.

But, to return to Basil. The Sabbath, which was his only day of rest, he devoted to his father; and, in these dark prison-walls his holy filial love seemed to burn with brighter lustre. Now, indeed, had his father reason to be proud of him as he listened to the words of Holy Writ from his lips, forcing himself to stop between the passages, at times, to speak cheerfully of the future. The future—which to him, even were the sunshine of his home restored to him by his father's presence, would still be dark and cheerless!

It was at this juncture of affairs that Mr. Hunter made his promise to Julie—the promise that he found more difficult to keep than it had been to make. But his word had been given; and Julie failed not to remind him of it, as he sat the next morning smoking his pipe on the piazza. He grumbled a little at first, and wanted to send his hired man in his place; but, no—Julie insisted that it would spoil all not to see her father riding through the village with Deacon Stanley in his buggy, and throwing her arms around his neck she added—

“You must not refuse me, father, for I shall have to sacrifice much more in keeping my promise to you; but I will keep it. You need have no fears of my breaking it.”

Mr. Hunter patted her cheeks, called her his good daughter, and then got up and knocked the ashes out of his pipe, grumbled about the house for an hour longer, and then was off to Stonefield Jail. He grew into a better humor with himself as he approached the town, for he began to fancy that he was doing a very meritorious deed; but when he alighted in front of the gloomy-looking building, and was admitted through the iron door, and led down the vaulted passages to the damp cell which Deacon Stanley occupied, his heart smote him for his cruelty.

The Deacon did not notice the sound of their footsteps: he was seated close by the iron-barred window, through which

the light came in feeble rays—so covered with dust were the small, square panes of glass. He bent over the volume that he held in his hands, while he read in low tones—

‘Why art thou cast down, O, my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God!’

‘Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!’

“Here I am!” cried out Mr. Hunter, “here is the unjust man! But you shan’t be delivered out of his hands this time. Here, jailer, open the door—quick, I tell you. Hang you! do you want me to knock it down?”

“’Twould be a tough day’s work for you,” muttered the jailer, as he turned the key in the massive lock, while the ponderous door swung inward.

Mr. Hunter grasped Deacon Stanley’s hand, and shook it heartily.

“I don’t know as you can ever forgive me, Deacon, for shutting you up in this old hole; and I am sure I never could forgive myself if you did. But, come along now, and try to forget that I ever was such a brute. I guess you have slept as sound of nights as I have, for you’ve had no conscience to trouble you—eh! isn’t it so, Deacon?”

Deacon Stanley looked around him, bewildered. He had suffered the grasp of his hand, but he seemed like one in a dream. When Mr. Hunter tried to draw him from his cell, he shook his head—he was afraid it was a mockery; and not until he was seated in the carriage and felt the cool, fresh breeze upon his face, and saw the fair, blue sky above him and the cheerful landscape spread around, did he realize that he was again free.

When they passed through the streets of Huntersville, they met gaping mouths and staring eyes in every direction; but Mr. Hunter enjoyed their surprise—he cracked his whip and laughed merrily, declaring that it was the happiest day that he had known since he had sent the Deacon to jail.

When they reached the lane, Mr. Hunter proposed that his companion should walk the rest of the distance to the cottage, saying—"he did not think he could meet Mrs. Stanley, after keeping her husband so long away; and, Deacon," he added, at the same time handing him a paper, "here is a present from my daughter—whose feelings you must not hurt by refusing to take it. It is but a poor compensation for the unkindness I have shown you."

Deacon Stanley well knew what it was; and with tears in his eyes he thanked Mr. Hunter for his great and unexpected kindness. As he bent his steps toward the cottage where his family resided, he repeated to himself the words of the Psalmist, 'Verily God hath heard me: He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.'

A few moments more, and he was surrounded by his wife and children; while words of endearment, mingled with prayers of thankfulness too sacred for repetition, were breathed within those humble walls.

The news spread through the village like wild-fire, and Basil hastened home—scarcely able to believe it until he found himself in his father's arms. After hearing of Mr. Hunter's additional kindness, it was his wish to return the note, but his father replied—

"No, my son—we will keep it; but my obligations shall prove none the less binding. If life and health is spared, Mr. Hunter shall not lose the first cent by me. I cannot blame him so much—hasty and passionate as we know him to be—for he thought I had misrepresented my affairs to him, while I

was only too sanguine. As soon as he saw his error, see how nobly he set himself to work to atone for it."

Basil made no reply, but he mused for a long time upon Mr. Hunter's kindness to his father, and from that he gleaned some hopes of future happiness for himself and Julie.

Ah, little did he dream of the terrible price that Julie was to pay for that kindness!

And, now, with the Stanley family, as it often seems to happen, one turn of good fortune was followed by another. The surveyors of the projected railroad between — and — arrived at Huntersville, and it was found that the road would pass directly through Deacon Stanley's store. Squire Barker took the property into his hands, and sold it for more than double the amount the Deacon had expected to obtain. Moreover, in tearing down the old store, the long-lost pocket-book was found, with the contents perfectly safe—the corners only having been gnawed by the rats, who were now proven to have been the thieves.

The Deacon was able to buy back his house and farm, to which his family joyfully removed; while Basil made immediate preparations to return to college—Squire Barker telling him, that as soon as he should finish his law studies he would take him into partnership, and gradually resign all his practice into his hands.

CHAPTER VII.

It was not until the day before Basil's departure that the rumor of Julie's engagement to the young minister reached his ears. He feared that it was true; for in no other way could he account for the manner in which she had so studiously

avoided him for the past five weeks, and for Mr. River's constant attendance upon her.

It was a sorrowful termination to the visions he had lately been weaving, but when the first sickness of heart which came over him at the tidings died away, he sat down to ponder over the future with a calmness which Julie never could have done. At first, life seemed utterly valueless to him, without the hope which had never quite died out, of one day calling her his. No other love could ever compensate him for the loss of hers; but ambition, with her alluring promises, beckoned him onward, and he resolved henceforth to own no thralls but hers. It never entered his heart to seek an explanation with Julie, for since her father's generous conduct, he felt himself bound by every tie of honor to abstain from any stolen interviews.

But now that this arrangement was publicly discussed, there was nothing to keep him from carrying out the impulse he had long ago had, namely, to apologize to Mr. Hunter for his hasty and disrespectful words. With this intention he walked up there that same evening.

As he stood in the shadow of the woodbine that hung in such masses from the pillars of the piazza, he heard the low sound of voices, which he knew to be Julie's and Mortimer's. His heart grew faint within him—he could not yet accustom himself to the thought of yielding her to another.

He went around the house to the side door, and in the back sitting-room he found Mr. Hunter alone.

As Basil crossed the threshold, Mr. Hunter's brow betokened a storm. He rose to his feet, saying—

"You are an unwelcome visitor in this house, Mr. Stanley. I had expected after what had passed between us that my home would be safe from your intrusion."

"And so it shall be, sir, from this night. After your kindness to my father, I could not leave this place without wish-

ing to recall those passionate words which I so far forget myself as to use to you. Believe me, sir, they have already occasioned me more accusations of conscience than any act of my life-time."

"Hum! so, so," and a mischievous light twinkled in Mr. Hunter's eyes, "do you know that my daughter is—"

"I know, sir, that your daughter is to be married this fall, else I should not have been standing here, lest *some minds* might have misinterpreted my motives." Basil's brow crimsoned as he spoke, and something of the light flashed from his eyes which Mr. Hunter had once before seen."

He seemed to respect him the more for the indignation with which he repelled his insinuation, for he extended his hand, saying—

"I believe you, Basil, I believe you; and although we cannot expect any very warm friendship on either side we will let by-gones be by-gones."

Mr. Hunter then walked with Basil down the path to the gate, and although his manner was rather constrained, the courtesy was more than Basil had expected.

Again, as they passed the windows, he heard the same murmuring of the low voices, and something like bitterness crept into his heart as he reproached Julie for so soon listening to the love of another.

Alas! could he have seen how the ^{roses} ~~flowers~~ had faded from her cheeks, how sorrowful were the once joyous eyes, he could have imagined something of the daily struggles of her life.

That night she saw Basil in the moonlight, as he walked down with her father to the gate, and she could not hide from Mortimer the emotions which so agitated her.

"What could it mean?" she thought. "Was there any possibility that her father had forgiven him? No, she was foolish to think of it," but although she told herself so, again

and again, her wayward heart would leap over the impossibilities and settle down upon this new hope.

Mortimer's unexacting love, and patient devotion, had won from Julie a sisterly affection, which would no more bear comparison to her strong love for Basil than the soft summer breeze to the fierce hurricane that sweeps every thing from its path.

But he was encouraged by the tenderness of her manner to hope that he should one day possess an undivided heart; for how could he know that her earnest looks and gentle words were only called forth by sympathy. Ah! she truly divined that the unnatural lustre of his eyes, and the bright glow that sometimes lingered on his cheeks, were the sure heralds of the approach of that insidious disease, of which, Angeline had told her, their mother had died.

Poor Mortimer! the reaction was too much for him. Giddy and sick, he watched Julie while she pressed her hands nervously across her heart, as Basil's footsteps died away in the distance. Over her pale cheeks the color came and went, and at length settled there with a rich glow, which rivalled the clusters of the crimson noisette that clambered over the casement against which she was leaning. For the remainder of the evening both were embarrassed and constrained, and it was a relief to Julie when Mortimer took his departure, and she was able to seek the solitude of her own room.

For hours she tossed restlessly upon her couch; she could not sleep, and her conscience told her that it was because she was endeavoring to escape from the path of duty. The night was warm, and rising, she went to her open window and threw wide the lattice. The soft breeze, laden with the perfume of the flowers, ~~yield~~ yield their sweetest breath at night, came to her refreshingly—the tranquil beauty of the landscape before her soothed her perturbed thoughts, and her mind settled back

into the calmness with which she had schooled herself to think of her trials. Still, as she searched her heart, she could not but acknowledge that the last hope had not yet been rooted out of it.

In vain she deceived herself with the belief that she was exterminating her love for Basil, when alas! her tears but watered it daily, swelling the germs to buds. No, the heart itself must cease to beat before this noble plant, when once rooted, can be torn from the soil. The buds may blight, the flowers may wither and fade, the leaves may grow dry and sere, but deep within, the roots have buried themselves, and they thrive on forever.

"Those never loved
Who dream that they loved once."

A few weeks passed away, during which time Angeline noticed the constraint in Mortimer and Julie when together, and fearing lest her cherished plans would, after all, be defeated, she resolved to persuade her brother to insist upon an earlier day for the marriage.

For this purpose she entered his room one morning.

"Mortimer," she said, "I think you ought to be married before Stanley returns from college."

Mortimer, pale and languid, was reclining upon a couch, but as his sister spoke, his cheeks were lighted with a rosy glow. It died away, and he turned his face from her, sighing heavily.

"Why do you sigh so?" said Angeline, as she bent over him anxiously.

"The more I think of it, sister," he replied, "the more I think that it is wrong for me to marry Julie."

"And the more I think of you, Mortimer Rivers, the more I think you are a fool, and nothing else," she answered.

"Angeline," he said, and the tones of his voice were gentle; "Angeline, you once told me that you would rather see me dying by inches before your eyes, than to have me wed a girl who did not possess riches. You see me thus dying now—be content with that, and ask no more."

The angry expression of her countenance vanished, and was replaced by one of intense anxiety. Her brother's solemn words awoke anew the fears, which had before this agitated her heart. She idolized him, and through him had she determined that the golden dreams of her childhood should be realized. Could it be, that Death would at one blow rob her of all? No, she refused to believe it, and with assumed calmness she sat down to reason with her brother upon what she called his infatuation.

Not in vain had Mortimer Rivers studied the Scriptures. Dwelling on the fulness of the Saviour's love, His sinless character and holy life, his soul became imbued with a religious devotion he had failed to feel when first he took upon him his ministerial duties. He realized his accountableness, and ever present with him was the momentous truth expressed in this passage of Holy Writ—'God will render unto every man according to his deeds.'

When he became convinced that Julie still loved Basil, while her acceptance of him had been caused only by her sentiments of filial duty, his resolution was taken, and no arguments nor persuasions of his sister were able to change him.

CONCLUSION.

It was the Sabbath day. The waning summer still robed the hills and vales in beauty, although the ripening fruit and fading flowers foretold the near approach of autumn.

In the pulpit that day, good old Minister White sat alone. With a tremulous voice he requested the prayers of the congregation for his young colleague, who was lying at the point of death.

Earnest and fervent was his simple prayer, and not alone upon Mr. Hunter's face were seen traces of tears that solemn morning.

Julie was not in church. She had staid to watch with Angeline beside Mortimer, who, the night after his conversation with his sister, had been so violently seized with nervous fever, as to be constantly delirious.

Now, indeed, were Angeline's air-castles crumbling around her; and 'midst their ruins, she saw only a yawning grave.

For days, Mortimer lingered between life and death; but at length his constitution proved too feeble to longer resist the ravages of disease.

Late one afternoon he awoke conscious, and his first request was that Julie would send for her father. She did so; and when he arrived, they were left alone together. What passed between them, Mr. Hunter did not repeat, but he had evidently been deeply affected; for when he went through the house to return home, his eyes were filled with tears, and he was still deeply agitated.

The next morning the tolling bell echoed through the valley, while the silence of death reigned through the parsonage—for death was there.

All that remained of Mortimer Rivers was but the form of clay.

The last summer roses that bloomed beside his window, some kind hand had plucked, and scattered over the couch by which Julie kept watch on the day she had once expected to have been his bride.

Angeline, who remained day and night beside the remains

of her brother, gave herself up to the most excessive grief, after returning from his funeral. Now was she cast adrift, without even the frail anchor of an earthly hope to cling to on the ocean of life.

Fearfully crushing is the hand of affliction upon the form which has Earth alone to lean upon—Earth, with its wounding thorns, its defiling dust, its treacherous quick-sands.

Another week, and Basil returned home from college. Mr. Hunter immediately visited him. Basil was the first one to whom he communicated the promise he had given Mortimer on his death-bed. It was that he would no longer oppose Basil and Julie in the first wishes of their hearts. From Mr. Hunter's lips, Basil also heard the history of Julie's self-abnegation—and his heart reproached him for having doubted her constancy.

There was nothing now to separate them longer, and in the exceeding love which each found in the heart of the other, both felt repaid for all the anguish of the past.

From this time every one in the village remarked the wonderful change in Mr. Hunter. He became as generous as he was once close; as kind and conciliating as he had been harsh and forbidding. In contributing to the happiness of others, he had learned the secret of true happiness.

His wife and daughter, with good reason, grew to look upon him with pride as well as fondness.

As with him, so ever is it; those who would bring happiness to their hearts and their homes, must

"Give and forgive, do good and love,
Lightening the load of daily life."

To a Friend,

AFTER THE SUDDEN DEATH OF HER ONLY BROTHER.

THY joyous smiles, my gentle friend, have flown!
Dark is the wreath that's braided in thy hair!
Oh! why should pallid sorrow make her throne
Upon a brow so pure and passing fair?
Thy sweet eyes only beam with mournful light,
And misty love is trembling on their fringe,
Whilst o'er thy wasted cheeks a sudden blight
Hath passed, and borne away the rose-leaf tinge.

Thy poor heart, dirge-like, beateth notes of woe
Above the mem'ries buried in the tomb;
And thoughts, like gliding shadows come and go,
And gaze from thy deep eyes with spirit gloom;
The hand I press seems cold unto my own,
And to my bosom sends a painful chill;
And thy low voice, once bird-like in its tone,
Now only sweeps the chords that sadly thrill.

Ah! ever in this clouded, tearful vale,
Hath Death the power to wring the loving heart—
To stifle notes of joy with funeral wail,
And pierce the soul with agonizing dart.

And ever must we raise our drooping eyes,
 And strive through clouds to see the golden throne,
 The streets of pearl, the streams of Paradise,
 Where on their angel wings our lost have flown.

Then shall its radiance our dark path illumine;
 And from yon Heaven's boundless, arching blue
 Soft gleams of light shall play about the tomb,
 Gilding the cypress and the darksome yew,
 Thus turn thy earnest gaze unto the skies.
 And on thy brow serene this light shall glow,
 The tears shall vanish from thy misty eyes,
 And from thy breast this melancholy woe.

Sonnets.

MORNING.

THE morning breaks. Across the amber sky
 Gray clouds are trooping slowly one by one,
 Their edges crimsoned by the rising sun.
 Mist wreaths upon the distant mountain lie,
 And violet vapors through the valley glide—
 Veiling the crystal stream that winds along,
 For ever murm'ring its low, gushing song,
 To the sweet flowers and fern that droop beside.
 My heart, to God, springs up in earnest prayer!
 Most beautiful on such a morn doth seem
 This earth!—most radiant! as the sun's first gleam
 Flashes afar upon the woodland fair.
 In "pleasant ways" my pilgrimage is cast—
 God only grant these happy days may last!

NOON.

The glorious sun is midway in the sky,
 But for the clouds it scarcely can be seen—
 Their shadows fall athwart the meadows green,
 And o'er the brown fields where the sheaves still lie.
 Ah! now my heart is filled with boding dread,
 And tears break slowly from my downcast eyes,
 Like drops of rain from all unwilling skies.
 When April's flowers bloom fair above the dead.
 A whisper trembles through the noon-tide air!
 The rustling of the pines the wind before
 Mayhap—yet sounds a dirge like "nevermore,"
 And back I gaze upon the past so fair,
 Yet glean not courage for the coming night
 From whence I see no ray of guiding light.

NIGHT.

To Night a thick mist fills the valley wide,
 And banks of clouds wall in the arching skies,
 Hiding the starlight from my eager eyes.
 Black loom the rocks upon the dark hill-side,
 And all is drear and lone, where late so gay
 The reapers toiled amid the golden grain,
 Leaving the rip'ned field with loaded wain,
 To wait the dawning of another day.
 Oh, gloomy night, thy shadow falls on me,
 As in the shrouded future, I divine,
 Still darker hours than ever yet were mine.
 Then o'er my breast the waves of sorrow's sea
 Shall beat more fiercely for the calm before.
 Oh, Life! how wild the storms that sweep thy shore.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW;

OR,

The Marriage Portion.

CHAPTER I.

"What are we set on earth for, say?—to toil
 Nor seek to leave the tending of thy vines,
 For all the heat o' the day, till it declines?"—MISS BARRETT.

It was the breakfast hour, at a certain number in a certain square—Astley Place, I will call it for convenience; there being no such place in the city of right angles, to my knowledge, my readers (if I have any) will find it difficult to determine its precise locality.

It was winter, and the morning was cold and blustering. The family had assembled in the breakfast room where they all drew closely around the grate, while the last dishes were being arranged upon the table.

Mr. Bryan dropped his newspaper, at the summons of his wife, and took his accustomed seat at the table, followed by his daughters. One chair alone remained empty.

"Where is Eleanore?" questioned Mr. Bryan, in a gruff voice.

His wife was engrossed with her preparations for the exact quantity of sugar and cream for the six cups and saucers spread out before her, and she answered not. The sisters looked from one to another, and still no reply was given.

"Where is Eleanore, I say?—will none of you answer me?" repeated Mr. Bryan, in tones no way increased in good humor.

"I presume she is in her chamber," said his wife, very quietly, without lifting her eyes from the cup of steaming coffee, which she was placing on the servant's waiter. "Take this cup to Miss Eleanore," she continued, "and ask her—"

"Put it down," interrupted Mr. Bryan, "put down that coffee, I tell you. If she is well enough to drink coffee, Mrs. Bryan, let her come down and drink it. I'll have no more of her ill-humor. Go up, Jarvis, and tell her that I say she shall come down."

Jarvis left the room.

"I am glad you sent up for her, father," said Miss Bryan, "there is nothing in the world the matter with her, and two days is quite long enough for a sulk to last."

"Oh, Margaret! how can you say so?" interrupted Julia, the youngest sister. "Eleanore is very unhappy, and looks wretchedly pale—I am sure I don't think she is sulky at all."

"Yes, and you humor her, and uphold her in her obstinacy: if it hadn't been for yours and Edith's romantic notions, she would have given up all thoughts of marrying Harry Moreland, by this time."

Julia colored up to her eyes—her father's penetrating gaze was upon her, and she feared an ebullition of his wrath, for of late it had been by no means of unfrequent occurrence. But he said nothing—greatly to her relief.

Mrs. Bryan and her daughter Edith, who sat near her, were

whispering. Mr. Bryan caught the last words—"Try to persuade her." Edith rose from her seat.

"Sit down," said her father, "I'll have no persuading about it—she *shall* come down; I wish madam," and he turned towards his wife, "I wish, madam, that you would remember that whispering is ill-bred. I should think you had been in good society long enough to forget the bad habits that you learned before."

This ungentlemanly and provoking speech, which Mr. Bryan never would have made had he not been overcome by his passion, awoke no answer in words; but Mrs. Bryan's dark eyes emitted such a flash of angry light, that had it fallen upon one less used to it than her husband, it would have caused that one to quail.

Jarvis entered. "Miss Eleanore will not come down, sir."

"By Jove, she shall come!" and Mr. Bryan, as he spoke, set his empty cup upon the table with such force, that the frail china was broken into fragments. He arose, kicked his chair from him, and left the room.

"I declare! father is so passionate, that I am positively getting afraid of him," said Edith.

"He is never passionate only when he is crossed," answered Miss Bryan, "I always study to keep the right side of him, and every thing goes on smoothly enough with me."

"Yes, but he does not love you any better for that," replied Edith, "that is plain to be seen. Since Eleanore has been in disgrace, Julia is his favorite, for all she is not afraid to speak her mind. She was the only one of us who dared to take up a defence of poor Eleanore."

"I wish you would stop disputing," interrupted Mrs. Bryan, in querulous tones, "my nerves are completely unstrung, and I don't want to hear any thing more about your father or Eleanore—they both give me trouble enough."

The remainder of the morning's meal was partaken of in silence. Meanwhile Mr. Bryan had gone up to his daughter's room. He opened the door without knocking, and closed it after him. In one corner, crouching over the heater, sat Eleanore, in her long night-dress, a woollen shawl wrapped closely around her, and over it in soft waves, floated her dishevelled auburn hair. Her face, which she turned towards the opening door, was pale, her lips were blue, and her eyes were surrounded with dark, discolored circles.

Mr. Bryan, who was tenderly fond of Eleanore, was struck with the sudden change, and he felt his anger dying within him.

"Eleanore, are you sick? In God's name why didn't you tell me, that I might send for the doctor?" he said, looking anxiously upon her.

"I am only sick at heart—the doctor could do me no good," answered Eleanore, sadly, and a tear glistened in her eye, like a drop of dew in the heart of a violet.

"Fudge! if that is all, get up and dress yourself. I'll have no daughter of mine sitting about the house in this crazy way." He spoke commandingly, and Eleanore arose reluctantly from her low seat. A miniature fell from her lap to the floor. In an instant her father stooped and picked it up—a moment more, and dashing it down, he stamped upon it, shattering the case and grinding the glass to atoms with his powerful feet.

"So perish every trace of that fortune-hunter, Moreland. I tell you, Eleanore Bryan, dear as you have ever been to me, I would sooner bury you alive, than give you to him. Fool, that you are, that you cannot see it is your money that he wants, and not you! You need not cry—tears will do no good with me—your mother found that out years ago. I am not to be bamboozled with them. Now dress yourself, and

come down to your breakfast." So saying, Mr. Bryan left the room. Eleanore bolted her door. She gathered the fragments of the miniature together. The picture was so defaced, that scarcely a trace of her lover's handsome countenance remained. Regardless of her father's command to dress, she sat weeping and sobbing in a complete abandonment of grief. Some one rapped at the door—before opening it, she stretched out her hand, and reaching a partially filled vial from the table, drained its contents. The rap was repeated. Eleanore arose and slid back the bolt. It was Edith who entered.

"Dear sister, do come down, let me help you to dress—do hurry," she said.

"I shall not go down from this chamber, until I am carried from it," answered Eleanore.

She sat listlessly upon the floor, her large eyes fixed in a dreamy gaze upon the remnants of the treasured miniature.

Edith smoothed her sister's hair, and gathering it into a twist, fastened it with the shell comb from her own head. She brought her morning dress, but she could do no more, for Eleanore was obstinate, and would not suffer her to unwrap the shawl.

Edith was greatly distressed, for every moment she expected to hear her father's voice calling to them to come down. But, now the hall door swung to, with a crash, and looking from the window, she saw him leave the house.

"He has gone," she said clasping her hands, "he has gone, and I am so glad, for I never saw him in such a passion before. When he came down stairs he threatened to send us all to a convent, because we had not told him that you had Harry's picture, and when mother ventured to say a word for you, he swore at her terribly. Poor mother feels badly enough about your attachment to Harry; for, as she says, she

looked ^{for} some great match for you, who are the beauty of the family. She would sacrifice all her wishes, though, for your sake, if she had her own way; but father told her this morning, that he never would consent—he would see you die first."

"So be it," replied Eleanore, "but now go and leave me, Edith, I must be alone;" then, noticing her sister's unwillingness, she added, "you may come to me again in an hour, I shall be calmer then."

Edith obeyed her sister, and retired from the room.

Eleanore arose from the floor. She tottered to the table where her writing materials were scattered, and penned a few lines to her mother, to each of her sisters, to Harry Moreland, and lastly to her father. Then feeling a drowsiness steal over her, she laid herself upon her bed, crossed her hands carefully upon her breast, and closed her eyes with the full belief that they would open only in eternity.

Why was all this bravery—this courage to meet death? Had she the Christian's hope, that thus calmly she resolved upon severing the cords of life? Alas, no! Howe'er so weary of life, the Christian awaits the summons to depart, nor dreams of such an unhallowed entrance, to the longed-for bourne. There was no courage in that calmness. It was the apathy of a despairing heart, untutored to meet the storms of life—unschooled in the control of its own evil emotions. The spirit of revenge alone was strong within her, and by it was she prompted to the crime she was committing, and blinded to its awful—its fearfully awful consequences. The punishment in another life, the disgrace which would fasten upon her memory in this, did not present itself to her morbid mind; and so, thinking only of the evil she was escaping from, and of the remorse her death would awaken in her father's heart, she closed her eyes and slept.

Mrs. Bryan was the first to enter the room. The sun streamed through the windows between the crimson curtains, falling directly upon Eleanore's face. Her auburn hair was transmuted by the warm rays into waves of gold that rested lightly on her brow, which was pure and white as a lily's opening petals. The long silky lashes of her blue veined eyelids swept down upon her colorless cheeks, and as her fond mother looked upon her, she thought her beautiful as an angel.

Very beautiful indeed was Eleanore Bryan even to eyes less partial than her mother's. She had inherited from her father the fair skin and lustrous blue eyes, so often found in the land of his birth, "green Erin," and from her mother, the delicacy of feature and symmetry of form for which she had been wooed and won from poverty and obscurity to grace the home of the successful Irish merchant. Yes, Eleanore was radiantly beautiful, but an indulgent and ambitious mother, a fond, but an irreligious and passionate father, had not given her the examples and the education which she needed, to develop the genial impulses of her heart, or implant that strength of moral purpose which all require to avoid the shoals and quicksands of life.

Eleanore, at eighteen loved and was beloved by Harry Moreland, a book-keeper in a large importing warehouse, whose salary was his sole income. When Mr. Bryan discovered the attachment, Harry received a dismissal from Mr. Bryan's house, and Eleanore a command never to speak with her lover again. Eleanore kept her room, refusing to eat, thinking she would eventually bring her father to relent. Her mother was distressed by her wilfulness, and feared the worst, for she knew her husband was equally obstinate. Two days passed away before Mr. Bryan inquired for her at the breakfast table, as before mentioned. The result has been already seen.

When Mrs. Bryan entered Eleanore's room, she was, as I have said before, struck with the loveliness of the fair young face, which in its peaceful sleep, was divested of the wild and haggard look which for the last two days it had worn.

She rejoiced over Eleanore's tranquil repose.

"Beautiful enough for the queen, Edith calls her," she murmured. "I wish she had never seen ~~Moreland~~ Moreland, and then my hopes might have one day been realized. A coronet never rested on a lovelier head than my Eleanore's," and bending over the sleeping girl, she kissed her fair forehead. She went to the windows to drop the curtains, and now her eyes fell upon the uncorked and empty vial—the scraps of folded paper. She grasped the vial—it was labelled 'laudanum!' In an instant she comprehended all—a deadly pallor overspread her countenance, as she staggered to the bell-rope and pulled it violently. Jarvis was the first one who answered the summons.

"Go for Mr. Bryan—hasten, there is not a moment to spare, for Eleanore is dying."

He was gone. The sisters were almost immediately in the chamber, but they could do nothing. Their cries failed to awaken Eleanore from her profound slumber. Mrs. Bryan chafed her cold hands, which seemed to her excited fancy to be already growing rigid.

At length came Mr. Bryan. Sternly he bade his daughters leave the room, then questioned his wife as to what had caused her alarm. She pointed to the empty vial and the unopened notes. He took up the topmost one—as he read, his features grew sterner than ever.

He summoned a servant, and ordered a goblet of the strongest vinegar to be brought to him. Not a word escaped him to reveal the emotions within, and but for the blanched cheek,

the eagle light of his eyes, the compressed lips, his wife would never have guessed their strength.

The vinegar was brought. He lifted Eleanore in his arms, and tried to awaken her. She opened her eyes for an instant, but they closed again immediately.

"Eleanore, keep your eyes open," said her father, in tones that never yet had been without their power.

She made one feeble effort, but seemed unable in her stupor.

"Eleanore Bryan would you fasten a disgrace upon your family that would last forever! Make an effort to save yourself, and drink this before it is too late." He held the glass to her lips. "Drink, I command you! Drink, to save your life!"

She swallowed a mouthful, a quick shiver passed over her—she opened her eyes slowly.

"I will drink no more, I have no wish to live," she said.

"But you shall live—you shall not die to disgrace us thus—drink every mouthful!" and he held the glass against her closed teeth.

She made an effort to push it from her, but her fingers were numb; she was drowsy and powerless, and had not strength to resist, still her father could not force it down.

"Eleanore, my child will you not drink it for my sake?" said her mother pleadingly.

Eleanore's head drooped forwards, and she made no reply. Mr. Bryan was fast losing his command.

"Fool!" he muttered, "drink this and you shall marry Moreland—by the saints, I swear you shall marry him! Now will you drink?"

"She closed her lips over the glass and drained every drop. Her father supported her, and walked the room rapidly with her. Another hour and she was out of danger.

Before her father left her, he said—"Eleanore, it was for no love to your mother or myself that you obeyed me, and saved us from disgrace. It was because I told you that you should marry Moreland. You shall marry him, and the gratification of your wishes shall be your greatest curse; but so help me God, not one cent of my money shall you ever touch—not one cent, if you die a beggar."

As the door closed, Eleanore flung her arms around her mother's neck and wept unrestrainedly.

It was an hour for admonition, for repentance, for prayer; but it passed away unheeded by the mother, and Eleanore's conscience was not awakened to the fearfulness of the sin, into which her ungoverned passions had so nearly plunged her.

CHAPTER II.

"Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair,
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose lips and full blue eyes."—TENNYSON.

"Yet who believes
That ye can shut out Heaven?
Your souls partake its influence not in vain
Nor all unconscious, as that silent lane
Its drift of noiseless apple blooms receives."—LOWELL.

THEY were married. Eleanore, with all her exquisite beauty—for whom her mother had indulged such high hopes of an alliance with some foreign noble, or at least, some distinguished senator of our own land—became the wife of a salaried clerk.

It was a sad day to Mrs. Bryan, when Eleanore left their stylish mansion for the simple and unpretending house of Moreland's mother, who lived in a retired and unfashionable street in the suburbs of the city.

It was a sorrowful day to poor Edith, who had wept with her sister over her troubles, and rejoiced at her happiness until their hearts were linked closely together. Yes, it was a sad day to all the sisters—even the unsympathizing Margaret, who was fast verging towards 'old maidism,' could not look upon the young bride without regrets—perhaps the principal one might have been caused by despair at her own forlorn prospects. Mr. Bryan was the only one who maintained his usual demeanor. There was no faltering in his voice, no moisture in his eyes, as he bade them farewell when the carriage drove off, and then superintended the loading of the trunks upon the hack in waiting.

They were gone, and he followed his wife and daughters into the elegant parlors; furnished with everything that the most refined taste could select, and almost unlimited wealth could buy. Costly curtains of satin and lace shrouded the lofty windows, falling down upon the masses of woven flowers, that gleamed up in gorgeous beauty from the rich carpets. Fauteuils, lounges, and chairs of unique patterns that had been brought from beyond the seas—antique cabinets and inlaid tables were scattered throughout the suite of rooms—and there were fine paintings, and faultless statuary, and massive mirrors that reflected all in increased beauty.

Around these rooms Mr. Bryan looked, and now a peculiar smile lighted his face and gleamed from his cold blue eyes.

"I suppose *you* gave Eleanore a parting blessing," he said sneeringly to his wife, who had sunk down in the nearest chair, overcome by her feelings, and was now pressing her handkerchief to her eyes to conceal her tears. "I did not think

it worth while to give you any unnecessary distress before this *delightful* wedding, but now, from this time forth, I wish you distinctly to understand that I forbid all communication with Eleanore Morehead. From the time she bore his name, she ceased to be my daughter. I have disinherited her—I disown her! She has had her way, and now I will have mine. You understand me. The moment that I know of your holding the least intercourse with her, be it wife or daughter, from that moment I say, I will not rest until I have wrought her husband's ruin. Obey me, and I leave them to themselves—they will soon enough work out their own misery, hot-brained as they are, and a father's curse their only marriage portion."

Mrs. Bryan raised her hands. "Maurice Bryan," she gasped, "for God's sake, if not for mine—for your own soul's sake, I beseech you, have mercy."

"Mercy!" he echoed, "where was the mercy that she would have shown me? No thanks to her that I am not now pointed at as the father of a girl driven to despair by his tyranny—the father of a suicidist! No, she sought to revenge herself upon me, and now she shall learn what my vengeance is."

Mrs. Bryan wept, prayed and entreated, but all in vain—her husband was inexorable, and repeating his charge to his trembling daughters with still more fearful threats he left them.

We will now follow Eleanore Moreland to her new home. The simply furnished second story front room had been prepared for her reception; and thither was Eleanore conducted immediately after her arrival. She looked about upon the bare and whitewashed walls, the ingrain carpet, the plain and old mahogany furniture, and a weight settled upon her heart. Strong indeed was the contrast to her own elegant apartment in the home she had left. She had expected a change in her way of living, but she was not prepared for so great an one.

She had hoped from her father's uniform ^{*calmness*} ~~calmness~~ that he had become reconciled to her marriage, and that he would settle a dowry upon her, which would enable them to live handsomely in a house of their own, while his influence would procure her husband a more lucrative situation; but she had not read his calmness aright.

At parting he had slipped a parchment into her hands, which bore the appearance of a deed, but he told her not to open it until she should be in want. He well knew that to Eleanore, with her cultivated tastes, that time was at hand, and that the sealed document would not long remain unopened.

Mr. Bryan, when not blinded by passion, was a discerning man. In some respects he had read Harry Moreland's character aright. He had penetrated through his acquired polish and indifference of manner, and judging him to be selfish and ambitious, he had immediately concluded that Eleanore's fortune was her greatest attraction. His inference was wrong, for Eleanore was the houri of Moreland's day visions, and of his night dreams—the only one beside his mother for whom he would have been willing to sacrifice one selfish whim. But he was prudent, and would have counselled delay in their marriage, had he not been deceived by Mr. Bryan's consent. He ordered a chamber prepared at his mother's, without really thinking that Eleanore's father would allow her to be carried there; still as nothing had been said to him about settlements, and as he had felt too much delicacy to make inquiries, he provided for her to the best of his ability, expecting until the last moment that Mr. Bryan would insist upon their remaining with him, until he had arranged a suitable home for them.

They were married in the morning—privately at Mr. Bryan's request; no one beside the family and Moreland's mother being present. Almost immediately after dinner, they

left. The gathering twilight of the same evening found them seated by the window of their simply furnished chamber.

Harry Moreland, in the shadow upon his young bride's face, read all her heaviness of heart; for the cheerfulness which she had tried to assume was insufficient to deceive his watchful eyes. They talked long, and now for the first time Harry heard of the incident which had forced Mr. Bryan's acquiescence. At once he felt the hopelessness of looking to his father-in-law for any assistance. He knew him better than Eleanore had done, for in the consent that had thus been wrung from him, in the preparations for their marriage that immediately followed, he read the first workings of his stern and relentless disposition. In his heart he could not but blame Eleanore for having heretofore kept it from him; but it was no time for chiding, and he only folded her to his bosom more caressingly, as he renewed his promises of love and protection. At this time they both thought of the parchment, and to Harry's representations that they now, probably, stood more in want than they ever should again through life—that had he the capital he could enter into partnership with the firm where he now held the situation of book-keeper, and that in that might be contained the requisite means—at these representations, Eleanore brought it to him. Together they opened it. It was written with all the formality of a will. Their eyes glanced rapidly over it. At length Eleanore came to these words: 'I give and bequeath to Eleanore Moreland, wife of Henry Moreland, fortune-hunter, *a father's curse!*—consigning her at the same time to poverty and beggary. To said Henry Moreland I also bequeath a wilful and headstrong child, who seeking to revenge herself upon her father, found his hand more powerful in vengeance than was her own.'

Eleanore could read no more—a mist gathered in her eyes, and throwing herself into her husband's arms, she gave free

vent to the emotions which all the afternoon she had been trying so carefully to suppress.

"Is it not cruel, Harry? Is it not terribly cruel?" she sobbed.

"Yes, Eleanore, it is. It is unnatural—inhuman. Do not let it pain you, my own wife; for such an unchristian curse will surely fall back upon his own head, before it will harm us, my darling. Thank God, you need not fear poverty. We are young and strong—we love each other. You can bear many privations for my sake, and I will toil for you until I place you beyond the reach of his taunts. Only one thing will I require of you." He paused—he looked wildly excited. The bitter words of his father-in-law had stung him to his heart's core. "Will you promise me that?" he continued, seizing her hand, and looking eagerly in her face.

"I will promise everything you wish, Harry. Have I not come to you a beggar, and shall I refuse you anything? No, there is nothing that I would not promise you. God knows that although I have sinned, it has not been wilfully toward you. I would have given up a thousand such homes as the one I have left, did I know that you were really able to be burdened with me."

She had thrown back her head as she spoke, and her large eyes were radiant with the strong self-sacrificing love of a fond woman's heart. Her husband caught her to his breast, and in that hour his love was strengthened and ennobled by the resolutions that he made.

The promise that Harry required, Eleanore hesitated not in making, although it wrung many fibres of her truly affectionate heart. It was that she should never seek her parents or her sisters in their own home. True, it was given more readily that she did not doubt their seeking her, for little was she prepared for the extent of her father's anger. Her

husband, as I have said before, knew him better, and he vowed in his heart that the day should come when Mr. Bryan should be forced to acknowledge that his curse had been powerless.

Notwithstanding the selfishness with which Harry Moreland's character had been heretofore alloyed, he possessed many good and noble qualities. In whatever society he appeared, friends gathered round him, drawn by his affable manners, his gentlemanly repose, united to the brilliant powers of a highly cultivated intellect. In short, Henry Moreland was a universal favorite, and no one appreciated him more highly than Mr. Mason, the head of the mercantile house where he held his situation.

The morning after his marriage he was surprised by Mr. Mason's offering him a partnership, and rightly judging that it arose from his alliance with the daughter of the 'merchant prince,' as Mr. Bryan was called, he confided to him the circumstances of his marriage.

Mr. Mason acknowledged that he had been influenced by the supposed interest of Mr. Bryan in his son-in-law's affairs; but appreciating Harry's sincerity, he continued his offer, which was gladly accepted.

That night Harry Moreland hastened home to his bride with a light heart, and tones so cheerful that every trace of sadness was dispelled from her brow.

Weeks wore away, and Eleanore heard nothing from any member of her family. It was a very great trial to her. She yearned for Edith's companionship—for her fond mother's society—even for Margaret's cheerful bantering, and Julie's merry words and low silvery laugh. Her father, too—could she have seen him, how she would have plead with him for forgiveness.

Her loneliness caused a fretfulness of disposition which was

foreign to her. Not to her husband was it manifested, but she could not appreciate the inquisitive interest which her mother showed in all her affairs; and so often was the well meaning old lady repelled in her advances, that had she not been governed by Christian principles, her heart must have closed against her daughter-in-law. But while all her motives were misinterpreted by Eleanore, and her sympathies rejected, she ever found some excuse or palliation for the wife of her only son.

Of the extent of Eleanore's unkind feelings towards his mother, Harry was happily ignorant. He had not expected to find his wife faultless. He knew that she was impetuous and wilful when he married her; but he trusted to her warm affections, to that goodness of heart which is so often relied upon in vain. To these he confided, and to that discipline which he knew life would bring her, to subdue her wilfulness—to control and tame her impetuosity.

In the moral and Christian sense of the word, Eleanore's heart, with all its warm emotions and kind feelings, was not good. She was wanting in that moral energy in which true goodness alone consists—all her winning qualities were as nothing without it; for by it they must be controlled and exalted, or they have no real worth. Eleanore had all the germs for a noble character, and with judicious early training they would have been developed; but now her best feelings seemed threatening to degenerate into weakness, for want of a power over herself, which her education had failed ~~to give~~ her. *to give!*

Thus months passed away. Mrs. Moreland was kind and considerate, and hoped for better days.

At length, in sorrow and suffering, a daughter was born to Eleanore; and now all the mother-in-law's sympathies and kind, tender feelings were called anew into action. Eleanore was too weak to acknowledge or notice her devotion. She

would open her eyes only when her babe was brought to her for sustenance, or when the deep tremulous tones of her anxious husband, fell upon her ears.

As she grew stronger, she yearned for her own mother's presence; whom, now for more than a year, she had never once seen. Her constitution shattered by the agony of her prolonged and dangerous illness, she became more petulant and nervous than ever. Still her mother-in-law bore everything patiently, and made many excuses in her heart for Eleanore's increased fretfulness.

On the Sabbath, four weeks from Eleanore's confinement, she was able to sit up in her easy-chair. Her husband sat beside her, looking upon her transcendently lovely countenance with fond idolatry. Their babe lay sleeping in the wicker cradle beside them. Mrs. Moreland entered the room, and after looking at the infant a moment, said—

"I hope you will give the baby a name to-day, for it is plump and pretty enough to deserve one."

"I should wish it called Eleanore," replied Harry, still looking in his wife's face, "Have you any objections my love?"

"She has had a name since the night of her birth!" answered Eleanore.

"Do tell!" said Mrs. Moreland, "why how strange that you should not have told us. What is the name?"

"Medora!" replied Eleanore, and she turned towards her husband with a gesture of impatience.

"Medora!" exclaimed Mrs. Moreland, "Medora! That is the last name for a child. Why, I remember the picture of one in history, with snakes all around her head—for pity's sake, don't call the baby Medora."

"You are thinking of Medusa, mother," answered Harry,

"Medora is not such a bad name. I always liked the abbreviation Dora."

"Dora! Medora!" repeated Mrs. Moreland, with unusual pertinacity. "Well, I must say that I have no fancy for such Pagan, out of the way names, for such a little darling."

A sharp retort trembled on the young mother's lips, but she was weak, and she burst into a nervous fit of weeping.

In vain, Mrs. Moreland attempted an apology—she had not meant any thing wrong—she could not see what she had said that could so disturb her. Eleanore only wept the harder, and at her son's request, Mrs. Moreland was obliged to leave the room.

"There, you see how it is now, Harry," sobbed Eleanore, "everything that I say is ridiculed, and everything that I do interfered with, until at last I suppose I shall not be allowed to say that I ever had a will of my own. I cannot live so any longer."

"Why, Eleanore, darling, I think you misunderstood mother. She would not interfere with your desires purposely, or ridicule you for the world," answered her husband, tenderly.

"I knew you would take her part, as you always do. If you had told me before I was married, that I was to be subjected to the whims of an interfering mother-in-law, and submit to her government, I should scarcely have been so eager to give up a palace for a hovel," and she cast her eyes scornfully around the room.

"Eleanore!" said her husband, with a grieved, yet reproving glance.

"Don't Eleanore me!" she answered angrily, "go to your mother and stay with her—she is more to you than I am."

"Eleanore, think for a moment how great an injustice you are doing to yourself in giving way to your passions thus—think how much this excitement may injure—"

"I don't want to think of anything," interrupted Eleanore. "I am not to blame that I have feelings—passions, if you choose to call them so; but I am to blame that I have suffered myself to be imposed upon and interfered with as I have been, and I won't bear it any longer. I urged you to let me go to housekeeping before the baby was born, but you cared more for the little outlay that it would cost, than you did for my comfort; and I was foolish enough not to insist upon it; but I do insist upon it now—I won't live this way any longer," and Eleanore threw herself back in her chair, and compressing her lips resolutely, watched the effect of her words.

Harry made no answer. The determined and proud light of Eleanore's eyes died away, for she saw her husband brush the tears from his cheek as he arose and hastily paced the floor. Only once had she ever seen tears upon his manly face before—in her hour of peril—and now they seemed falling upon her heart to soften and subdue it. She looked around the chamber, endeared to her by so many fond recollections, and which now bore the traces of her husband's kind and careful attention to her comfort. The neat papering of the wall, the simple but pretty new curtains of the windows and the bed, the really beautiful toilet and tete-a-tete set which he had given her at Christmas, and the choice bouquet of greenhouse plants he had brought her only the day before. She had compared this pleasant, cheerful room to a hovel. Her heart smote her—she extended her hand, saying—

"Dear Harry, how could I speak so to you? I did not mean it—and now I could hate myself that I have said such words. To you! to you!" and she looked up at him, her dark violet eyes glittering through tears—a look that a heart less fond than Harry Moreland's could not have resisted.

Deeply grieved had he been, and even now, although he freely forgave his wife; her words had left a bitterness in his

heart which he had never known before. He could not forget; and often during the remainder of the day did Eleanore notice the workings of his features. She understood it well, although his manners were as tender as ever; and she would have given worlds had her unkind words never been uttered.

So is it, for the want of self-control, that daily, yea, hourly, some loving heart is grieved, by one who would have laid down life itself for the beloved one, had such a sacrifice been required. 'Trifles light as air' are often the cause of words which bring after hours of self-reproach to one:—to the other, memories which no future devotion can entirely divest of their bitterness.

Gladly would Eleanore have now consented to remain with her mother-in-law. It would have been to her an expiating life, in which she would for a time have rejoiced, for the sake of proving to her husband, that her ungenerous mood had entirely passed away. But he would not listen to it. He told her that he would have insisted before upon making her the mistress of a household of her own, had he not felt anxious to amass while young, a fortune sufficient to afford her every luxury.

It was Harry Moreland's ambition to place his beautiful wife in her own ~~estate~~; and in his efforts towards this, he had sacrificed all his former selfish and extravagant habits. Again and again had he denied himself, until self became a secondary consideration with him. Now he resolved that he would but toil the harder for this increased expenditure.

In the course of another month, a pleasant house in a more desirable part of the city, was rented; and preparations immediately made for furnishing it.

Eleanore was in despair at seeing her husband decide upon an imperial for their parlor carpet. She forgot all the good resolutions she had made, confident in her own strength; and

returned dejected and moody to her chamber, where the faithful mother-in-law was nursing the fretful baby.

Mrs. Moreland had made no opposition to the change, but it was plain to be seen that she felt it keenly. A widow, with an only child, whose society she had never been deprived of, with the exception of the few weeks of his usual summer tour, it was natural that she should feel lonely and desolate at the thought of the approaching separation. But she made no complaints, and only regretted that she had failed of making Eleanore as happy as she had desired to. Her patience was not to be without its reward, for Harry appreciated the great sacrifice he knew she was making, in suffering him to leave her roof without opposition or entreaty. He appreciated it, and felt his heart linked more firmly than ever to the mother, whose all of life that he could remember, had been devoted to his happiness.

Mrs. Moreland had been left a widow, while Harry was still young. Her means were moderate, but with the strictest economy, she had succeeded in giving her son a thorough education. She owned the house that she lived in, and some other real estate, which in the last few years had risen in value. Since Harry had obtained a situation, she had been able to lay by a sum of money yearly; and now, guessing the cause of the cloud upon Eleanore's brow, she immediately decided upon appropriating her savings to the gratifying of her tastes. Calling Harry from the room, she told him of her wish, but he would not listen to it.

"Where have you been this noon?" she asked.

"We have been selecting a carpet," answered Harry. "Eleanore would have liked a Brussels, but I could not afford it. I explained to her that I wished to draw as little as I could from the firm, as I had put nothing in it. She feels a little

disappointed, but it will all come around right, for Eleanore has a good heart."

Mrs. Moreland made no reply, but immediately after dinner, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and taking an omnibus, rode down to the carpet store.

"Will you show me the carpet that my son, Mr. Moreland, selected this morning?" she said to the clerk who waited upon her.

"I will see, madam—step this way if you please."

The carpet was found, and rolled out. It was a neat pattern of English Imperial, colors blue and maroon, the quality excellent. Mrs. Moreland thought it very suitable, but she remembered Eleanore's former luxurious home, and she requested that the Brussels carpet her daughter had selected, might be shown to her.

"I did not know that she selected any, but here is one that she admired very much," answered the clerk, as he unrolled a very beautiful pattern of Brussels. "Here, Marcus, help me to match this."

The carpet was matched, and Mrs. Moreland's kind heart was completely won by the brilliant, but well-assorted colors. She glanced back at the Imperial, and did not wonder any longer that it should have failed to please Eleanore."

"You will send the Brussels, to Mr. Moreland instead of the other," she said, "and the bill I wish brought to me."

"Very well, madam, anything else I can show you to-day? We have a new stock of Tapestry and Velvet carpeting, just unloaded from the Shenandoah. You might see something that would please you more amongst them."

"No, I thank you, I could not be better suited," and Mrs. Moreland left, without dreaming that there were other carpets in the store, with which the Brussels would have borne no

better comparison, than did the Imperial with it. So is it, that our tastes are controlled and influenced by comparison.

Mrs. Moreland walked on, looking for an omnibus. In a window a few doors below, she saw some very elegant curtains displayed. "Eleanore is so partial to curtains," she said to herself, "I will just step in and see how much these are."

The price was beyond her means, but the attentive shop-keeper showed her more, and she soon selected a very pretty but cheaper set, and giving him the number, ordered them to be laid by for Mr. Moreland, until he should be ready to have them put up.

"Mr. Moreland—Mr. Henry Moreland?" said the man, glancing at his books, "yes, he was here this morning. I have the number; he ordered plain buff Holland shades for the whole house. These lace curtains are just the things to go with them for the parlor—his wife had quite a fancy for them."

Mrs. Moreland's heart beat warmly within her. She was so happy, that she was not conscious of having made any sacrifice in thus contributing to her daughter's gratification. She forgot the new parlor furniture that she had long been promising herself, when her son should be firmly and prosperously established in business—even the service of silver, with which, in her air castles she had been adorning her supper table, was no longer remembered. But with a light heart she entered the omnibus, and busy with her plans, the time passed rapidly until she was set down at her own door.

She found the baby cross—the mother nervous and worried. She took the child, and tried to engage Eleanore in conversation, that she might discover what furniture she particularly desired for her parlor. She could not succeed, for Eleanore had relapsed into her former feelings, and attributing her inter-

est to inquisitiveness, she maintained a stubborn silence, answering only in monosyllables.

Harry returned from his business that afternoon sooner than usual, and proposed to his wife to go down Walnut street with him and select their parlor furniture. She answered that she was too tired to take any more interest in the arrangements, and that she would leave them to him entirely.

A smile lit up Mrs. Moreland's features, as laying the sleeping babe in the cradle she said—"Let me go with you Harry—it's the very thing I wanted to do."

"I thank you mother—I shall be glad of your assistance," answered Harry, and before Eleanore had time to speak, they had left the room together. Her first impulse was to follow them, and tell them she should refuse to abide by his mother's selection—but she remembered how Harry had chided her for the disrespect which she had previously shown to some of his mother's suggestions, and she sank back in her seat again, angry passions working in her heart, and reflecting their evil light upon her lovely countenance. She heard the hall door shut, and now rising she paced the room hurriedly.

"Yes, I know how it will be!" she exclaimed, passionately—"she will go and buy a parcel of old second-hand furniture not fit for fire-wood, high-backed concerns like these, I suppose," and so saying, she pushed the large chair in her path so rudely from her, that it fell crashing to the floor, and the splintered mahogany flew in every direction. A sudden cry from her babe startled her, and turning to the cradle, she saw it struggling in vain to open its eyes, one of which was bathed in blood. A sharp, ugly corner of the wood upon the pillow, revealed the cause. Lifting her child, Eleanore ran terrified to the servant below. A neighboring physician was immediately summoned. The eye was bandaged, without knowing

the real extent of the injury, for between the screams of the babe, and the nervous distress of the mother, the doctor found it impossible to examine the wound more closely.

The remainder of the afternoon was a wretched one to Eleanore. Clasping her baby tightly to her breast, she pictured to herself the remorse of the future:—if she should in her passion have been the means of blinding her child forever, where would there be peace for her? She strained it wildly to her—she laid it on her low couch—she knelt over it—she called upon God to save her from this terrible punishment. Yes, earnestly did fervent, genuine words of prayer rise for the first time from Eleanore's breast. The fountains of a mother's love were stirred violently, and prayer alone could tranquillize those heaving waves. If there be anything that will cause the spirit to wrestle thus, it is the agony of fear and suspense, when we are threatened with some terrible affliction which we still feel a merciful God may avert from us.

Calmly, Eleanore arose from her knees, and drawing a chair beside her sleeping babe, gave herself up to reflection.

Not in vain had been her chastisement, for it awoke her to the sinfulness of her passions. She remembered the ebullitions of her father's temper, which had been so increased by indulgence, that her gentle-hearted mother had learned to fear him; and she trembled when she thought how closely, she had been pressing in his footsteps. She saw the necessity for immediate exertion, and she resolved, with the assistance of a higher Power, to conquer the evil which had so long been suffered to hold undisputed sway. Even the formation of this resolution gave her an inward peace unknown to her before.

Harry and his mother returned about dark, and Eleanore hastened to tell him the effects of her anger. She did not seek to screen or justify herself; and in her penitent and can-

did acknowledgment, her husband felt more confidence in her future efforts for control.

That afternoon dated a change in Eleanore. Once conscious of her danger, she could not fall back into ignorance; and although afterwards she was sometimes overcome by the evil within her, she oftener overcame it, and the struggle increased and ~~strengthened~~ ^{strengthened} that moral ~~courage~~ ^{strength} which she so much needed.

CHAPTER III.

"The feuds and animosities in families, which disturb the intercourse of human life, and collectively compose half the misery of it, have their foundation in the want of a forgiving temper; and can never cease but by the exercise of this virtue on one side or on both."—PALEY.

THE time passed away unmarked by any event worth recording, to the day of Harry and Eleanore's removal. Little Dora's wound proved to have been in the eyebrow, instead of the eye, as her mother had feared, and as Eleanore watched its healing she felt that she could not be sufficiently grateful for the providential escape. She submitted all household arrangements to her mother-in-law, whom she saw desired she should do so, and she resolved to be satisfied with all her selections.

Mrs. Moreland was gratified by the change in Eleanore's manner, and she spared no pains in providing everything as far as she was able, in accordance with her fancies. Meanwhile, Eleanore did not once visit their new establishment—her husband wished to give her an agreeable surprise.

The morning arrived. Harry went around to see that the rooms were properly heated, for although it was early spring,

the house was cool and damp, from the winter's frosts, it having been untenanted.

The hack was standing at the door which was to convey Eleanore away. Dora, wrapped up in her white merino cloak and embroidered hood, looked the prettiest of babies, in her grandmother's eyes, and she could not consign her without tears into the hands of her nurse. Her emotions were too strong for her usual control, and she went out of the chamber into her own. Eleanore followed her, and laying her arm tenderly upon her, said, "Mother, I have often been wilful and ungrateful towards you, and I cannot leave you now without telling you how sorry I am. I have not deserved the kindness that I have always received from your hands, and I feel it more than ever, now that we are about to separate, and I shall no longer be with you to receive the advice and assistance that you have always so willingly given."

Mrs. Moreland could not trust her voice to reply, and Eleanore continued—"It pains you to part with little Dora, but I will send her every pleasant day to see you; and Harry will come every evening—don't feel so badly, mother. There is one thing that I have always wished to explain to you, but I never have, even to Harry, and that is, why I persisted in calling the baby Medora, when I found you disliked it. I would have given it up, but it was my mother's name, and therefore very precious to me. My anguish at being so long separated from her, has often made me unjust and irritable towards you—will you say that you forgive me for it, before we part."

Mrs. Moreland struggled hard to obtain a command over herself, and finally succeeded in saying, in broken sentences, "I have harbored nothing against you, Eleanore—I have excused many things—that I could not account for—because I knew how you must have suffered—in your total separation

from your family—and if ever I have been inconsiderate or unkind to you—you must forgive me as freely as I do you."

"You never have—*never!*" answered Eleanore, and with a mutual embrace in which everything unpleasant was forgotten and forgiven, they separated.

Everything packed in the carriage, Eleanore with her nurse, 'band-box, basket and baby,' were soon whirled away to the door, where Harry was waiting to welcome them.

The baby was hurried up to the warm nursery, and now commenced Eleanore's surprise, as her husband opened the parlor door. The room was a model of taste and comfort, with its fanciful work-table, (the velvet-cushioned sewing-chair close beside,) its well-proportioned and pretty sofas, and its easy chairs of various patterns. There was her favorite carpet—her beautiful curtains! Then there was a handsome pier-mirror, an etagere opposite, containing her choice books, and there were fine porcelain vases on the mantel, and engravings scattered over the pure white marble of the centre-table; and Eleanore looked around on all in mute astonishment—then, flinging her arms about her husband's neck, tried to give some expression to the thankfulness in her heart.

"Not to me—not to me," said Harry; "I have had nothing to do with this. I would willingly have gratified you, had I the means, but I had not—all this is mother's doings." And then he told her that she had ordered the carpet and curtains without his knowledge, and insisted upon getting furniture suitable to go with them.

If Eleanore had had her own way, she would have flown directly back to her now well-appreciated mother-in-law, and forced her to leave her lonely home and return with her to the pleasant little paradise, which that mother's affection had created for them.

Her husband led her from room to room, in all of which

were found some unmistakeable evidence of her mother-in-law's forethought.

Even the little yard had been carefully attended to. The grass plot had been newly sodded, the vines were trained along the fence and over the little trellis, shrubbery had been planted, and everything looked green and thriving.

Eleanore was very happy. She wanted nothing more she told Harry, only his mother's presence, but he would not consent to that. In vain she plead Mrs. Moreland's loneliness without them—her own regrets at having ever misjudged so kind a heart. It had no effect upon her husband—he was glad to see his wife manifest right feelings towards his mother, and he thought she would be more likely to continue in them if separated, than if thrown together again, therefore he would not yield to her earnest solicitations.

CHAPTER IV.

"Oh, blessed love! how mighty thou to sway the human heart!
A subtle yet a holy thing, and conqueror thou art!"—F. S. OSGOOD.

"Look upwards once again, though drear the night;
Earth may be darkness—Heaven will give thee light!"—MRS. NEAL.

SPRING emptied her flowers into Summer's lap. Summer wove more gorgeous blossoms and resigned her sway to Autumn. Autumn deepened the hue of the ripening fruit in city yards and country meadows, and showered down her flakes of gold and crimson from the wayside trees as midst the distant forest, just visible where the Schuylkill winds its tranquil way. Then came Winter, treading with the faltering step of old age. He gathered the last dry leaves from the skeleton

trees, as he moaned a requiem through their branches. He scattered them over the earth, and spread a spotless shroud above them all—he clasped his icy fingers about the restless streams, and hushed them to repose. He looked in upon the varied scenes of many homes, and where he found penury and want hollowing the cheek and dimming the eye, he not unfrequently gathered them to his bosom and laid them in the grave, for the rest which life had denied them. Anon, he turned from scenes like these to traverse the halls of fashion; and oftentimes where a jewelled arm flashed out in snowy whiteness, or where a gauze-enveloped breast heaved to the bewildering sound of gushing music, he stooped to press a kiss—the sure precursor of a blighted youth, an early grave. Again, there were happier scenes, made happier at his approach. The long cold evenings drew the family circles, where fashion and folly had not made their homes, into closer companionship, and the intercourse of mind with mind knit loving hearts more closely, while over all the weeks flew on, until at length the high tide of the season's mirth—the merry Christmas day—was ushered in.

A very busy time had it been during the last week in Harry Moreland's pleasant home. Eleanore could scarcely find time to notice her baby during the day time, so much was she occupied in preparing her husband's present for him.

The bed was taken out of the back second story chamber, and the room was converted into a nursery. The former nursery, which extended over the dining-room, was the scene of Eleanore's labors. A delightful, cheerful room it was, but here Harry was now not permitted to enter. He was really quite curious about it, for whenever he tried the door he found it locked, and his wife had even caught him once or twice looking through the key-hole; but he affirmed that he knew she was behind him, and that he had done it more from mischief

than curiosity. He had a suspicion that she was converting it into a sort of library or smoking-room for him, as he had often expressed a wish that he had some other place beside the parlor where he could take his ~~many~~ friends.

Christmas morning came at last, and Eleanore routed him from his warm bed just as he had settled himself for a comfortable morning's nap.

"A merry Christmas, husband—come, dress yourself quickly; your present is all ready—the forbidden room is open to you."

"Oh, I'm sleepy, Elly," he answered with a yawn, "do let the room wait a little longer."

"Now, Harry, you bad, ungrateful man," she said, laughingly, "I won't let you be a moment. If you don't wake up, maybe I'll bring the baby in and pinch her and make her cry."

"No, don't do that; I'll get up this minute. If she is quiet, let her be, for it's a wonder."

Eleanore danced into the now adjoining nursery, and in her glee almost smothered her little Dora with kisses. She frolicked about the room with her until she had made her nearly as wild as herself.

At last her husband joined her, and they proceeded to the mysterious room.

"Where is your key?" said Harry.

"I carry it no longer—the door will open at your touch," answered Eleanore.

Harry turned the knob, and stood within the room. There was nothing there so very wonderful after all. The furniture was changed, to be sure; but it did not seem new or strange to his eyes. Eleanore might have had it brought down from an upper room for aught he knew. There was a plain sofa, two nicely cushioned chairs, and yes, there was one thing new—those warm looking curtains, that hung over the Holland

shades. Eleanore had such a fancy for curtains; but then they were the last things he should want, if the room was for him. The room was well heated, and Harry sat down, while Eleanore watched his puzzled look with a face glowing with satisfaction.

"And haven't you any suspicion, Harry?" she said at length.

He had, but he did not like to tell her that the furniture was not at all suitable for a smoking-room, so he said nothing.

"Come," she continued, "I have not shown you all yet," and she opened the door into the room adjoining. This was a good sized room, which they had before used as a store-room. Complete indeed was the transformation here. Harry could see that the floor was carpeted from where he sat, and he also caught a glimpse of the high posts of a bedstead, the head of which was not visible. There was a bureau and a washstand, and a stuffed easy chair, and, wonder of wonders, as he came nearer, there was his dearly beloved mother, looking for all the world, with the tears in her eyes and the smile on her lips, as though she was the happiest woman in creation, excepting Eleanore, who in her continued efforts experienced the happiness that she now fully deserved.

"Why, mother," exclaimed Harry, "how in the world did you ever get here without my mistrusting it?"

"Eleanore will tell you all about it. I am so happy that I can't talk without crying like a baby."

"Didn't we fix it nicely?" said Eleanore; "I had everything moved while you were at the store; but the greatest difficulty was to keep mother here all day yesterday without giving you the least hint—I am sure it was on the end of my tongue a hundred times. And then I was so afraid that you would go up to her house, and that was the reason that I told you that she was very busy, and that we wouldn't go up until we went to bring her down to Christmas dinner. I've brought

Ann, too—mother is so used to her ways; and Ann is to do nothing but wait upon her. And now mother is to live like a lady, and we are all going to make her so comfortable and happy. You see this is only mother's sitting-room out here—down stairs is *her* parlor; but you'll let us sit in it sometimes, wont you, mother?"

Eleanore did not wait for an answer, but rattled on, giving her husband more minute details.

To Harry's expressed fears that his mother would miss the active life that she had been accustomed to, Mrs. Moreland replied that she had long wished to have less care, for she felt herself growing feeble—and that she could not imagine greater happiness than to be provided for as she was now, with her children around her. With these assurances, Harry's heart was at rest.

It was a merry Christmas day to all of them; even Dora seemed to partake of the universal joy of the family; and Eleanore felt her heart swell repeatedly as she looked around upon them all and saw the happiness that she had created.

No wonder that Harry told her that she was the dearest and best wife in Christendom.

The days glided on tranquilly and pleasantly, in the blessed exercise of home affection, and under the influence of her excellent mother-in-law's example, Eleanore's nature was still further perfected. By constant, untiring effort, the generous sensibilities of her heart had been confirmed into permanent principles. But now was rapidly approaching a great trial. For several weeks had Eleanore noticed frequently upon her husband's face a shadow of gloom. So intense had been her love for him that she had stifled the yearnings of her heart for her parents and sisters' society, that he might not be distressed. Often and often had she wept in secret, as day followed day and brought no way of communication, but never

had her husband been pained with these tears. Humbled by the change in her way of life, she had immediately after her marriage dropped all her former acquaintances, and now in the lapse of two years she had heard but once or twice from her father's family—and then through an old servant whom she had chanced to meet. She found that hers was a forbidden name in that house, that her mother and sisters had been commanded not to hold any intercourse with her; that her picture hung veiled in her mother's room, and that her father had grown sterner than ever.

All this she endured. The desponding look upon her husband's face distressed her more than all. She feared some terrible business calamity—not on her own account, but because she knew that her husband's heart had been so buoyed up with success, that failure would be more than his ~~power~~ ambitious spirit could sustain. The dreariness, the terror of life without him, was pictured in her lively imagination, until she could endure the acute anguish of her mind no longer.

One evening he returned late from the counting-house. Eleanore was in the door-way watching his coming. The gloom was heavier on his brow, and his step had lost its usual elasticity. In the hall she twined her arms about him—she drew him into the parlor, and there she begged him to confide his trouble to her, to relieve her suspense.

"I could brave poverty with you, Harry, cheerfully," she said, "but I cannot endure longer these manifestations of your unhappiness."

He clasped her tenderly to his breast, he lingered, he hesitated over the words in which he should break the tidings to her, but it came at last. In another month he was to sail for Canton for an absence of from three to five years. It had been talked about for a couple of months by the firm, and had that night been decided.

Eleanore's heart seemed crushed within her—she neither moved nor spoke nor shed a tear.

"I shall come back wealthy," said Harry. "A prince could not buy my treasures *now*, but I want the world to worship my Eleanore, and she must have—"

"Harry, Harry," interrupted his wife, "don't talk so. I want only you—you must not go," and she clung to him nervously. He passed his hand over her brow caressingly—he explained to her how necessary it was that one of the firm should go—that he had been fixed upon by the others—how ungrateful it would be to refuse, when through their kindness he had been so prospered; and strongest of all inducements to him, though less than all to her, of the wealth that would flow in upon him—how the few years of his absence would bring that affluence which a score of years of toil would scarcely yield him here.

Eleanore saw that with all his grief at their approaching separation, that he still desired to go; and she said no more: but bitter, bitter indeed were the struggles she contended with, and heavy was the heart that night she raised in prayer.

Time showed them no mercy. The month flew quickly around. It seemed shorter because so much had been done, so many preparations made for Eleanore's comfort—happiness she said she should not know until her husband's return. Harry had rented another house—one directly opposite Eleanore's father's. He rightly thought that her time would pass less heavily, where she could occasionally see the familiar faces of her family. Every thing had been done secretly, for he did not want the Bryans to dream of her proximity. He confided it only to Mr. Mason, and their family physician, who lived in the same square to which they were removing. The house was very large. With cutting here and piecing there, their parlor carpet was made to fit the front chamber, which

Eleanore selected for bed-room and sitting-room. The adjoining chamber was fitted up for Mrs. Moreland, who helped to sustain Eleanore greatly with her sympathy, and whose example of pious resignation her daughter-in-law endeavored to follow.

A dining-room and another sitting-room, or nursery, back, was neatly furnished—the kitchen and the girls' room, of course—but the parlors remained empty and unopened. Eleanore had no use for them. Harry bought blinds for the second story front windows, so that Eleanore could sit beside them and see into the street without being seen.

To the large yard back he had all their flowers transplanted, and new ones he added; and here he begged, for his sake, that she would devote a portion of her time every day; for he feared that she would confine herself to the house too closely for her health.

And now the morning arrived. Harry fondled Dora again and again, and then giving her to the nurse, went to his mother's room. In trembling tones Mrs. Moreland said that she felt this was their last parting—she blessed him for the dutiful son that he had always been, and she told him that she had faith that God would prosper him and return him safely home, but she should not be there to welcome him.

He tried to cheer her and divert her mind from its forebodings. He knew that they were the consequence of her increasing age; for when did a mother advanced in years ever part with a darling child without breathing the fear that it was the last parting.

To his wife's room Harry hastened. Eleanore was sitting with clasped hands in her low sewing-chair. Her hair was thrown back from her temples, unveiling the sweet oval contour of her face, which now, blanched with grief, was so transparently pure that the blue veins were visible. At the sound of his steps a faint flush spread over her face, deepening on

her cheek to the vivid color of a moss rose's heart. She sprang towards him—her bright lips parted, but the words she essayed to speak, the entreaty not to go, died away in an unheard whisper, as she hid her face upon his shoulder. It was the last embrace—the last for such a weary, weary time. Low words passed between them—a trembling confession which Eleanore had not strength to make before, called all the anxiety and tenderness of her husband forth, so that even at that late hour he assured her that he would not go; he would forfeit all, the good opinion of his partners, the wealth he had longed to amass for her—for he felt that he could not make too great a sacrifice now.

It was Eleanore's turn to console, to encourage, and to sustain; and nobly did she do it. They parted—Harry to traverse the pathless waste of waters to a distant land, there to gather the gold of his ambition: Eleanore to tread the quiet walks of home duties, to school her heart to her approaching period of suffering, and in sorrow and anxiety to pray for her husband's safe return.

Who could tell whether such spreading paths should ever merge again?

How kind the Providence who hath veiled the future from our eyes; else how many hearts would sicken and falter and refuse to meet the trials which are wisely sent to perfect us for another—a higher state of existence! How many would cling to the earth in their despair, and while the dust entered their hearts and blinded their eyes, call upon the grave as their only refuge from grief.

Ah, sick heart, nerve thyself for the warfare of life! A crown is waiting thee—a mansion is prepared for thee, and *there* 'shall be no more sorrow, for tears are wiped away from all eyes.'

CHAPTER V.

"O Father of our spirits,
We can but look to thee;
Though chastened not forsaken,
Shall we thy children be.
We take the cup of sorrow,
As did thy blessed Son,
Teach us to say with Jesus,
'Thy will, not ours, be done!'"

HAVE patience with me, while I introduce you for a few moments only, to a family who will have little to do with this tale. I wish you to know what Eleanore's neighbors think of her strange way of living, and have selected the Templetons, because their residence is next to that of Mr. Bryan, and of course nearly opposite Eleanore's house.

Mrs. Templeton, her two daughters and son, were sitting in the front drawing-room, the windows of which were open, for the air was mild and balmy with the breath of Spring. It was evening, but lights had not been brought in.

"Those people opposite are the strangest people that I ever saw," said Celia Templeton, the youngest daughter—"there is some mystery about them. I have never seen a gentleman there yet."

"But they keep the parlor shutters shut, and the chamber blinds always down, and we can't see any thing going on. For aught, we know, the house may be full of men, coming and going all the time through the back gate," answered Hetty, the elder sister.

"I declare, I shouldn't wonder a bit if it was so. I don't think much of people that keep themselves shut up so from morning till night—there's something wrong, you may depend

upon it," replied Celia; "there, see—there's that everlasting light in the second story. I do believe they cook, eat, and sleep in that room."

"I have found out something about them," said Mrs. Templeton. "Sally tells me they keep no man-servant, but they have three girls; and there's two women who walk out together every pleasant morning, an oldish one and a younger one, who always keeps her veil down—and then there's a baby that the nurse takes to the Square every afternoon. Sally spoke to the nurse, but she couldn't get any thing out of her. She'd had her directions."

"It's a shame to have such people in the neighbourhood, so it is," exclaimed Hetty. "If I had my way, I'd soon rout them out of the house."

"Well, if you are not a pretty set," said Edward Templeton. "You all beat Eve in curiosity, and Miss Charity there," and he pointed to Hester, "shows a particularly amiable disposition; I thought you were a Sabbath-school teacher; went to church morning and evenings on week-days, and the Lord knows how many times on Sundays, and all in hopes of winning the young rector. I advise you to give it up, Hetty—it won't pay. You could'nt speak your mind so freely then."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Ned Templeton, so you ought—you do say the most provoking things," answered Hetty.

"Provoking, because they hit the mark. If the coat fits, wear it—if it don't, let it alone, that's all I have to say," replied the young man, as rising from the lounge where he had been lolling, he sauntered into the hall, and taking his hat and cane from the stand left the house.

Celia leaned from the window and followed him with her eyes.

"He has gone into Mr. Bryan's as usual," she said—"I wonder if Edith does care any thing about him."

"It is plain to be seen that he is over head and ears in love with her," answered Hetty; "I just wish she would refuse him—he deserves it for making himself so disagreeable at home. He is pleasant enough every where else."

"He don't mean any thing, it is his way of talking," said Celia, soothingly; "Ma, do you think Mr. Bryan would be satisfied with Ned?"

"How satisfied?"

"Why, as a match for Edith, do you think he would give his consent?"

"I know no reason why he should not."

"But Mr. Bryan is so particular—dear knows, how many offers he has refused for the girls; and then you know poor Eleanore was disinherited for marrying that Moreland, who was by far the handsomest and the cleverest man that I ever saw. He had such a way of looking out of his magnificent black eyes, that I'm sure I would have ~~run~~^{run} away with him myself, and been glad of the chance, if he had asked me."

"Well, that is a pretty speech, Celia; I wish you wouldn't talk, if you can't talk better sense," said Mrs. Templeton.

"Oh, I didn't mean any thing, Ma; only I don't blame Eleanore one bit for running away with him. I wonder what ever did become of her; nobody ever mentions her name now-a-days, and she used to have hosts of friends."

"She married out of her sphere, and had her reward by being consigned to oblivion," said Mrs. Templeton grandly. "Her fate shows the folly of sacrificing prudence to a youthful fancy."

Celia bit her lips—she had her own thoughts, but she said nothing.

A carriage rattled up to Mr. Bryan's door. The gaslight from a street lamp directly facing the house threw its rays upon the old gentleman that alighted, the black servant that followed, the boxes and trunks that were uncorded, and we will leave the Templetons lost in wonder as to who could be the new comer.

The stranger was immediately recognised by Mrs. Bryan as her only brother, from whom she had not heard for several years. He had been residing in India, where, favoured by fortune, he had acquired a handsome property, which during the last year had been more than doubled by a legacy from his partner. He had returned, he said, to get some one to help him to spend it, for it was more than he knew what to do with.

His indignation knew no bounds when he heard of the estrangement of the family from Eleanore. He called them all heartless, for not having sought her out, but his sister explained to him that love for her had kept them from so doing, for her husband had threatened to follow Moreland relentlessly if any communication took place between them.

It was fortunate that Mr. Bryan had gone to New York, or a rupture would have taken place at once between his brother-in-law and himself; for Charles Everest scrupled not to express in the strongest terms his disapprobation of the course pursued towards Eleanore.

The next week he devoted to a fruitless pursuit of her. The only tidings that he obtained were that Mr. Moreland had left the city, and probably taken his family with him. It was a sad disappointment to Mr. Everest, who had pictured to himself the satisfaction he should experience in endowing them with a portion of his wealth.

Summer came—the Bryans left for Newport, and the house was shut up for the season.

In August they returned, and Mr. Everest still remained with them. Washington Square, which was near at hand, was his favorite place of resort.

Here one afternoon he met little Dora and her nurse. He was attracted towards the child, in whose bright ringlets and deep blue eyes he fancied that he could trace some resemblance to Eleanore. Dora was at first shy, but upon his taking out his watch, with its rings and seal, she moved closer to him. The nurse was uneasy.

"If you please, sir," said she to Mr. Everest, "her mother does not wish her to speak to strangers."

"Never mind—never mind that," answered Mr. Everest, and he lifted her in his arms.

Dora clasped the watch in her little hands and shook the heavy links of the massive gold chain merrily.

"Thy name is Eleanore, is it not?" he said, in his tenderness relapsing unconsciously into the plain language of his boyhood. The nurse tried to persuade the child to come to her.

"No, no, Dora, tay wiv papa," she replied.

"Medora! God bless the child," ejaculated Mr. Everest. "I thought so—I was sure of it from the first. Thou art the image of thy mother—God bless thy little heart," and he squeezed her so tightly that she cried to get down. Bessie took her from him, and was hurrying off. Mr. Everest stopped her and held out his purse.

"Take this," he said, "and answer me one question. Is her name Medora Everest?"

Bessie shook her head and refused the purse. He turned away disappointed, when he remembered that he had not mentioned the right name. He hurried after her, and out of breath said, "Is the child's name Medora Bryan?"

"No, sir," answered Bessie. "I wish you wouldn't guess

any more, for I am sure you won't guess the right one." She began to think he was crazy.

Mr. Everest, in his agitation, had forgotten the name of Eleanore's husband, but now it flashed over him.

"No, no, that wasn't the name I meant; Medora Moreland—is that it?"

Bessie would not answer.

"I knew it—I was sure of it. Go along, go along, I will follow you."

"Please don't, sir. Mrs. Moreland would not like it, she lives so private; but I will tell her about it, and will come here again to-morrow with the child."

"I shall go with you—you cannot keep me from *her*," said Mr. Everest, who was momentarily getting more and more excited.

Bessie was in despair. She drew near the gate—an omnibus was passing; it would take her out of her way, but it was her only escape, and she motioned the driver to stop. There was but one empty seat, and Mr. Everest was obliged to give up his pursuit, and wait patiently for ^{the} to-morrow.

That evening the inmates of the house in Astley Place, noticed an unusual bustle in the 'new neighbor's house,' as Eleanore's residence still continued to be called.

Hetty Templeton stationed herself at the window. Her curiosity was at fever heat.

"Another gentleman has gone in," she said, "there, that first one has come out—see how fast he walks. I wonder what is going on. Look Celia, the blinds are pulled up—now we can see right in the room."

Celia joined her sister. "Let us go up stairs," she said, "we can see plainer up there."

They reached the chamber window. "Oh, provoking," said Hetty, "the blinds are pulled down again."

"For the next half hour they saw nothing to reward them for their vigilant watch, but the time passed quickly in the various conjectures they were making, as to who and what such strange people could be.

At length the gentleman returned in evident haste, with a lady on his arm.

"That is Mrs. Mason," said Hetty. "I know it is."

"Oh, you can't tell at this distance," replied Celia, "it is too dark."

"Well, she walked just like her any how, and I'd bet my little finger it was ~~her~~ *she*."

All was quiet and still for another hour—then the chamber shutters were bowed—the two gentlemen passed out of the house together, remaining at the front of the steps some time in earnest conversation, then separated, one going back into the house, the other entered a few doors below. The sisters looked—it was the residence of Dr. Smith.

Morning came, and fluttering out upon the mild September air from the door and windows of the 'new neighbor's' house, were the sombre folds of crape—Death's insignia.

All uncharitable conjectures were hushed in sympathy, when, a few days afterwards, a coffin was borne out to the hearse in front—a female form clad in the deepest mourning followed, the heavy dark veil shrouding her face completely from view—but the droop of her head, her unsteady gait, expressing profound grief. The gentleman upon whose arm she leaned wore only the weeds of a common acquaintance. Another gentleman assisted a lady in ordinary dress into the same carriage, and then the door was closed upon them, the two gentlemen entered another carriage, and the solemn little train wound on.

The mortal remains of the excellent, the devoted mother-in-law, were borne to their last resting-place.

CHAPTER VI.

"Thus ever in the steps of grief,
Are sown the precious seeds of joy;
Each fount of Marah hath a leaf,
Whose healing balm we may employ."

MISS WOODBRIDGE.

AND now was Eleanore indeed desolate. For days she sat as if in a dream, dwelling constantly upon her mother's brief illness,—her sudden death. Every object awakened some memory of the love she had lost—every sigh of the autumn wind seemed a lament for the departed.

Bessie's account of her last walk in the Square awoke no interest—she scarcely seemed to hear it; and the faithful nurse, knowing not why so much secrecy had been enjoined upon her, feared that a discovery might lead to evil, and therefore took the child there no more.

October came, and before its departure Eleanore Moreland held to her heart another babe; and in this incentive to renewed effort, her mind acquired the healthful tone which grief and anxiety had threatened to destroy.

Purified by sorrow, sustained by faith, and animated by love, Eleanore's life now revealed a beautiful manifestation of that tranquility which always follows the soul's resolute efforts in the path of duty.

Mr. Mason had been very kind to Eleanore in her affliction. He had brought his wife with him the evening of Mrs. Moreland's death, and both of them had remained with her during that sorrowful night and for most of the time until the funeral. Eleanore's loneliness won Mrs. Mason's sympathy largely, and she continued to visit her frequently.

When Eleanore was able to be about the house again, she resumed her seat at the window, where through the partially bowed shutters she was often gladdened with a glimpse of her mother's serious face, as well as her sisters, who were always of an afternoon visible at the drawing-room windows. Sometimes she would see her father going in or coming out, and so strong were her yearnings towards them all, that had it not been for her husband's interdiction, she would have ventured any thing to obtain her father's forgiveness.

She noticed, too, the old gentleman who bustled about with great activity, and at length she recognised in him the uncle whom she had not seen for eight or ten years. She recalled the partiality that he had always shown to her, and she resolved that she would watch for an opportunity to entrust him with the secret of her residence. She had not long to wait.

A few days afterwards, Bessie, who was standing at another window, tapping on the pane to amuse Dora, espied the old gentleman on the steps. She immediately recognised him.

"Look there, Mrs. Moreland—that's the very man, ma'am, that took Dora from me in the Square, and fretted me so about her name," she said.

Mrs. Moreland looked out. "Is it possible that he has seen her? Why, Bessie, how came you not to tell me about it before?"

"I did tell you all about it, ma'am—it was the very day *she* died," and Bessie glanced up at the faithful portrait which hung opposite the bed. "That was the very day we met him. I could not tell you that night, but after all was over, and she was carried away from us, I told you; but I suppose your mind was so filled with her, you did not heed it;" and Bessie went on to relate the particulars. Just then a sudden gust of wind blew the shutters wide open—the blinds were drawn to

their utmost height, for the day was dark and cheerless. Mr. Everest was still standing opposite. He looked up—he recognised Dora's light curls, peculiar in their soft flaxen beauty, and he hurried down the flight of marble steps and was across the street in an instant. Day after day had he returned disappointed from the Square until it was closed, and now he was not to be thwarted again. Eleanore saw him cross the street—she heard the loud ring, and with a beating heart she hastened to meet him. Biddy was at the door, but there was no time for any questions to be asked or answered, for Mr. Everest espied Eleanore upon the stairs, and hurrying past without any regard to Biddy's indignation, he met his agitated niece and folded her in his arms.

No longer was Eleanore without an adviser and protector, to whom she could confide every sorrow of her life—every anxiety in her mind. Deeply did ~~Mr. Everest~~^{her uncle} sympathize with her in the absence of her husband, and in the bereavement she had experienced in the death of his mother.

He kept her secret also faithfully, and when questioned as to who the family were where he now paid such frequent visits, he invariably replied that they were old friends whom he had accidentally discovered, and who had reasons of their own for not wishing to be intruded upon by strangers. All further interrogations failed of eliciting more.

Most of Mr. Everest's time was now spent with Eleanore. Dora was very fond of him, and he would hold her for hours, amusing her with 'the fascinating fiction' of Mother Goose's melodies. Again, he would read to Eleanore while she busily plied her needle in the formation of pretty little articles of wearing apparel for the darling boy, in whose dark eyes she could already trace a resemblance to his father. At other times, when the weather was fine, he would take them out driving—Eleanore always keeping closely veiled for fear of

recognition. But now the winter, which had heretofore been unusually mild, set in with its stormy winds and its bitter cold. Mr. Everest insisted that the drawing-rooms below should be used, and he ordered furniture even more beautiful than that she had been accustomed to in her father's house. The arrangement of it diverted her mind for a time, but her sadness increased when she looked about upon the splendor which surrounded her, and thought how valueless it was without the presence of that dear one, in whom her happiness in life was centred.

She began to feel impatient for a letter—Christmas-day brought her one. Her spirits were unusually excited when she first found that her husband had reached Canton in safety, but the eagerly longed for epistle was perused with mingled emotions of grief and joy. There were many kind messages to the mother who was no more, mingled with the reiterated expressions of anxiety for her.

Great was the contrast between that Christmas and the one preceding, and keenly did Eleanore feel it. The fountains of grief were again unsealed, and it was days before she regained her wonted composure.

Another year flew round—slowly, it is true, to Eleanore, but unmarked by any important event. With very little irregularity she had continued to receive letters every month from her husband. Her uncle had taken up his abode entirely with her. Dora had grown very interesting, and the baby whom Eleanore had named Maurice, after her father, was a noble looking boy.

One day, it chanced that the hall door was left open by Bessie, who had gone to do an errand for herself, leaving Dora to Biddy's care. Biddy gave Dora a seat in the dining-room, and put the muffin-rings in her lap to amuse her, and then went in the kitchen, continuing her preparations for

dinner. The muffin-rings, bright as they were, were not attractive enough to Dora, and climbing down from her seat, she succeeded in slipping out of the front door before she was missed. Down the street she ran, calling after a woman just in front of her, whom she thought was Bessie. The woman turned and spoke, and Dora, frightened at the strange tones, burst into tears.

Mr. Bryan was passing—the child's face interested him, and making inquiries, he found she was lost.

"I live close by," he said to the woman, "and will take her into my house—my wife may know where she belongs, for she cannot have strayed far—her little hands are quite warm."

Lifting her in his arms, he crossed the street and entered his house with her. There was no one in the drawing-room. He wheeled a chair up close to the heater, and placed the still sobbing child in it, then rang for the servant and inquired for his wife.

"Mrs. Bryan and the young ladies have gone out shopping—they will not be home until two o'clock," Jarvis replied.

"Very well—I wish you to make some inquiries in the neighbourhood, and see if a child has been lost."

Mr. Bryan was left alone with Dora—he tried to pacify and soothe her; he brought some of the China toys that were scattered about on the tables; and easily diverted, the little Dora dried her eyes, and began to prattle with her usual cheerfulness.

Mr. Bryan looked upon her, and the sternness died from his face. Softening memories were working at his heart. Those fair curls, those deep blue eyes, with their long dark lashes, were not unfamiliar to him. Just such a head had he pillowed on his breast with a father's pride years ago. He lifted Dora in his arms, and held her tenderly to his breast—

he smoothed those soft ringlets, and she put up her mouth winningly for a kiss. Tears, so long strangers to Mr. Bryan's eyes, gathered in them as he pressed those dainty little lips. And his heart yearned for his lost daughter—his favorite, whose very rashness and wilfulness had been a part of himself. Not the first time was it that he thus yearned towards her; for often in the still watches of the nights that were past had he turned restlessly upon his couch, recalling the curse which pierced his heart like thorns, and which pride only forbade him to remove—for revenge had long since smouldered and died within his breast.

Dora raised her dimpled hand and brushed the tears from his cheeks.

"Don't you cry," she said, "you didn't run away and get lost from my mamma; but won't you come and help me find her?" and jumping down, she seized his hand between both of hers and tried to pull him from his seat.

"No, not yet; pretty soon we will go. Come, sit on my knee, and tell me all about your mamma—what is her name?"

"Mamma," answered Dora, "Mamma's name is *Mamma*."

"And what is papa's name," continued Mr. Bryan, in the hopes of gaining some clue, now that she was in a talkative mood; for she was too much frightened to answer any questions when he had first found her in the street.

A cloud passed over Dora's sunny countenance, as she answered, "Papa gone way off in a big ship;" then suddenly looking up with a smile, she added—"Won't you be my papa?"

"Yes, I will be your papa; but you must try to tell me where you live—don't you know what street you live in?"

"I don't live in the street—in a nice big house like this—Mamma and little bruzzer Mau-iss, and my Bessie, and—and

Uncle Evvy, and cross Biddy, that wouldn't help me play with the muffin-rings."

A sudden thought flashed through Mr. Bryan's mind, and the blood rushed to his face, throbbing in his temples painfully.

"No, it cannot be possible," and he shook his head thoughtfully. "Mau-iss!—that is very like Maurice—Uncle Evvy, too—it must be!" He looked earnestly in the child's face. She was frightened at his steady gaze—her little lips quivered, tears started from her eyes, "Dora want to go home," she sobbed. That name decided him.

"Yes, yes, my Eleanore's child!" he said. "I see through it all—Charles lives with them opposite. Fool that I was, that I did not mistrust before," and rising from his seat, he resolved to carry the child over.

He met Jarvis at the door, who had returned with Bessie. Dora flew to her. She seized the child and seemed almost frantic with joy to have her in her arms again.

"She belongs to the people opposite, where Mr. Everest lives," said Jarvis; "they were in a great way about her."

Mr. Bryan saw Dora depart reluctantly—and it was with a heavy heart that he caught the last glimpse of the sunny little face turned towards him. He went up to his room, and dropping the blinds watched for Eleanore with as eager a gaze as ever she had watched for him.

In the excitement which prevailed in the house before Dora was found, Eleanore had left open her chamber window, out of which she had leaned, looking up and down the street for the little truant. Mr. Bryan saw some one close this window, but the blinds were not dropped as usual, and in the light which streamed through an uncurtained window in the room beyond, he saw seated in a low chair with Dora in her lap, a form which he recognised at once as Eleanore's. He looked

steadily. For a time there was nothing but caresses and kisses; but at length Dora sat more quietly in her mother's lap, and he judged from her upturned face and the motions of her little hands that she was describing who and what she had seen. Then he saw Eleanore press her handkerchief to her eyes, and from the convulsive motion of her frame he knew that she was weeping bitterly. In that emotion he read that the affection he still bore for her was not without an answering glow in her breast. He could bear it no longer, and, forgetting pride and obstinacy, he hastened out of his house, and was soon under the same roof with his daughter.

He paced the long parlors to and fro while awaiting her coming. The door opened.

"Eleanore!"

"My father!"

They were the only words that were spoken for a long time. Mutual was the forgiveness that was at length asked and granted, and full to overflowing were the hearts of the reconciled father and daughter.

Eleanore would not let him go until she had taken him up to her chamber, and Dora at once claimed him as her papa, and climbed his knees; while even Maurice, who had always been shy, did not refuse to go to him, but nestled down upon his breast with that unaccountable preference which children sometimes manifest for a stranger.

It was thus Mr. Everest found them when he returned to dine. He was at first astounded, but he gradually comprehended the state of affairs; and rubbing his hands, he declared he never had enjoyed any thing so much in his whole life.

His active mind immediately planned an agreeable surprise for his sister and her daughters, and he proposed to Eleanore to make a tea-party and invite them over that evening.

It was all arranged. Mr. Bryan was to go home as though nothing had occurred. Mr. Everest was to follow and tell them of the loss of the child, of Mr. Bryan's finding it, of the mother's gratitude; and then he was to insist upon their all passing the evening and taking supper with him.

It was very well carried out, and no suspicions were excited, although Mr. Bryan was unusually considerate and gentle, and Mr. Everest's eyes rather more mischievous than usual.

Eleanore had given her father the particulars of her husband's absence, and a rapid sketch of her life, as it had been since, not forgetting Mr. Mason's and his wife's kindness to her.

That afternoon Mr. Bryan called upon the firm. Mr. Mason happened to be the only one in the counting-house. To him Mr. Bryan tendered his thanks for his kindness to his daughter, at the same time mentioning her loneliness and unhappiness in her husband's absence. He desired, if convenient, that another might be sent out to take his place, for he said that he wished his immediate return to take charge of the business which he had decided upon resigning into his hands.

Mr. Mason acquiesced, and a letter acquainting him with Mr. Bryan's wishes was immediately written, to be sent via Egypt, and Mr. Mason thought that if he returned the same way, he would be with them in about six months.

CHAPTER VII.

"Peace is more strong than war, and gentleness,
Where force were vain, makes conquests o'er the wave:
And love lives on and hath a power to bless,
When they who loved are hidden in the grave."—LOVELL.

It was evening, and the sisters were dressing.

"Edith what are you going to wear?" said Julia to her sister, who was busily arranging her profuse brown hair before the toilet mirror.

Edith turned around—"I don't know—Dame Margaret is going to look stately and grand in her new brocade. Shall we wear our gray silks?"

"I wish you wouldn't call me Dame," interrupted Margaret.

"Do let us have a little fun, Maggie, without looking so cross at us. I call you dame, just as I used to call Eleanore queen," and her fair white breast heaved with a sigh, as flinging back her long tresses she sunk down on an ottoman near, and resting her rounded chin in the palm of one hand, she supported her elbow with the other.

"Queen Eleanore!" she said musingly, "what would I not give if she ^{was} back amongst us again, with all her affectionate ways, and her resolute, perverse spirit! Father misses her too—he would give worlds to recall her, I know he would. Eleanore was just like him—so proud, and lofty and passionate. Now I am not proud, as they are, and yet I would be too proud to manifest the passion that I have seen in them. What a queer, contradictory thing human nature is! If ever I—"

"Come, Edith, do get up and dress—you are getting off

into a regular sermon, as usual," said Julia—but there were tears in her eyes, notwithstanding her merry, bantering tones—tears that her fondly loved sister's name never failed to call from their hiding place. Margaret, too, was saddened by the recollections which that name had awakened, and very quietly did they go on with their toilet.

"I think it seems so strange for all of us to go over," said Julia at length—"I wish mother would let me stay at home."

"She would be glad to stay herself," answered Margaret, "but Uncle Everest says we shall all go—he insists upon it, and mother says it won't do to cross him. For my part, I am glad of the chance. I always hate a mystery, and now we shall find out all about them. I never was so curious before."

"Oh, yes, you have been—a hundred times," replied Edith, "but I confess it never lasted so long, for you always contrived to find out in less time. Whoever these people are, they have kept their secret well."

nicely "I know they are ~~these~~ people, else I wouldn't go over," said Margaret. "Such a carriage of the head as that lady's I never saw, only on our Eleanore—she often makes me think of her, only she is a slighter figure, and not quite so stately."

"What if it should be Eleanore after all?" said Julia, eagerly.

"Oh, you are a goose—I have no patience with you?" replied Margaret; "you know that Eleanore married a poor man, and lives away up town somewhere. Hum! I wish she could afford to live in such a house. When I get married, girls, I'll show you a house that you won't be ashamed to come to."

"I shouldn't be ashamed to go to Eleanore's, wherever it was, if father would only let me, and I could find her out," said Edith.

"Nor I," echoed Julia.

"Nor I, as to the matter of that," added Margaret, "but I often feel vexed that Eleanore should have preferred poverty with almost a stranger, to wealth with us."

"Well, then, I don't," answered Edith; "it was just like Eleanore, and I would have done it myself. I don't believe in a heart that can fix itself only where there is affluence ~~and~~—catch me selling myself for gold! Julia, won't you fasten this bracelet—there, that will do; now let us go down to mother."

Mrs. Bryan was in the drawing-room. There her daughters joined her.

"Really, Charles," she said to her brother, "I do wish you would consent to two of the girls staying at home. Such an army as we shall make—we shall take them by storm; it does not seem respectable."

"Fiddle-de-dee!" you shall come, every soul of you. Here, you needn't wait for Maurice—he said he would be over after a while," and tucking his sister's arm under his own. Mr. Everest marshalled the way.

They crossed the street, and waited but a moment upon the steps before they were admitted. Up through the lofty, well-lighted hall, Mr. Everest piloted them to that mysterious chamber, the blinds of which had always been so carefully drawn. Margaret looked around eagerly.

"There is no Bluebeard here, after all," she whispered.

"It is the Fatima that I want to see," replied Edith. *the senior* Julia had paused before the mantel and was surveying Mrs. Moreland's portrait attentively.

"I have seen that face before—I am sure I have," she said at length.

Edith threw her hood and shawl upon the bed, and joined her sister—"So have I, why how strange it is!"

Mr. Everest looked blank—he was afraid his secret was be-

trayed. But no one could recall where or when they had seen those features, although all had a remembrance of them.

Mrs. Bryan sat down to take off her overshoes—her eyes fell upon a gold thimble that lay close beside her chair. She stooped and picked it up. It was set with turquoise—she remembered just such a one, and her heart beat quickly. She held it towards the light—there were the initials 'E. B.' Her hand dropped powerless at her side. She arose and went towards her brother, and in hoarse tones whispered—

"Charles, take me to my child—this suspense is cruel—cruel."

"Hush, hush," he said, placing his finger on her lips then turning to his nieces, who were busily talking in the opposite corner of the room, he added,

"I will be back in a few moments, girls; I have to take your mother down first."

"They went down to the parlor, where Eleanore was waiting—scarcely able to remain there, in her eager impatience. She heard her mother's voice—she could remain no longer, and she sprung to the door to meet her.

But too affecting was that interview for recital—even Mr. Everest, as much as he had anticipated it, was obliged to withdraw, and it took him considerable time in the entry to clear his throat, and his eyes too, before he ventured to go for his nieces.

He led them down—he threw open the parlor door. And now there were wild shouts and joyful cries, and for the next half hour nothing intelligible could be distinguished. It was—

"Eleanore, look here," and—

"Eleanore, do answer me," and—

"Eleanore, darling, don't mind the rest, do talk to me," and amidst them all, holding Eleanore's hand in hers, sat

Mrs. Bryan, tears rolling down her face, and too supremely happy for words.

At length came Mr. Bryan, and when the girls found that he was in the secret, they made their uncle give them a full account of everything.

Dora and Maurice were brought down from the nursery, but they would go to no one but grandpapa, and holding them both, Mr. Bryan looked as happy as a prince. Altogether it was as delightful a family party as Mr. Everest had anticipated.

"How it always does turn out that everything is for the best," said Edith. "Now if Bessie hadn't been careless, and left the door open, Dora wouldn't have been lost; and if she hadn't been lost, father couldn't have found her; and if he hadn't found her, you might have lived here till you died, and we not found you out."

"No, but I don't think everything happens for the best," answered Julia; "it would have been a great deal better if Eleanore had got married and lived at home with us, or had a house like this close by, and not been separated from us these long years."

"No, it wouldn't," said Mr. Everest, nodding his head emphatically, "no it wouldn't. Don't you see what an angel she has become? Egad! I believe I have grown better just living with her. It has been her trials that have been the making of her. I have watched her, and I know all about it. I tell you any man might be proud of such a wife, or such a daughter either—she is not like you, all froth and frivolity."

Eleanore had jumped up at the beginning of this speech, and tried to hold her hands over her uncle's mouth, but he imprisoned them in his while he continued.

"He don't mean it—he don't mean it," she said; he has told me often how dearly he loved you all."

"Yes, I do—I mean every word of it. You would have been

just so, if you had your own way, Eleanore, ~~and been permitted to do as you pleased~~. All the good in you would have been overgrown with weeds, and the noble, self-sacrificing elements of your character would never have been known. No, no—never say again, Julia, that everything is not for the best. The good God who watches over all, has driven your sister more closely to Him with storms, than He ever could have drawn her by sunshine.”

And thus in cheerful conversation the evening passed away.

Mrs. Bryan watched Eleanore with pride as she presided at the handsomely arrayed supper-table. The sisters pronounced everything perfect, from the silver equipage of the massive waiter, to the richly painted China plates, all presents from Uncle Everest, who had constituted Eleanore his housekeeper, that she might not feel as much delicacy in accepting his numerous and valuable gifts.

When the family left, at a late hour, Mr. Byran called Eleanore one side, to tell her that he had sent for her husband, and that probably it would not be more than six months before his return. Eleanore's heart was full of thankfulness—a thankfulness which she felt she could but feebly express in words.

The following June, as they had expected, Harry Moreland returned. As he held his wife to his heart, he wondered, as he had often done before, how ambition could ever have tempted him to leave her.

His joy was saddened by the recollection of the beloved mother he had lost; but a new fountain of affection was opened for the child that Eleanore had borne him in his absence. Dora, though, was his darling, for she was so strangely like her mother, that every look, every smile, attracted him more and more.

Uncle Everest, whom Harry could not help loving, yielded

to his and Eleanore's solicitations, and continued to make their house his home.

Mr. Bryan, as he had promised, resigned his business to his son-in-law, to whom he, as well as the other members of his family, became strongly attached. In less than a year, Harry took in as partner Edward Templeton, who had married Edith, and the new firm continued as successful as the old one had been.

Harry had the satisfaction of seeing his wife fill that station in society which she was so eminently calculated to adorn: but he acknowledged that more than all wealth was the ‘pearl beyond price,’ of which his treasured wife had taught him the value.

Eleanore never ceased to attribute to her mother-in-law the control which she had acquired over herself; for in her had she first seen the ‘beauty of a meek and quiet spirit.’ Her memory was revered and cherished and ‘kept green’ in her bosom; and that influence which had been exerted upon Eleanore was now, through her, made beneficial to the members of her own family. Thus was it that, although the mortal frame of the mother-in-law was mouldering in the dust, the spirit triumphed over death and the grave.

CONSTANCE LESTER;

OR,

Love vs. Gratitude.

CHAPTER I.

"A BEAUTIFUL creature! By Jove! a perfect Juno—no wonder you are so in love with her, Fred."

"Isn't she superb? isn't she magnificent? and then the mystery of her whereabouts, for though I have made every inquiry I cannot find out who she is, where she comes from, or whither she goes."

"And yet you say she passes here nearly every day at this hour?"

"Yes, as regular as clock work."

"Well, why don't you stroll carelessly up street after her? It would be the easiest thing in the world to follow her home."

"Ay, I tried that, and instead of finding it the 'easiest thing in the world,' I found it the rudest. I have several times followed her as far as Eleventh street—she always turns the corner there, and I have never had the face to go any farther."

"Better go back to the army, Fred, and get a little more courage—you were never in want of it there, if report speaks

true. But, joking apart, you don't deserve the love of the fair unknown, if you won't take a little trouble in the matter."

"Trouble! haven't I been to every bore of a party for the last six weeks in hopes of meeting her?"

"Well, if you were to meet her, and find out who she was, then the mystery would be over, and consequently you would lose all interest in her; for I have thought from the first, and think still, that the principal feature of her attractions to you, consists in her remaining incog, despite of your efforts to discover who she is."

"And you can say that coolly, after looking at her face this morning—after seeing the perfect grace of her every movement. Why, Harry, I tell you she is a queen—a goddess."

Henry Mortimer laughed heartily as he replied,

"Ah, Vincent, you are as romantic and enthusiastic as in your college love scrapes, and it will last quite as long, I fancy. Come, I am going up street—will you come along?"

"No, I have an engagement at one; it wants but half an hour of the time."

The friends parted. Mortimer walked up the street, and Lieutenant Vincent went into the reading-room of the hotel where they boarded.

The next day, at the same hour, they stood upon the steps again. The expression of Vincent's face was one of eager expectancy, while a calm looker on could not have failed to have noticed the arch twinkling of Mortimer's eyes.

"There—look, Harry, she is crossing the street. By Jupiter, what a step."

Mortimer placed his arm in Vincent's, and before he was aware of his friend's intention, they were strolling toward her.

They met. Mortimer lifted his hat—the salutation was

answered by a stately bow from the lady. In amazement Vincent turned to his friend.

"I know all you would ask," said Mortimer, laughing, "but don't get indignant, for I assure you upon my honor, I never saw your inamorato until yesterday. I was as much struck as yourself with her beauty; and astonished at your timidity, I determined to show you what one day could accomplish. Now I will give you the advantage of whatever I know, but at the same time I warn you fairly, that I shall follow up what I have learned."

"That is not fair," said Vincent.

"Every thing is fair in love, as well as in war," replied Mortimer, "it will only add interest to the thing, and we will both promise whatever turns up, to remain friends."

"I'll not agree to that," answered Vincent, indignantly.

"Why, Fred, the eyes of that splendid girl have blinded you, or you would see the reasonableness of the thing. Let us go back to my room, and we will talk the matter over calmly."

They entered Mortimer's cozily furnished room, and wheeling the lounge in front of the glowing grate, they sat down together.

"Now I won't tell you a thing, Vincent, until you look at it in a right light. Promise it shall not break our friendship, and I will manage an introduction for you—will tell you how I came by mine, and all about it. She *may* prefer you, she may me," and Mortimer cast a complacent look at the glass opposite, at the same time raising his thumb and finger to his dark moustache, which he gave an extra curl. "There is no accounting for tastes," he continued, "your figure is not quite equal to mine, and I suppose you would not generally be called as ~~good~~-looking," another extra curl, "but ~~then~~ the laurels you
good

have won, would probably, with a great many, counter-balance my personal attractions."

"In your humility you have forgotten your greatest attraction," said Vincent, in a half musing tone.

"What's that?"

"Your money."

"What the deuce has that got to do with it?"

"Why, some ladies would prefer a fool with a fortune, to a Socrates without one."

"Good," said Mortimer, as he burst into a hearty laugh, "I believe my soul, Fred, you have had some serious intentions, while I have only been planning a flirtation to amuse myself during the rest of the winter."

Vincent's eyes flashed, but he promptly answered, "I acknowledge that I am serious. I would marry that girl tonight if she would have me. I would trust every thing to such a face as hers."

Mortimer laughed louder than ever. "Why, Fred, she's a music-teacher," he found breath to say at last.

"And what if she is? I wish when you have finished that laugh you would tell me how you contrived to meet her so soon."

"Well, I'm ready now. You know I asked you to come up street with me—you couldn't come; that was your fault not mine. I looked out for the garnet merino, and counted a dozen at least. I quickened my walk, and at length espied one about a square ahead. It was the same velvet hat—the same cashmere—the same queenly step. I was near Tenth street then, and had walked myself into a fever. Gradually I fell into the same measured tread, and by the time we turned into Eleventh street I was quite cooled off. Well, on we went, she on one side of the street and I the other. We neared Clinton. Mrs. Foster's carriage was standing in front of her

door. The garnet merino was almost past—a moment's hesitation, and back it swept—up the marble steps into the vestibule, and in a moment more was beyond my vision. I walked a square below, crossed the street, walked back again, and rung the bell."

"Cool, I declare."

"Why so? I had been intending to call on Mrs. Foster ever since her invitation at Patterson's. She was evidently very glad to see me."

"I do not doubt it. This is Miss Foster's third winter out, I am told."

"Well, Miss Foster was not there, but her place was well filled by this superb beauty—pity she teaches music, it was quite a come down, I assure you. For a moment I thought I should not get an introduction, but I kept my eyes on Mrs. Foster inquiringly—she looked a little confused, but at length it came—in ten minutes more, thanks to my tact, we were in as animated a conversation as though we had known each other for years. She is as intelligent as she is beautiful. Mrs. Foster grew colder and colder. Miss Lester took the hint, and gracefully pleading an engagement, left, greatly to my disappointment, and to Mrs. Foster's relief. Then came the old story—the daughter of an acquaintance who had been reduced, and whom Mrs. Foster employed out of charity to practise with Miss Foster, and help her along with her music. It quite gave me the idea of taking music lessons myself—what say you, Fred?"

"Nonsense. All this don't bring you any nearer an acquaintance, nor me an introduction," said Vincent, moodily.

"Oh, leave that to me. It is the easiest thing in the world to call on Mrs. Foster again—tell her how much I was struck with that divinity—how fond I am of music, beg of her to make an evening—invite some half dozen amateurs, and to

wind up, I'll tell her that I will bring around a gallant lieutenant—she's death on lions."

"But will she consent? You noticed her reluctance and her coldness. Depend upon it, it won't be so easily managed."

"Never fear. She knows the fact of her being a teacher will counteract her other charms, and besides she will be too much flattered with such a request from me, to think of denying it."

"Well, I must give in, I suppose, as I cannot do any better," and Vincent cast his eyes upon the mirror. He need not have drawn so long a sigh, for there was that in his face which was far more attractive than the regularity of features which his friend possessed. His countenance was full of expression. His large and luminous gray eyes were shaded by dark lashes, long and silken as a woman's, but in nothing else was there aught effeminate about the face. The scornful curl of the well-turned lip might have led a physiognomist to have called him overbearing and cold-hearted, but never in human frame beat a warmer or more generous heart than Frederic Vincent's. Henry Mortimer's fortune was said to be immense, while that of Vincent was only moderate. He was some three or four years older than his companion, and so vain of his really fine appearance, that he forgot that there could be any attractions superior to those of mere personal beauty. He was so in love with himself that he had never lost his heart, and firmly believed its citadel unassailable. He had long ago concluded not to marry as long as he was so important a member of society. It was so delightful to him to receive the homage of the manoeuvring mammas, and to watch the increasing interest of their marriageable daughters, that he could not think of sacrificing it all while yet in the zenith of his glory. He had a vague anticipation of one day meeting a companion—some one who should increase his own import-

ance by her brilliant position in society; or one whose wealth added to his, should swell his income to such an extent that he should be able to boast the finest establishment in the city. Whether it should be the President's daughter, or the widow of some East India merchant, (*retired* in two senses of the word) he had not yet decided; but that he should prove irresistible to whoever he should conclude upon, he had not a doubt.

CHAPTER II.

It was not without some difficulty that Mortimer succeeded in persuading Mrs. Foster to arrange an evening for him to meet Miss Lester at her house. Mrs. Foster had sufficient penetration to discover that it was not for the sake of the music that he desired an invitation extended to the teacher; but the young hero carried the day, for heroes were a species of the lion not as common then as within the last few years. The evening was appointed, and greatly to Vincent's satisfaction it at length arrived. At an early hour he was introduced by Mortimer into the elegantly furnished and brilliantly lighted parlors of their hostess. She received them cordially and continued conversing with Mr. Vincent, while Mortimer hastened to renew his acquaintance with the beautiful Miss Lester, who was seated near the centre-table looking over a port-folio of engravings with her friend, Cornelia Foster. *Her friend* she had proved herself, for she still remained strongly attached to Miss Lester, notwithstanding the reverses which had estranged others from her.

To some remark of Mortimer's, Miss Lester replied with such a silvery laugh that Vincent turned toward them, and

the promised introduction was given. Miss Lester arose and extended her hand warmly.

"Why, Frederic, what an age since we have met."

"Miss Lester! Constance Lester! is it possible?"

"Why, '*is it possible*' that you did not remember *me*? I am sure I should never have forgotten you. You look almost exactly as you did years ago when we quarreled about our hoops, and I stole all your marbles." Another silvery laugh. Vincent was beside himself with pleasure—his heart seemed in his mouth, he did not know what to say, and said the very things he would have wished unsaid. He soon, however recovered his self-possession; and before the evening was over, he heard from Constance's own lips the tale of her father's misfortunes, his sudden death, the grief of the heart-broken mother who soon followed him, the bitter coldness of professed friends—he listened to it all, and he longed to clasp her to his breast, and tell her how doubly dear to him she was for her misfortunes.

"And where is your home now, Constance?"

"Not a very long walk from here, but oh, it is such a tiny little place, I am sure you could not find it."

"If you will let me try, we will see how long it will take me."

Constance laughed again, and Vincent thought of the 'noble throated nightingales.'

"Do you sing, Constance? But I need not ask you, for I am sure you do."

"Oh, yes, I am always singing at home, sometimes cheerful songs, sometimes sad ones—which shall I sing for you, for I see you are going to ask me?"

"Not exactly a sad one—only a little pensive," said Vincent, as he followed her to the piano.

Mortimer and Miss Foster soon stood beside them.

"You have selected a favorite air of mine, Miss Lester—will you allow me to accompany you?" said Mortimer.

"I should be delighted to have you," was Constance's reply.

Her execution was perfect—their voices harmonized well, and song after song was repeated before they left the fine-toned instrument.

"Do you not sing, Frederic?" Constance said, as she sat down on the lounge beside him in the back room.

"Sometimes, but not to-night."

"Well, you must sing for me the next time we meet, for I am extravagantly fond of music. What a perfect voice your friend has?"

"Yes—very fine."

"And a splendid figure—quite *distingué*, is he not?"

"Quite so."

"Have you known him long?"

"We were at college together."

"Is he a Philadelphian?"

"No, he is a Southerner, and very rich."

"Ah, fortune has favored him in more respects than one then."

"Yes, and I think likely will favor him still more."

"How so?"

"Time will show."

"And I suppose she may be as fickle as she has proved to others, and change her smiles to frowns."

"Possibly."

"How concise you are, Mr. Vincent—you haven't said any thing hardly except in monosyllables since we sat down here."

"And you, Constance, have not done any thing but ask me questions to which I could reply in no other way."

"And is it my fault then? Now you ask me some, and see if I do not give you longer answers."

"Very well, and to begin, how do you like Mr. Mortimer?"

"Exceedingly—he answers my ideal of a perfect gentleman—a noble man perhaps would better express my meaning. Now listen and don't interrupt me, for I am not half through yet. I will read you his character from his face—you must correct me if I read wrong. Energetic, proud, high-souled, capable of strong feelings, and of concealing them when occasion requires—disinterested—but I will stop for you are smiling—now I have told you some of the virtues, you must tell me the faults."

"Such a character as you have been describing could have none in your eyes—their very faults would become virtues in time. No, you have found your ideal I plainly see, and even if I could, I would not show you that it was moulded in clay."

Constance laughed carelessly, but the color deepened on her cheeks at her companion's steady gaze, and altogether her embarrassment increased so greatly, that not without some cause came the conviction to Vincent's heart that Mortimer would be preferred to him.

That night as they sat together over their wine in Mortimer's room, Vincent thawed somewhat from the icy silence in which he had indulged during his walk home from Mrs. Foster's, said to his companion,

"As might have been expected, Harry, *you* have proved to be the favorite—your conquests are quickly made."

"How now, Sir Frederic?—flattery is a new vein for you."

"But I am not flattering now; I wish there was less truth in it. Didn't you see how much at home Constance made herself with me? Confound it! I wish she had been more

distant and reserved, but she was just as she was five years ago. Sometimes when we were children and played together, I would coax her to make believe she was my little wife, but not a bit of it—she would ‘brother’ me though, until I was sick of the name of brother; and now things seem going on the same way again. Why, would you believe it, she talked more about you than any thing else, and there I had to sit and hear it all, wishing from my heart that you had never been born, so that there might have been some hope for me. Hang it, I believe the women are all alike—a handsome face, fine figure, &c., carries the day with them, and a sensible fellow like myself stands no chance.”

Mortimer laughed merrily at the serious air with which Vincent said this, but although he affected to ridicule the idea, it evidently made an impression upon him. So much of an one that, during the following week, he was emboldened to seek Constance in her own home; and she, unsuspecting and confiding, welcomed him as Frederic’s friend. When he repeated the call, Constance ventured to inquire after Mr. Vincent, and Mortimer prevented her from dreaming that Frederic was not aware of his visits by pleading his gayety, and added that “he intended to accompany him some evening, when he could break away from his numerous engagements.”

Thus weeks passed away, during which Mortimer visited Miss Lester frequently, and he never failed to give his friend a somewhat embellished account of each agreeable interview.

The irritation which Vincent felt at Constance’s supposed neglect, in not extending to him the invitation to call, which Mortimer had said that he received, increased daily. Too proud to seek her society again, he left the field uncontended to Mortimer, who made the best use of the advantage thus gained. More and more chagrined at his rival’s success, and at the failure of his own hopes, Vincent made preparations for

leaving the city. In vain he tried to find consolation in the thought that Constance was not what he had imagined her to be, but ever before him would rise a vision of her pure face, whose serene expression and soul-lit eyes seemed to defy him to dream that she was other than the noble-minded being that she seemed. Of late she had failed to pass the hotel, on the balcony of which Vincent always stationed himself at the usual hour of her passing, and this caused a suspicion that she had given up her teaching for Mortimer—perhaps was even betrothed to him. Then came a remembrance of the mockery with which Mortimer had always treated marriage:—of the merriment he had expressed at the idea of being in love with a music teacher; and he resolved to ask him before he left—to refer to that conversation, and ask him if his intentions were any more serious than they had been at that time.

He did so, and Mortimer candidly confessed that Constance was his idol, and that he would sacrifice his fortune rather than lose the hopes that he now had of one day making her his own.

It was enough, and with a heavy heart Vincent parted from his friend, and that night left the city for New York.

With assumed cheerfulness he had disguised his real feelings, and his last words to Mortimer had been, “well, Harry, I shall not see you again, I suppose, before I go to Europe—perhaps when I return I may bring such a pretty dark-eyed Italian wife back with me, as to make you regret your present choice.”

“No, Fred, the world has but one Constance,” replied Mortimer, and he grasped the hand he held tighter as he continued, “you do not know, my dear fellow, how infinitely obliged I shall ever be to you for the selection—good-bye, may you be as lucky as I trust I shall be.”

Vincent disengaged his hand hastily, and with a half suppressed exclamation of impatience threw himself into a corner of the carriage, and was whirled onward. ;

It was night, and the long rows of dazzling lights in the shop windows mocked him with their brilliancy. He covered his eyes with his hands, and desolate indeed were the feelings of the heart he looked in upon. He was alone in the world, and earnestly had he longed for the sympathies and love which he now felt were forever denied to him.

When love is crushed in youth, and the flame of hope has flickered and gone out ; in the dense darkness that follows, it seems impossible that it can ever again be re-lighted. The world is but a dreary waste, life, a blank—a void, and death a sweet repose from grief and trouble.

So thought Frederic Vincent as he leaned over the railing of the boat that night, and looked down into the deep, dark waters that glided so sullenly in their wake. There were wild feelings wrestling in his heart—temptations of evil that well-nigh conquered him in his loneliness and despair ; but there came memories of other days to save him from their power—memories of a time when he had not been so destitute of earthly ties—when a mother's love had blessed his pathway with its holy light ; and although that mother was now mouldering in the grave, her memory was strong to combat with the evil within. Calmly he raised his eyes from the night black waters, and as he lifted them to the heavens the pure rays of the stars fell upon him as a benediction. That night in Frederic Vincent's breast, the lesson of endurance was added to that of suffering.

CHAPTER III.

NOT in regularity of feature or brilliancy of complexion did Constance Lester's beauty alone consist. Attractive as were the faultless outlines of her face and figure, there was something far more so in the soul which looked out of her dark hazel eyes. It was the exceeding power of that soul that had so changed Mortimer from the gay and vain man of the world, to the devoted and idolizing lover.

Not because Constance was a music teacher had Mortimer hesitated in declaring himself, for over all pride and selfishness had love triumphed ; but there were fears in his heart which he scarce would acknowledge to himself, and he lingered on day after day watching for some look or word that should encourage his avowal. Several times had Constance shown more emotion at the mention of Vincent's name than it had been pleasant for Mortimer to see ; and when he parted from his friend it was with no regret, for now he thought he should be more certain of success.

Had Vincent known this, not so hastily would he have renounced his hopes of happiness, but truthful and single-minded as he was, it never entered his head to doubt his friend's representations. He had also been deceived at the embarrassment which Constance had shown, when he had spoken of Mortimer as her 'ideal.' Could he at that moment have seen into her heart how differently would he have judged. She was thinking of the ideal of her childhood, and when she met the glance of those never-to-be-forgotten eyes, which for so many years had only in dreams smiled upon her, what wonder that it brought the bright blood to her face, and caused the dark lashes of her eyes to sweep her crimsoned cheeks.

more heavily. But her heart was not open to his gaze, and how could he imagine that his face and not Mortimer's answered to that of the 'ideal' enshrined within its depths. Weeks rolled away, and she saw him not again, while Mortimer, ever kind and considerate, whiled away many evening hours with her, that else would have been sad and lonely.

Day after day she watched and waited for Vincent—that he would sometime surely accompany his friend she did not doubt—but she watched and waited in vain. At length Mortimer told her that he had left the city for Italy, and would probably return in the course of a year with his bride.

That night Constance wept herself to sleep, feeling as lonely and desolate as Vincent had done the night of his departure. It was with a heavy heart she arose the ensuing morning; and although the sky was cloudless, and the air soft and mild with the breath of approaching spring, she stood beside her open window unmindful of it all.

Mrs. Hunt, with whom Constance boarded, lived in the suburbs of the city in a small frame dwelling, which in summer time was not uninviting in its exterior, so thickly was it covered with the green and luxuriant vines that had been twined about the doorway and casements. She was a widow, and had nursed Mrs. Lester at Constance's birth, and also during her last illness. Her only son was at sea, and as she still followed her occupation, Constance, and Biddy the housemaid, had sole possession of the cottage during a great portion of the year. The parlor had been appropriated to Miss Lester since she had made one of the household, and here were her piano and sewing-chair, her work-table, and several other elegant souvenirs of her former home. The carpet was a ~~Brussels~~ Brussels, that had once covered her chamber floor, and the pictures and medallions that hung upon the walls had decorated the same room in her father's prosperous days.

That morning Constance prepared herself for her usual round of lessons, but she was not now obliged to leave home as early as formerly. Several of the families where she had been giving instruction had concluded to employ a professor—some for other reasons had declined, until she retained only a few pupils: most of them the daughters of those who had been personal friends of her parents.

As Constance closed the garden-gate after her, she saw Mrs. Foster alighting from her carriage a few rods below the house, and she hastened to welcome her. Mrs. Foster took her hand coldly.

"I have something to say to you, Constance—will you come back to the house again, or shall I be encroaching upon your time?"

"Certainly, I will return, but I hope you have no bad news. Is Cornelia well?"

"Perfectly so."

"And Mr. Foster, too?"

"Yes."

They reached the house, entered the parlor, and Mrs. Foster carefully closed the door.

"Constance," she said, and the tones of her voice were in no way calculated to dispel the mingled emotions of surprise and fear which Constance felt as she noted the mysterious air of her companion. "Constance, I was your mother's friend, and I think you have known me sufficiently not to doubt that the friendship which I felt for her has been continued to you."

"I have never doubted it," said Constance, earnestly.

"Nor will you, I trust now, when I request of you to receive Mr. Mortimer's visits no more. He is a man of the world, Constance, and had you thought for a moment you must have seen the imprudence of allowing him to come here so frequently.

I do not wish to pain you with the reports which your intimacy with him has given a foundation for; but as your friend, and your mother's friend, I request you to let that intimacy cease from this hour."

"What reports?" said Constance, and her eyes kindled as she spoke, "I desire to hear them all."

"Not from me, Constance. I have never given credence to them, nor will I repeat them. I have done my duty to you in warning you of them. You know the world is not proverbially charitable, and if you have been imprudent you have no one but yourself to censure."

"But how have I been imprudent, Mrs. Foster? What have I done?"

"Has he not frequently joined you at the Pattersons and the Wiltons, often leaving to walk home with you?—you cannot wonder that it should have been remarked by them. His character is known too well to doubt his motives in paying you the attention which he has; and if you would retain any of your pupils you will be obliged to receive his visits no longer. Cornelia tells me that he frequently passes his evenings here: how could you allow it, Constance?"

"Indeed—indeed, I never thought of its being wrong. He is so fond of music, and we have practised so much together, and I have so few friends. I cannot think his motives have been unworthy—he has never breathed a word of love to me."

"No, Constance, he has been cautious—he knew who he had to deal with. There is a dignity about you which would preserve you from any open insult; and he saw the first step with you must be to gain your confidence and affections."

Constance was so deeply humiliated at this new view of Mortimer's kindness and attentions that she could not answer.

Mrs. Foster continued, "have you not noticed that your pupils were falling off?"

"Yes, I have; but I never dreamed the cause. There was always some plausible excuse given. Can it be possible that this has been it? oh, mother! mother!" and bursting into tears, Constance covered her face with her hands and wept unrestrainedly.

Mrs. Foster was touched, and her manner was softened as she stooped over her and kissed her. "You must not give way so, Constance—these unkind reports will soon die away if you do your duty. Be resolute and see him no more, my child. I must go now. Cornelia is waiting for me to shop with her this morning—good bye."

"Do not think me ungrateful," answered Constance through her sobs, "for I do thank you, but it seems so cruel that—" she could say no more, and when the door closed upon Mrs. Foster, she buried her face in the pillows of the lounge, and for full an hour sobbed as she had never done since the day of her mother's burial.

Twice Biddy half opened the door and closed it again, saying, "poor young cratur," but the third time she found courage to enter. She stood close beside her before she spoke, but neither by word nor signs did Constance show that she knew of her presence.

"Its not the likes of me, Miss Lester, that can be giving yer comfort for yer sorrow, but it makes my heart sore to hear ye takin' on so; and if its about the jontleman, as I'm afraid it be, I would just say that its not him I'd be frettin' afther; for Ann, as lives at Mr. Roberts, just beyond the road there, was tellin' me only last night that the people do say 'tis for no good he comes here so often, and that—"

"Biddy, how dare you repeat this to me," said Constance, starting to her feet.

"Indade, ma'am, 't was only to comfort yer—I thought mebbe he'd been gettin' married, and you was grievin' afther

him. *I* never took on so but once in *my* life—oh, the men are wicked desavin' bastes, Miss Constance. I had my own heart's trouble with one of 'em, but God be blest, it was the first and the last one."

Constance dropped down in her chair, and rocking to and fro sought to control herself. She knew that Biddy had spoken from the kindness of her heart, but it was hard to bear. Encouraged by her silence, the garrulous girl talked on.

"Och, Patrick *was* a boy; he'd not his beat for size and strength in county Cork, where both of us was raised; and his eyes I am sure would have coaxed a potatoe from a pig any day, they were so winsome—then ye couldn't wonder that——"

Constance interrupted her, "Biddy, will you leave me," she said, gently, "I want to be alone to-day—never mind my dinner."

"Yes, ma'am; but don't fret any more. There's nothing worth yer while to cry so for, it takes the light out of yer eyes intirely;" and the good-natured Irish girl sighed in sympathy, as with a heart full of memories of 'Patrick' and 'green Erin,' she returned to her work.

Constance bolted her door that she might be safe from intrusion, and then resuming her seat, she recalled incident after incident of her acquaintance with Mortimer. There was nothing to justify the suspicion which Mrs. Foster had created. With the utmost respect and consideration had he ever treated her, until she had learned to look upon him as a brother, and now even this friendship was to be denied her. In musings and memories, the day wore on—once she slept, she knew not how long, but it was nightfall when a gentle knock upon her door aroused her. "What is it Biddy?" she said, as twice before, since she had bolted the door—receiving both times the answer, "take a cup of tea and a bit of toast, Miss Constance—

ye'll be the better of it." But now there was no sound save that of the rap repeated. She undid the bolt, and Mortimer stood in the entrance. For an instant not a word was spoken. Biddy crossed the narrow hall with a light, which she left upon the table in the darkened parlor. The rays fell full upon Constance's flushed face and dishevelled hair.

"I have intruded," said Mortimer, "but I will come no further without your permission."

Constance stood irresolute—her fine face now suffused with crimson, now blanched as the memories of the morning came over her, and again flushed with the warm tide of blood that swept up from her heart. Still she spoke not.

Mortimer's voice at length broke the silence, and its tones were deeper and more earnest than they had ever been before.

"You are in trouble, Miss Lester," he said, as he drew her to a seat. "If I could hope to deserve your confidence, the dearest wish of my life would be answered—I know my unworthiness of so great a treasure, but if you will give me a hope of one day winning you to be my wife, there is nothing that I would not endeavor to become for your sake."

Oh, these were dear words to Constance, but she answered them only with tears.

Mortimer ventured to clasp her hand—it remained passive between his own. Encouraged by this mute acknowledgement of confidence, he spoke tender and soothing words; and Constance at length told him all that Mrs. Foster had said, and the confirmation which Biddy had unwittingly given to the prevalence of the reports—of the agony of mind she had endured in consequence, and how she had thought that she could never again go out in the world to meet the cold and suspicious glances which she now felt would be her portion—how she had longed and prayed for death as her only relief; and Mortimer listened, and clasped the hand he still retained, still

closer, breathing such ardent words of love to the lonely orphan, that with a heart filled with gratitude she promised to be his.

With *gratitude*? Yes, I said aright. No wonder that in her desolation, Constance thought not of the difference between gratitude and love—that in the whirl of her emotions, she paused not to ask herself whether had it not been for the bitter trial of the morning, her consent could have been thus willingly given.

The words of love which he first breathed to her, I said were dear words; and very dear they were, for at a glance she saw how all suspicion could be crushed, and the scornful and averted looks which in imagination she had so trembled before, should be changed to those of envy; for she well knew that in the hearts where the first could find their origin, there would be room for the last to follow.

When Constance slept that night, she dreamed that she stood before the altar, but the arm she leaned upon and the hand she clasped, were not Mortimer's.

She awoke with the memory of the dream still strong upon her, and she asked herself whether in truth and wholly she had given her heart to the one to whom she had promised it.

A heavy sigh was the only answer.

"I am surely not so ungrateful," she said, at length, "as to turn from him for one who has so neglected me!—one who has even now gone to Europe for his bride! No, no, I am not so foolish, not so ungrateful." She went to her writing-desk, unlocking the drawer. From it she took a folded sheet of tissue paper and opening it, looked fondly down upon a pencilled head, and a short curl of dark crisp hair that lay within. Then she glanced toward the fire-place, as if she had thought of committing this one secret of her life to the flames, but she evidently had not the courage to see them so perish.

"I wonder if it would be so very wrong," she said, at length,

"to preserve these mementoes of childhood. No, I used to call him brother, and he shall be my brother still." Thus deceiving herself, she relaid them in the drawer and turned the key upon them.

That same morning, Mortimer called upon Mrs. Foster to communicate his engagement with Constance; and in another week it was the topic of conversation in the circles where Mortimer was known.

Constance Lester was suddenly remembered by many as a most attractive and beautiful creature—others who were personally disappointed, though she must have been very artful to have entrapped one who had escaped so many snares; and there was still another class who would have wagered any quantity of ~~old~~ kid gloves, that he would never marry her at all—not he, they knew him too well.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE came a letter to Constance—it bore a foreign post mark, and was directed in a strange hand. She opened it and read—

"MISS LESTER—

"Dear Madam—My mother writes me that your parents are dead, and that you are boarding with her. It must be a great change for you who used to live so elegantly. She also tells me that you are dependant upon your own exertions. I trust that now your father's kindness to me may be the means of rendering your life easier. When I was home from sea, three years ago, I told him of an opportunity that I had during my last voyage of making a handsome fortune, which I was obliged

to give up on account of a want of funds. Your father was kind enough to say that he had upon more than one occasion noticed my business tact as well as my integrity—I give you the very words, Miss Lester, not to praise myself, but to explain to you why he trusted me with so large a sum. You know I was in his counting-house several years, and when I first went to sea, I went as supercargo in one of his ships. Well, he spoke of my business tact, as I told you, and said that he would advance for me the requisite amount. He did so, I agreeing to share equally with him the profits. The venture turned up much better than I could have expected, and my first profits have been doubled by another successful speculation. I have bought the barque Haytie, and intend freighting her with a cargo that cannot fail to render me independent if we reach the United States safely. I enclose for you a one hundred and eighty pound note. I do not like to risk more by mail, but I shall probably be at home the last of next summer, and you shall then have yours made all right. It is but just that I should divide equally with you, for had it not been for your father's munificence and influence I should still have been a poor man.

Very respectfully yours,

EDWIN HUNT."

Constance held up the note and looked at it, as if she doubted its reality, and read over the letter as if she thought that so much good luck was impossible, and that it must be a hoax; but there it was, a genuine note on the bank of England—a soiled and crumpled letter, which in every line bore marks of its genuineness, and with tearful joy she folded it. As she arose, a small billet dropped at her feet. Without looking at the address, she broke the seal and read, "what has become of Mary, dear mother, that she writes to me no more? It is

two years since——" These words Constance's eyes glanced over before she had time to think that it was not designed for her. She looked at the outside. It was directed to Mrs. Hunt, and had been enclosed within her own. She knew it had been a long while since Mrs. Hunt had heard from her son, and that she had felt very anxious upon his account. So hurrying on her bonnet and shawl, she started immediately for the house where Mrs. Hunt was now engaged. She came down stairs to her, and Constance, explaining why she had broken the seal, placed the billet in her hands. Mrs. Hunt read it with much emotion. The last few lines she repeated aloud, "Miss Lester will tell you of my success. I am coming back a rich man, mother, and *you must not* go out nursing any more—you know I wanted you to give it up long ago. You must stay at home and get ready for me. I dream often of what a spot my home will be with you and Mary. God bless her, how surprised she will be to hear that her Edwin is rich. I did not want to write it to you, but to come home and tell you myself, but I had to explain to Miss Lester when I heard she had herself to support. I think she could not help liking Mary; and I hope you have brought them together."

Mrs. Hunt stopped reading. "A rich man he writes. Well, well, what will he care for it all, when he hears about Mary;" and Mrs. Hunt wiped the tears from her eyes, and sat down, while Constance read her own letter to her. Her eyes brightened once or twice during the reading of it, but when Constance finished, and closing the letter looked up into Mrs. Hunt's face, she saw that the good woman was nearly blinded with the tears that were now raining so thick and fast.

"I am sorry this good news seems to sadden you so," Constance ventured at length to say. "Who is this Mary that he speaks of? or is that a secret, Mrs. Hunt?"

"No, no; it has been one, but it cannot be much longer. She was as beautiful a creature, this Mary Winters, Miss Lester, as I ever saw; and I never expect to see her like again. My Edwin set his whole heart upon her when he was but a boy; and when they grew older she promised to marry him, although she told him that he seemed more like a brother than anything else to her. It is now more than a year since her parents have heard a word about her—they don't know whether she's dead or alive. She had a dashing beau after Edwin went to sea. He got to coming pretty often, and one night her father turned him out of the house, and rated Mary well for not loving my son better. She told her father that she never could marry Edwin, now that she knew what real love was; and he said she should. She seemed very sad and unhappy all the next week. At the end of that time she went away, leaving all her clothes and jewelry behind her; and her mother thinks she wandered off and drowned herself, but they never could know anything for certain; and I hadn't the heart to write the bad news to Edwin. Oh! it will be a heavy blow to him when he does hear it."

"Poor fellow!" said Constance, "how terrible it seems—do *you* think, Mrs. Hunt, that she drowned herself?"

"I don't know what to think. Mary was such a modest, lovely girl, I cannot judge her wrong; but I greatly fear that not loving Edwin rightly, she was persuaded away from her home by some one whose love was not as honest as was my son's. He would have made her happy—Edwin would, for he loved the very ground she trod upon. But I can't find it in my heart to blame Mary over-much—still she should not have promised to be Edwin's wife, if she did not love him well enough. *There* was where she did wrong. If he had never had the promise of being a husband to her, her loss would not break his heart, as I am sure it will now. Ah,

Miss Lester, such promises should not be lightly made, but when once made, they should be kept *forever*."

Constance remembered those words long after they were spoken.

CHAPTER V.

THE Fosters were going to Saratoga for the summer. Constance had concluded to accept their invitation and accompany them. Of course Mr. Mortimer was of the party. Their marriage was to take place in October, immediately after which they were to sail for Europe.

Mortimer had received a letter from Vincent, saying that he had changed his plans, and had concluded to travel over the northern portions of the United States. Mortimer wrote in return, of his engagement to Constance, and invited Vincent to be present at their wedding in October. Then the correspondence dropped, and in Mortimer's increasing happiness, his friend was nearly forgotten.

They reached Saratoga the last of June, and were all comfortably settled at the United States Hotel, for the crowd which throng this place in the latter part of the season had not yet arrived. Mortimer was delighted with the admiration which Constance everywhere elicited, and gratified to see that the universal homage which she received, in no way excited or changed her. A month glided away as pleasantly as time must ever glide to the light-hearted in that lovely place.

Thus Constance wrote in her journal at the end of that month.

"Thursday night. Never was I so greatly astonished at the quiet beauty of any spot as at that of this much abused

watering-place. In such condemnatory terms had I heard it consigned to fashion and folly, that I expected to see nothing but huge hotels, bevys of languishing belles, and flocks of moustached foreigners. I find to my great surprise a lovely, rural town, with many large hotels, to be sure, but the most of them having such delightful grounds that you can be free forever, if you choose, from the throngs of fashionables that crowd the parlors and the promenades. We have nightly the most delicious music, and these moonlight evenings are glorious. My room is on the ground floor, and last night, as I sat alone by my window, a gentleman repeatedly passed me. The roof of the piazza and the grand old trees kept the moonlight from his face, but there was something about him so like Frederic that I could not keep my eyes from following him. Of course it could not have been he—he must have been in Europe long before this. Why do I still think so much about him? How wrong it is—three more months and I shall be Mrs. Mortimer. God forgive me, but as the time draws near I feel as though I never could be his wife. Poor Mary Winters! I wish for Edwin Hunt's sake I could know what became of her. His mother thinks he would have made her happy, but that could never be if she had not the love for him which a wife should have. Yet, he was so fond of her, she should have been true to him. What am I writing? my own condemnation! How ungrateful of me to feel toward Harry as I do. He is so generous, so truthful, and so fond of me. Sometimes I think I will tell him the whole—that I feel the most unbounded gratitude to him, but that it will not ripen into love. Then I remember Mrs. Hunt's words so solemnly spoken, 'ah, Miss Lester, such promises should not be lightly made, but when once made they should be kept *forever*.' She little thought that I needed such a charge.

"Monday night.—I have seen Frederic. How he has

changed! he is pale as if recovering from sickness, but his eyes! they are the same; they must have read my very soul: there was no disguising it from such a glance. Oh, my brother, my—

"Poor Mary Winters! poor Constance Lester! To-night I wonder which is the most unhappy.

"Wednesday night.—Vincent's room must be near mine. He walks past the window during the evening constantly. He does not seem to know that I am so near. Last night I refused to go to the ball; Harry was so disappointed; he had set his heart upon having me 'the cynosure,' he said. I wonder if he would love me if I were not beautiful. Ah, I will not doubt him—did he not woo me in poverty and neglect? Generous heart, I am the unworthy one. I plead a headache; but oh, my heart ached worse. I sat beside my open window all the evening—so near was Frederic to me at times that I could even hear his sighs. He is unhappy. Perhaps he has been disappointed—that Italian lady may have refused him, and if it were so. What folly am I writing? Enough.

"Monday night.—A week ago I was first sure that Frederic was here. Harry does not seem to know it yet—his room is up stairs in the opposite wing. Frederic's I have discovered to be the last one on this side—he seems to keep it all day, coming out only in the evening. What a restless spirit he then appears to have—he walks this piazza constantly. Cornelia tells me that they all think I am acting very strangely: perhaps I do stay too much in my room in the evening; but it is to save Harry the pain of seeing that my thoughts are not of him, and—but no, I will not write it.

"Was ever woman as foolish as myself? turning from one who idolizes me for another who has neglected me—one who would even scorn me if he knew all; but is he not my brother? I am sure never sister loved more ardently than I. My head

burns and throbs to-night—I will walk in the grounds; the cool air may relieve me.”

And Constance did walk in the grounds—but not alone; for as she left the piazza, one who well knew her form and step followed her timidly at first; but gathering courage, until at length in a spot the most remote from the glare and bustle of the hotel, he whispered her name. She turned and saw Vincent. It was an embarrassing moment to both of them. Constance extended her hand.

“My brother!”

“Brother still. I would I never had heard the sound of that word:—what am I saying? forgive me, Constance, I should be thankful for it, and I am. I must not forget to congratulate you, you deserve to be happy—you are of course. Harry is a splendid fellow.”

“He is a noble man, Frederic. As you say, I ought to be happy.”

“No, I did not say *ought*, I said you were of course.”

Constance sighed—Vincent answered it.

“You have been sick, Frederic.”

“Yes, my physician thought at one time that I should not recover. I wish I never had.”

“Frederic, how changed you are. You must have had some serious trouble, some great disappointment.”

“You say rightly, I have.”

“And will you not let me be a sister to you; and give me your confidence as such, my brother?”

“If I had never heard that word ‘*brother*’ from you, Constance, I might have been a happier man. A *sister’s love* was not what my heart craved from you, and therein lies my disappointment.”

Constance trembled at these words—these earnestly spoken

words that had come *too late*. It was the full knowledge of this that now caused her violent emotion.

“Forgive me, Constance; I have pierced your gentle heart, with words that should not have been spoken—forgive me, and you shall not be so troubled again. Let me feel that I have not forfeited your regard, and I will endure my disappointment without another complaint. Am I forgiven?”

Constance extended her hand, but she dared not trust her voice to words.

“Will you not say with your lips that you forgive me, Constance?”

“You need no forgiveness—you wrong no one; but *I*, oh! how greatly am *I* to blame.”

“That cannot be, Constance. You could not help it that you loved Harry, brilliant as he is, better than myself, I have not a shadow of blame for you in my wretchedness. But could I have been worthy of your love, earth would have been a heaven to me where ’t is now but a wilderness.”

No wonder that Constance’s head grew dizzy, that the hand which Vincent still retained with a brother’s privilege, became chilled like ice. Vincent noticed it.

“You are ill, Constance. Shall I take you back to the house?”

“No, no, do not take me to *him*. I could not endure to see him to-night. Oh! Frederic, if I dared to tell you that I too was wretched, that Harry has my sincere respect and gratitude, but not my love; would you hate me? would you spurn me from you as unworthy of your noble friend? You must—I know it would be so.”

“Never, Constance; but this cannot be. Why did you engage yourself to him? Why did you so neglect me?”

“Neglect you! that reproach I do not deserve, although the first question you may well ask. Neglected *by* you—slandered

by the few I had known—Harry, alone my friend, I promised to be to him all that he could ask. I had no one else to turn to, and he had been so kind. Do not blame me now, it would be more than I could bear ;” and Constance clasped her hands to her head, which now throbbed with redoubled power.

Vincent drew her to a seat, and sitting down beside her, heard from her own lips the history of her life as it had been since Mortimer first met her. Sometimes he was obliged to question to comprehend more fully, but at length he saw the double part which Mortimer had played towards him. Constance could not be convinced that it had been intentional, but Vincent knew Mortimer but too well. He knew that no deceit was too low for him to stoop to—no stratagem too mean for him to devise, where a woman’s heart was the stake he played for; and Vincent now only wondered that he should ever have been serious in his attentions to Constance. He would not have wondered though, could he have known the intensity of Mortimer’s feelings for his betrothed. Truly and passionately did he love her—even the coldness of manner which she could not avoid showing him of late, had but kindled his affections to a more fervent heat. He idolized her, anticipating every desire, watching every opportunity of paying her the most delicate attentions, until Constance had hated herself that she could not return such love. She would not now believe that he had intentionally deceived his friend, nor would she allow Vincent to seek him for the purpose of demanding an explanation.

“For my sake,” she had said, “promise me that on no account will you approach him. I will confess everything, and noble-hearted and generous as he is, he will release me at the expense of his own happiness.”

Vincent had promised, and the promise had been sealed

with such a kiss, that, loth as he had been to give his word, he was satisfied. It was a kiss to dream about—to remember in after days, and well was it remembered by another than these two, whose hearts still thrilled so fondly. One moment was Constance held to Vincent’s heart, another, and he had gone. She was alone upon the garden-seat, alone and very wretched, notwithstanding Vincent’s confessed love. She thought of Mary Winters, of Mrs. Hunt’s honest words, of the pain she should give the heart she still believed noble, and she wept. She started, for the sound of suppressed breathing fell upon her ears; she turned her head in the direction from which it came. At that instant a servant crossed the grounds with a light, and the rays flashed upon a face close beside her own. It was Mortimer’s, but so contorted with passion that she could hardly believe it his. She would have screamed, but he grasped her arm, and the touch paralyzed her. He spoke, but although his teeth were set, the words hissed through them painfully plain.

“You trusted to my generosity—you pitied me—yes, you even wept for me; but know, Constance Lester, that all the tears in the world should never melt me—you *shall be mine*.”

Constance raised her hands in supplication.

“You need not plead. I tell you nothing shall deprive me of you. No, were the powers of heaven and hell leagued together against me, I would traverse the earth, but I would find means to hide you from them. *Mine, mine* you are: let Vincent *dare* say otherwise, and I will shoot him like a dog. Aye, don’t shudder so, and clasp your pretty hands so closely; he is in no danger so long as you are true to me, and to your own free will promise; but give such another kiss as these trees witnessed a few moments since, and he shall never live to repeat it. You have turned my heart to flame, complain not if its heat scorch you now.”

In the wildness of his passion, he sought, for the first time, to clasp her to him, but she struggled to disengage herself.

"My God, Constance! what have I done to you to deserve this? I who so gloried in you!—who loved you as never woman was loved! Flame I said," and he struck his breast with his clenched hand, "no, no, there is nought but ashes. Not from you—not from you, Constance, did I deserve this."

Constance was more agonized by these reproaches than she had been by his threats. She had not been true to herself, and bitter were the fruits she was now reaping.

The next morning, Mr. Mortimer, with Cornelia and Constance, left Saratoga. Constance had not seen Vincent again. He missed her, and inquiring of Mrs. Foster, found they had gone to Niagara. There he followed them, but his search was unsuccessful. Their names were not registered at any of the hotels; and after waiting a week, Vincent returned to Saratoga, hoping to hear from the Fosters where he could now find them. Mrs. Foster gave him a note, which had been enclosed in a letter to her. It was dated Trenton Falls, and read thus—

"FREDERIC—We have parted *for ever*. I request you never to seek me again, unless you wish to make my life utterly miserable. I would have you forget, as I shall strive to forget all that passed between us in the grounds that night. I wish we had never met, for I fear that although I now plead with you so earnestly you will violate my wishes, and render my whole life a curse by again seeking me. You peril your life and mine by doing so. For my sake listen to me—my life will be bearable will you but avoid me. Go to Europe—go to the farthest ends of the earth, so that we but never meet again. Remember your promise—it was made in the

sight of God, and never, I implore of you, never dare to break it.

"CONSTANCE."

Vincent left Saratoga immediately for Trenton Falls. They were no longer there. Disappointed and discouraged, he returned to Philadelphia to await their return. Here, overcome by the excitement of the last two weeks, he had a relapse of the fever which was even more dangerous than the first attack.

CHAPTER VI.

On the distant hill sides, and by the winding river's brink, Autumn had pitched his tents. Through a golden haze the morning sun glanced down upon a mingled mass of bright and glorious hues. Canopies of dark brown, and deepest orange, of purple and mottled green, of crimson and gold, loomed up wherever the eye might chance to rest; but gorgeous as is ever the sight, Autumn's tents are peopled with pale and melancholy visions of the past. As if in mockery, he scatters his brilliant signal flags and pennons, for, with his unchanged solemn mien, he moves along, swelling his train with sad memories even from the hearts of the mirthful.

One there was who looked upon this more than regal splendor, and marked the visions of her blighted hopes, her perished joys, pass one by one.

The day of Constance Lester's bridal was fast approaching. Mortimer had relapsed into his usual manner, all tenderness and devotion, but it could not erase from Constance's mind the fearful memory of that night of passion. Vincent she

saw no more; and she rejoiced, for she well knew that Mortimer's threats had not been idle words.

Edwin Hunt had returned from sea. He had immediately settled upon Constance, the sum which rightfully belonged to her, she positively refusing to receive more. Constance had seen him but once, as her home was now with the Fosters. He had then seemed stern and morose—very different from the idea she had formed of him; but Mrs. Hunt told her that he had not been the same since he had heard of Mary's disappearance. It seemed to turn him to stone, she said: and she grieved that she saw so little of him, for he was out all day, and often till late in the night.

The last day of the month, Constance had fixed upon for her wedding, and as she was firm in refusing that it should take place at an earlier day, Mortimer was obliged to yield.

The Fosters and Mrs. Hunt were the only persons whom Constance would allow to be present at the ceremony.

One day, wearied with her preparations, and sick at heart of the gay apparel that was scattered around her room, Constance resolved to escape from it all and pass the afternoon at the old cottage.

She found Mrs. Hunt at home anxiously watching for her son, who had left the house the previous morning, and had not yet returned.

Constance's haggard face alarmed her, and she questioned her if she were well, but Constance evaded the answer.

"Poor child," said Mrs. Hunt, "I have been so wrapped in my own troubles, that I have not noticed you before. You must be sick, I am sure."

"No, only sick of life—but I ought not to have said that. Indeed, Mrs. Hunt, you must not ask me any more."

"But I must, my child. I cannot see you suffering and not ask you to tell me the cause. I might, humble as I am,

be of use to you, Miss Lester—if you are in trouble, tell me what it is."

"No, you would only blame me. I alone have brought it upon myself, and I must bear it alone."

"Not alone, Miss Lester: there is *one* ever ready to bear our burdens for us—mine were long ago too heavy for me to bear alone; but blessed be God when the clouds were the thickest, His strong hand was stretched out to help me, and His love made the dark places light as day. Look to the Saviour, my child, put your trust in him, and your troubles will vanish like the clouds of the morning. Your mother was a pious woman, Miss Lester, and it has been my nightly prayer since she was laid in the grave, that you might follow in her footsteps. It is such as you that make religion beautiful to the world, and oh! you need it—you need it—the heart is desolate without religion."

The mention of her mother's name brought the tears to Constance's eyes—her heart was softened by this 'resurrection of its buried memories,' and with a faltering voice she poured out her troubles to the sympathizing Mrs. Hunt. She sought not to conceal or palliate her error, for now she could plainly see that because she had not courage to meet the sneers of the world, had she promised her hand where her heart was wanting.

Mrs. Hunt in her amazement scarcely knew what to say or how to advise.

"And you are then determined to keep your faith?" she said, at last.

"I can do nothing else; if knowing that my heart is not his, he still claims the fulfilment of my promise, there is nothing left for me to do but make the sacrifice and die."

"My child, death comes not so easy. Are you prepared for a long life of *continued* sacrifices? I beg of you, Miss

Lester, refuse to be his wife—no imagining can equal the anguish that you will otherwise have to endure.”

“I cannot—I dare not—Frederic’s life would then be the forfeit. No, no, let us talk no more about it—nothing can save me now.”

There was a grinding step upon the narrow gravelled walk, and flinging open the cottage door, Edwin Hunt stood before them. His eyes were blood-shot, and his long hair hung dishevelled about his face. His beard had been suffered to grow untrimmed, until poor Mrs. Hunt could scarce recognise in the careless and morose man, her once neat and merry-hearted son.

“I have seen her, mother—I have seen her,” he said, unmindful of Miss Lester’s presence, “oh, my God! I have seen the wreck of my Mary, and she is lost to me for ever.” He threw himself into the nearest chair, and bowing his head to his hands, he sobbed like a child.

“Edwin, Miss Lester is here,” said his mother, rising, and laying her hand upon his shoulder.

“Then Miss Lester may weep with me,” said Edwin, lifting his head and fixing his eyes steadily upon her, “Miss Lester may weep with me, for the man she is so soon to marry, was my Mary’s destroyer. For your sake, Miss Lester, I have spared him:—with the memory of the kindness which your father showed me, I could not render his daughter’s life wretched. I spared him! but oh, it was a bitter struggle.”

Mrs. Hunt fixed her mild eyes rebukingly upon her son, and in solemn tones repeated this passage of Scripture, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.’

“Yes, mother, I know; but I would that he could answer to me, before he stood at God’s tribunal.”

Constance had started to her feet, her face was ashy pale. For an instant a gleam of hope shot from her eyes—the next

moment she could have hated herself that she had thought of escape in such a way. Fourfold her sufferings were now increased. She pressed her hands convulsively to her breast, as though she would still its painful throbbings. With that man was her fate linked for ever? Was there no way of escape? None, and overcome with the horrible thought, a faintness came over her, and she fell to the floor.

CHAPTER VII.

AT noon of the day following the one wherein occurred the events of the preceding chapter, a young man weak and greatly emaciated, alighted from a hack that stood in front of a neat two story house in a retired street of the city, and with feeble gait ascended the steps and rang.

To his inquiry if Mrs. Rivers was in, the housemaid ushered him into a small sitting-room, where a lady and a child were the only occupants.

The lady was of slight stature, and of that wonderful, almost spiritual beauty which is so rarely seen. Her fair hair was drawn off from her low, transparent forehead, and simply banded about her exquisitely shaped head. Her eyes were of the softest, deepest blue—you could not look at them without thinking of spring violets. As she sat bending over her work, the babe sleeping in her lap, it was so beautiful a picture that it was no wonder that the young man paused, holding his breath, as if almost in fear that the vision should vanish. Another moment and she had glanced at the doorway.

“Have you forgotten me, Mary?” said the young man.

She looked steadily at him—her crimson lips parted, and a deep glow burned on either cheek.

"It is Mr. Vincent, is it not? I am sorry to see you so much changed. Ellen, bring in the easy chair—Mr. Vincent needs it, I am sure."

Frederic Vincent, for it was he, did not refuse the seat; for in his weak state he was almost overcome with the exertion he had made.

"I have come to you, Mary, on a painful errand," he said, "but——" he paused, as if hesitating to speak the words which he knew would cause so much grief.

Mary anticipated him. "I know, Mr. Vincent, what you would say. Harry has ceased to love me; and would desert me, would I but sign the paper which he has so often of late endeavored to force me to do."

"Worse than that, Mary. He is to be married to another, this month."

"No, no, Mr. Vincent; you do him injustice—he cannot, he dare not do that."

"I would not jest with you, poor child, it is the truth."

"But how dare he, Mr. Vincent? I will never suffer that. *You know I am his wife.*"

"I never doubted it, Mary; and it is this that I came to see you about. If we could only prove it. I was not in the city at the time, but you told me all about it when I came to you on that horrible errand. Let me see, he hired some low fellow to personate an alderman, if I remember—before the night arrived, the man was conveyed drunk to an alderman's office; here he disclosed the secret, and the alderman came himself in *propria persona*, married you, gave the certificate in your keeping, and then taking Mortimer one side, told him to make the best of his marriage, for it was a bona fide one. Mortimer concealed his chagrin from you, thinking you knew

nothing of his intentions. Suddenly the alderman died, and he then went to you, obtained the certificate and destroyed it, telling you that it was a false marriage, and that there was now no proof of it in existence. Am I right?"

"Yes," answered Mary, and her eyelids drooped until the thick lashes rested on her burning cheeks.

"Then proof is impossible. Oh, I would give worlds, if I had them, to recall that certificate." He spoke so earnestly, and there was such misery expressed in his countenance, that Mary was touched by it.

"If I only knew you were my friend, Mr. Vincent," she said, "*if I only knew.* Forgive me, for I have learned to mistrust every one."

"Mary!" said Vincent, reproachfully, "did I not prove myself your friend when Mortimer sent me to you on that shameful errand, the memory of which even to this day makes me indignant. I promised then to be a brother to you, and had I known that you were living, you should not have been thus long neglected. I sought you at your boarding-place—you were not there. I inquired of Mortimer, and he dared to tell me that you were dead. It was scarce a week ago that my physician accidentally spoke of one of his patients in such a way, that I was convinced it must be you, for I never saw any one like you, Mary. He called you Mrs. Rivers. I made inquiries and was satisfied, and the first moment that I was able to walk across my room, I came to you. You must not doubt my friendship—we have both suffered through Mortimer. The one he is going to wed would be mine if it were not for him. I shall go to her from here, and tell her your history; she cannot then persist in the mistaken notions of duty which he is now forcing her to carry out."

"Mary arose, laid her sleeping infant in the cradle, and left the room without speaking. The child was the image of Mortimer, and as Vincent looked at it, he wondered at th

cruel heart that could desert two such lovely beings as were Mary and her babe.

When she returned, she placed in Vincent's hand a folded paper—he opened it, while she stood silently watching the play of his countenance as he read. There was cause for the joy that she there saw expressed, for the paper contained a full account of the scheme which the good alderman had discovered, with his name signed to it, and that of the man whom Mortimer had bribed. Underneath was a duplicate of the marriage certificate properly attested, and Vincent saw at a glance that Constance was saved.

The alderman had drawn up the paper with a shrewd suspicion that Mortimer might seek to destroy the certificate, and had given it to Mary with the charge never to part with it. Shocked at the discovery of the fraud which her husband had sought to practise upon her, and yet loving him too well to yield him up, she had been satisfied to live only for him, and so the fond wife died to the world, and with a devotion of which its object was unworthy, she had striven day after day to bind him to her with bonds which he should not seek to break. The only proof of her marriage had long rested in a sealed envelope directed to her father, that in case of her death, he might know that her life had not been one of sin.

Vincent's first proposition to Mary, after giving vent to his joy in words, was that he should seek her parents, and exhibit to them the paper which could not fail of giving them the happiness they had so long been strangers to. Mary had been so accustomed to fear Mortimer, that she hesitated in giving her consent, lest it should call down his anger anew upon her; but Vincent explained that steps must be immediately taken to make Mortimer's marriage with her public; and that her father was the most proper person to move first in the matter.

Mary yielded a tearful consent; but it was with a heavy

heart that she saw Vincent leave. She could not quiet the forebodings of evil that cast their shadows upon her heart.

Vincent reached Mr. Winters' house, and was surprised to find that he knew the residence of his daughter. In a few words Mr. Winters told Vincent that Edwin Hunt had traced Mortimer as the one who had visited Mary after his departure. Day and night had he dogged his steps, and at length had seen him enter this house. In the neighborhood he then stationed himself until he had seen Mary at the window with her child in her arms; but neither Hunt nor Mr. Winters had dared to hope that there had ever been even the mockery of a marriage.

Mr. Winters accompanied Vincent in his carriage to Edwin Hunt's. The paper was shown him, but very different was the effect upon him from what it had been on either of the others. His eyes flashed. "Villain! he said, "God keep my hands from blood! but I could tear his heart out." He paced the floor rapidly, his broad chest heaved quick and strong, and his nostrils dilated in the excess of his passion. When the first violence of his feelings subsided, he rejoiced with the father that Mary had not been the guilty creature they had feared she was; and then as calmer thoughts took possession of him, he exulted in the idea that Mortimer would now be made to feel in the loss of Constance, a part of the agony which had been his portion. Enough had his mother told him the previous day with regard to Constance, to convince him that it was no willing heart she could bring to the altar; and he saw that upon Mortimer would the blow alone fall.

Before they separated, it was decided that upon the following morning Mr. Winters should call upon Mortimer, and acquaint him with his knowledge of the marriage, and of the existence of proof. But not till morning could Edwin wait.

That night when Mortimer went to his room after supper, he found a stranger awaiting him there. The servant retired and left them together. What then passed between them was never known. At length a violent and repeated ringing of his bell, caused several of his servants to rush to his room. The stranger stood with his hand on the bell-rope, and Mortimer was stretched prone upon the floor, the blood gushing from his mouth and nostrils. A physician was immediately summoned, and Mortimer was found to have ruptured a large blood-vessel. The hemorrhage was so profuse, and the attack altogether so severe, that the physician desired if his patient had any friends they might be immediately sent for.

"I will go for his wife," said Edwin Hunt, and he jumped into a carriage, ordering the coachman to drive to J—— street.

It might have been an hour afterwards that the carriage returned. Edwin with the most tender care assisted the fragile young creature to her husband's apartment. She was just in time, for Mortimer had been conscious for the last few moments. His eyes were closed, but as Mary's sobs fell upon his ear, he moved his hand restlessly until she clasped it within her own. He essayed to speak, but his voice was so feeble that Mary bent her head lower before she could catch the words—"my wife, forgive me." Her kisses and her hot tears were the only answer.

These words atoned for all his neglect and deceit—for all the wrong he had sought to do her. To her woman's heart he was dearer than ever, and she pictured to herself days of happiness that might yet be in store for herself and her child.

The morning came, and she was a widow.

Once more Mary Mortimer's parents held her to their hearts, but their love, precious as it was to her, could not

subdue or even lessen her great sorrow. Her husband's body was brought to her dwelling—three days and nights more of anguished watching beside his marble face, and he was buried from her sight.

Prostrated by a low, nervous fever, Mary then lay for months, during which time Constance was her most faithful nurse. By her devotion to Mortimer's wife, she sought to atone for the wrong which she had so unintentionally done them both in listening to his addresses. Together they read the word of God—together their prayers were mingled, and by degrees both learned to know 'that peace which passeth all understanding.'

Vincent was a frequent visitor at Mary Mortimer's home; and daily he saw more and more to admire in Constance.

The Hunts also were sometimes added to that little circle, and Mary's parents very often. Little Viola Mortimer was quite a pet among them; and a year afterward she cried heartily because "naughty Aunt Constance would go away with Mr. Vincent."

As happy were Frederic and Constance in their married life, as 'pure and well placed love' will always make its possessors.

This story may possibly meet the eyes of some, who, like Constance, to escape from a threatening evil, or for the more unworthy motive of obtaining wealth and influence, have promised their hands where their hearts have refused to rest. To such I would say, weigh well the sacrifices you will be called upon to make: fearful are the responsibilities of married life to women—even to those who love, and how must they be increased tenfold, where love is wanting. Peril not your soul with the word upon your lips which your heart belies, for you cannot dream of the wretchedness which such a sin will bring upon you.

Mary.

STAINLESS lilies of the vale—
Fragile lilies, pure and pale,
Slowly toll your crystal bells!
Hear ye not a mournful tale
In the zephyr's dying wail,
As it lingers thro' the dells?

Wild wood violets, meek and low,
White as any flake of snow,
Closer bow your heads to earth!
Do you feel no pang—no throe?
Is there no sign by which ye know
A mortal's Heavenly birth?

Song birds by that forest side,
Where the rippling waters glide,
Breathe a slower, sadder strain!
For our hearts send up a plaint
Through our voices low and faint,
and ~~But~~ she answers not again.

Summer roses wet with dew—
Clouds that float o'er Heaven's blue—
All things pure, and frail, and fair,
Bring some offering to the grave
Where the dark pines nightly wave;
For our loveliest sleepeth there.

THE END.