

THE LINTON FAMILY.

THE
LINTON FAMILY;

OR,

THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD.

BY

SARAH H. BRADFORD,

AUTHOR OF "LENIE," "UPS AND DOWNS," "THE SILVER LAKE STORIES," ETC., ETC.

— "Therefore, this evil life,
With all its gilded snares and fair deceivings—
Its wealth, its wants, its pleasures, and its grievings,
Nor frights, nor frets me by its idle strife—
Oh! thou! who rearest of thy courtesy,
Whoe'er thou art, I wish the same to thee."
FANNY KEMBLE.

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Plain

To My Children,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

WITH THE LOVE OF THEIR

MOTHER.

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THE LINTON FAMILY.

Chapter First.

THE NIGHT OF WATCHING.

WE were all gathered in the kitchen of our dear old farm-house. I cannot tell why we always preferred to assemble there, when we had a comfortable sitting-room, and a large parlor, except that it was the very pleasantest room, and had the most cheerful look-out of any in the house. The great parlor was seldom opened, and when it was, it had a stiff, formal, uninhabited look, with its twelve cane-bottomed chairs, and one table, all set up straight and prim about the room, telling us plainly that we must be upon our good behavior there, if nowhere else.

The sitting-room was never a pleasant room to us children, being on one side of the hall, and between the parlor and kitchen, so that it had but one lookout, and that not an agreeable one. All that we could see from it being the old brown house on the hill, where Mr. Burton murdered his wife—who ran, according to tradition, clear to my

grandfather's house, with her throat cut, and lived long enough to write on a slate the name of the murderer.

But the kitchen, the dear old light, airy, cheerful kitchen, was in a wing by itself, with a little piazza of its own, and pleasant windows on each side ; for the pretty grove hid the old haunted house from the windows on one side, and those on the other commanded as lovely a view of hill, and dale, and meadow, as one would wish to see, with the white spire of the church rising above the tree-tops in the distance. It was a large kitchen, with a huge fireplace, and clean white floor, and painted dressers, like many another kitchen ; but when I think of it, with the merry group assembled there on winter evenings, and the bright fire-light shining on their happy faces, it seems to me that, among the many places in which I have been since, I have never seen any one half so pleasant.

Here, in the winter evenings, we cracked and picked out our nuts, while the molasses was boiling in the suspended kettle ; or told each other's fortunes with apple seeds, and apple parings, or watched Phillis as she fried doughnuts, between our games of jack-straws and dominoes, while father and mother sat, the one reading and the other sewing, in the sitting-room.

But this was a summer evening, and it was nearly tea-time. My brothers had come from the hay-field, my sisters and myself had long been home

from school, mother was knitting in the corner, and the French girl sitting opposite, her delicate fingers engaged upon some kind of pretty fancy-work, for she never did any other.

Who was the French girl ? And how came she in our quiet country home ? Have patience, dear reader, and you will hear all, and perhaps more than you wish to hear, of her, in time.

Harry was the first to burst into the house, saying : " Mother, hasn't father come home yet ? "

My mother never wasted words, so she merely answered " No. "

" I'm sorry for that, " said Harry, " for there is an awful storm coming up, and the bridge over the Dote-man's-kill is broken, and father will have to ford the creek. I am so sorry we let him go to town alone. "

" It does look black ! " said mother, rising and looking anxiously from the window.

" Black, yes, black as night, " said Arthur ; " I will go and see that the shutters are all closed. "

At this moment a distant rumbling was heard. Harry sat looking uneasily at the western horizon. At length he said, " Father may possibly have determined to stay over till to-morrow. "

" No, " said mother, " he would not do that, " and her pale face grew a shade paler.

Just then the door opened, and my cousin Walter came in. Walter lived in the cottage with grandmother and her husband, just over the hill.

"Grandmother sent me over to see if uncle had come home yet," he said. "She says there's a storm coming, such as has not been known in many a year."

"No, not yet," said Harry, "and I am so glad you have come, Walter. I want to ride out as far as the Kill, to meet father if possible, and pilot him over. I was just wishing for you, for Arthur is not strong, and some one must stay with mother and the girls." Then taking Walter out on to the piazza, I heard him say, "I should not feel so very anxious, but father cannot see after dusk, and it would puzzle sharp eyes to find the ford after the stream rises."

Walter said he would run over and tell grandmother where he was going, while Harry got the horses ready. My mother made no remonstrance, for she knew the danger. The clouds came on blacker and heavier, the thunder rolled nearer and louder, and the great rain-drops beat faster and thicker against the window; and in the midst of the storm the two boys started off.

The "Dote-man's-kill" (I don't know whether I spell the name right, but so it was pronounced by the people about us) was a stream, or brook, about four miles off, and the town of Sackville, to which my father had gone on business, was eight miles from us. He often drove over in the afternoon, returning in the evening, for at this place we purchased our supplies, such as the farm did not afford us, or changed for them its produce. The bridge over

the stream had been down for some weeks, and our people were slow in repairing roads and bridges; but it was seldom that the ford was impassable in summer, and in the winter it was bridged with ice. So the old bridge remained in its dilapidated condition.

The boys had hardly reached the gate, before the rain came driving by in sheets, and the kitchen grew as dark as night, save when it was lighted up by the sudden flashes of red lightning. That was a fearful night! I never knew one like it. Hour after hour the lightning blazed, and the thunder crashed, and the rain poured down in torrents. And there we sat with hearts sick with fear; not of the storm, but for the dear ones who were exposed to its fury, and most of all for dear, dear father.

The tea stood untasted, save by the French girl, who shrugged her shoulders, and ate and drank, for it was out of the power of circumstances to disturb her equanimity, or diminish her appetite.

It will be long before the boys are back, and though all that happened on that fearful night stands out distinct and clear on the tablet of my memory, I will pause before I tell it, and let you know who, and what we are, of whom I am writing.

My father's family were city people. I never knew my paternal grandfather and grandmother, but I believe they were people of some wealth, who lived in what is called *style*. My mother was born in a house, which once stood near the little cottage, where grandmother and her husband lived, at the time my

story opens. I say grandmother *and her husband*, for "old Daddy Blake" was not our grandfather. *He*, poor man, was carried off by the Indians in the last war, and taken to Canada, where he suffered so much from the cruel usage he received, that he died there in prison.

Some years after, and before I was born, my grandmother married her neighbor, old Mr. Blake, who thinking her cottage more comfortable than his own, and her farm more productive, came and took up his abode with her. I have always thought that grandmother married this old man out of pure benevolence, because he had no one to take care of him. Hers was one of the loveliest and purest spirits that ever inhabited mortal flesh; and self-sacrifice was so the habit of her life, that when the old man represented to her his lonely and forlorn condition, as a motive why she should marry him, it probably never occurred to her that there was any alternative.

If poor grandmother wished opportunity for self-sacrifice, she certainly found it every day and hour from the time she took old Mr. Blake into her little cottage. He was the most cross-grained, obstinate, irritable, disagreeable old man that ever worried out a poor woman's life. Nothing ever went right with him, nothing ever satisfied him; no effort that my grandmother could make to please him ever gained her an expression of thanks or a word of approbation. Surely, it was a weariness to the flesh and to the spirit, to be in the house with "old Daddy Blake."

Just back of grandmother's cottage, might be seen the remains of a cellar, with part of the foundations of a chimney, and a pile of blackened bricks. This was all that was left of her early home, to which she came as a bride in her youth. Here, one night, when her little children were sleeping around her, she and my grandfather were surprised by a party of hostile Indians. The fearful whoop first roused them, and struck terror to their hearts; and, on starting up, they found the room filled with dusky faces, while others peered in at the window. My grandfather was taken from his bed, and, with only time to wrap a blanket round him, he was hurried out bare-footed into the snow, and down the lane toward the road, and my grandmother saw him no more. The Indians being fearful of pursuit, were in haste to be gone, and in the confusion my grandmother escaped with her three youngest children, one of whom, my mother, was a very little infant; and, crawling under some long sticks which were piled against a fence, she pressed her baby closely to her, holding her breath with terror, fearing that the child might cry out and attract the attention of any stragglers of the party, if such should be prowling about.

The two elder children trembled and cowered close to their mother, without making the slightest sound, while the snow around them was reddened by the blaze of their burning dwelling. These two little creatures, being clad only in their night dress-

es, were so badly frozen that they both died in consequence. The oldest son, Daniel, fled to the house of a neighbor, whence he watched the burning of his home, not knowing whether any member of the family besides himself had escaped.

As soon as it was daylight, he crept over to the spot, which was now only a mass of smoking cinders. Here, while exploring the cellar, he heard a slight noise, and, being fearful of Indians, he called out hastily, "Who's there?" "It's only me, Mr. Dan," answered a familiar voice, and out from behind the ruined chimney crept little black Phillis, now our good old cook. Phillis had hid behind a hay-stack while the work of destruction was going on, but after the Indians left, and the fire had nearly exhausted itself, she crept to the cellar to warm herself by the heated bricks.

The two then began to search for other members of the family, and soon found the little group behind the wood-pile, my grandmother being unable to speak, and two of the children nearly dead. The little feeble baby lay snug and warm upon its mother's breast, and was the only one who escaped unharmed the horrors of that night. One daughter was absent from home at the time of this dreadful event. She grew up and married, and was the mother of my cousin Walter. But Walter was an orphan when he came to live with grandmother.

The effect of this scene upon the son who fled, and returned in the morning, was most painful. Up

to that time he had been a bright and interesting boy, but the terrible excitement through which he passed that night, threw him into a brain fever, from which he recovered weakened in intellect, with a decided obliquity in his vision, and an impediment in his speech. Such was poor Uncle Dan till his death.

The kind neighbor to whom Uncle Dan fled, took in the whole family, and cared for them, till some died and others recovered, and then grandmother moved into the little cottage on her own farm, and near her former home. Here my mother grew up, with only such learning as a country school-house afforded, together with the lessons of true wisdom, taught her by her good mother. She was, however, a person of strong good sense, though of a delicate frame, and reserved disposition.

My father being disgusted with the frivolities of city life, or of so much of it as he saw at his father's house, and with the vanity and folly of his sisters, and having a love for rural pursuits, determined to go to the country and try the life of a farmer. For that purpose he came to the neighborhood of Sackville, to live in the family of a farmer, and learn the art of agriculture. Here he became acquainted with my mother, and married her, much to the disgust of his fine sisters, who never paid her any attention, or acknowledged her as a relative.

Hour after hour passed away, and the storm showed no signs of abatement, and the little group

in the kitchen gathered close together, save that the French girl sat apart, always, as it seemed, determined to remain outside the circle of our sympathies. We were in such a state of expectation and suspense, that it would have been vain for us to lie down, and the nervous restlessness of different members of the group showed the agitation within.

Oh, what is more painful than just to *sit and wait*, under such harrowing anxiety; feeling obliged, meanwhile, to conceal, for the sake of other anxious ones, the fears with which the heart is bursting. Better be out with Harry and Walter, in the storm, searching hither and thither for him who could not be found, than sitting or lying there, listening and waiting for the tidings which we almost knew would come.

Often one or another started up, certain that they heard the sound of wheels rattling over the mill-stream bridge just below our gate. Then we would all make our way to the front windows of the house, and, pressing our faces against the panes, would try, by the lightning flashes, to discern some object coming up the road. In vain, in vain! we knew; it but no one whispered her fears to the ear of another. The rattling wheels were only the rolling symphony of the distant thunder, between the nearer crashes.

"Gabrielle, my child," said my mother, "*you* had better go to bed."

"I do not wish to go," answered Gabrielle.

"Are you afraid to go alone, Gabrielle?" asked Flora.

"I am not afraid of *nothing*," said the French girl; "I shall stay till those boys come home."

The only one of our family for whom Gabrielle had ever shown any liking, was my brother Harry.

"Arthur," said my mother, "take down the Bible and read to us the forty-sixth psalm."

Arthur obeyed her, and, as he drew the lamp toward him, I noticed the deadly pallor of my brother's face, and the hollow look about his eyes. He opened the Bible and read that beautiful and touching psalm, the words of which I never hear, to this day, without the associations of that night rising up before me, mingled with a feeling of intense sadness.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

"Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

"Though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

* * * * *

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

"The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

At these tender, comforting words, spoken to us in our sorrow by our Heavenly Father, tears for the first time rolled down our cheeks, and relieved our bursting hearts. But the French girl had risen, the moment Arthur took down the Blessed Book, and muttering, "I do not want to hear your Bible," she had gone out into the darkness of the next room.

It will be long yet before the weary hours wear away, and bring the morning light. And as it seems in some sort to defer the catastrophe which fell upon us so suddenly, and so sadly, I will tell you now who was the French girl, and how she came to us.

About five years before the time of which I am writing, the Sackville stage stopped one day as usual at the tavern opposite the church. The driver sprang from the box, and called out to the landlord, "Come, Johnny, give a lift here! There's a sick woman in there, and neither she nor the child can speak a word a Christian can understand, no more than if they hadn't a tongue in their heads. They must be some kind of *furriners*. They came in the boat to Templeton, and when they got into the stage, the child showed me a card with '*Mons. D'Arcy, Sackville*,' on it. What do you suppose *Mons.* means, Johnny?"

"You can't git em on to Sackville, hey?" asked the landlord, his portly form filling the doorway.

"Bless you, no; I've been afraid every jolt of the coach would drive the last breath from her body. No Johnny, she's got to *her* last stages, I can tell

you, and when she sets out again, it will be for a longer journey than she's taken yet, if so be she *has* come from furrin parts."

Old Johnny Gilmore was by this time looking in at the door of the coach, where lay extended upon the seats, the wasted form of an apparently dying lady; while clinging to her, was a child of about eleven years of age, whose large, coal black eyes, and raven ringlets, contrasted strangely with her deadly pale countenance. She seemed in an agony of grief, and terror, probably supposing her mother was already dead.

The poor lady was borne from the coach by the two men, while the landlady met them at the door with lifted hands, ejaculating:

"Bless my soul! that poor cretur's dying! send for Dr. Richards, Johnny! quick! something may be done for her yet." The child, never letting go her hold of her mother's dress for a moment, followed up-stairs, and when they laid the insensible form on the bed, she immediately climbed up, and seated herself beside her, with her arm under her mother's head.

I was a little thing then, eight or nine years old, and when my father rode down to the post-office, he often caught me up, and set me before him on the horse. We were thus riding down the road, when we saw the sick lady carried into the tavern. Wherever there was trouble of which my father knew, he was ever ready and foremost, with heart and hand to

aid. So as soon as he heard the exclamation of the landlady, he set me down upon the steps, saying, "Stay you here, daughter, while I ride over for the Doctor. I shall go more quickly without you."

I was sitting on the long bench by the tavern door, when the landlady came down, saying, "Here, Grace, if you don't mind going up there, I wish you'd just stay in the room with the woman and child, while I warm a little wine for the poor cretur. There isn't a girl about the house to day; they're all off blackberrying."

So, though a little frightened, for I had never been in the room with a very sick or dying person, I went up the stairs and crept cautiously into the room. The poor lady lay with her eyes closed, and the gray shadow of death was on her face. The child, unconscious of my presence, was bending over her, with her face close to hers, calling upon her in passionate tones, but in language I did not understand. All I caught was, "Mamma, chere, chere, Mamma!"

Fortunately, my father met old Doctor Richards before he had ridden far, and brought him to the tavern. The kind old man bustled in, with his white hair standing up as usual, and his round, beaming face redder than ever with haste and excitement. He made his way directly to the bed, and felt the pulse of the patient long and anxiously. And then heaving one of his long, wheezing sighs, he said, "Nothing to be done here, I fear. You are doing the best that can be done, Mrs. Gil-

more; she may just revive, but the candle is in the socket. She is nearly gone; feet cold, cold to the knees; finger-nails blue."

"Yes, and just feel her nose, Doctor, cold as a stone; that sign has never failed in my experience, and I've seen many a one die," said the landlady.

"This is a case for a clergyman, not for me," said the good old Doctor. "The poor creature's got a soul, and she'll be in eternity in fifteen minutes. Lord deliver us, she's a Catholic!" he exclaimed; as the child, who had been eagerly scanning the Doctor's face, had with keen instinct read there the truth; upon which she hastily drew from her mother's bosom a little crucifix and pressed it to the dying woman's cold lips.

The good old doctor now seemed to bend all his energies toward the spiritual good of his patient, plying restoratives, meanwhile, without intermission, in the hope of rousing her sufficiently to make her understand her dying condition. He was a very excitable little man, and when his feelings were roused, he would talk in the most eager and rapid manner imaginable. Sad as was the scene around the dying bed of the stranger, I can never think of the poor doctor's perplexity and consternation, without a smile.

"Speak to your mother, child!" he said, leaning over and touching the little girl. "Oh, dear, dear, she does not understand a word! How strange it seems that she should sit there looking so like the

rest of us, and not able to comprehend a word we say. Bless me ! what did they act so like a pack of fools at that Babel for ? We might all have been talking the same language yet."

"Let's see ; I wonder if I've forgotten all my French ! Child ! *Enfant ! votre mère* (let's see—is going—*va aller*—oh dear, dear, what shall I do ?) Child, *Enfant, n'avez vous pas un livre de prieres ?* It's odd now, how it comes back to me ! *N'avez vous pas un Bible, Beeble*, child, to (*lire*, to read)—oh, she pays no more attention than if I wasn't speaking her own tongue."

My father then stepped to the side of the bed, and kneeling down he said, "Let us pray for this poor soul, to the God who heareth prayer in every language." And he offered a short, fervent prayer for the dying woman, that she might know her condition, and trust in the Savior of sinners alone for pardon, before her spirit went to meet Him.

He was interrupted by a cry from the child. All started and looked toward the bed. The dying woman had opened her eyes, and was looking with bewildered gaze upon the group around the bed. Then she fixed them upon her child, and an expression of distress passed over her face ; but when she saw the little crucifix which her daughter still held before her eyes, she faintly smiled, and made an effort to kiss the revered symbol.

At this moment, a lovely vision appeared at the door of this chamber of death. It was Miss Cath-

arine Temple, in her riding dress, who had been hailed by old Johnny Gilmore, as she was galloping by on her horse.

"See here a minute, Miss Temple," said Johnny, "there's a mighty strange thing happened here. A furrin woman has come, with a child, and she's a dying up-stairs. Here's the card the child dropped, and it just occurred to me that they might somehow belong to the mounsher, that taught your brothers. I think he used to ask for letters for Mounsher Darcy."

"Certainly, certainly," said Miss Temple, "they are the wife and child of poor Monsieur D'Arcy ; he wrote to them and sent them money to come. And now, poor man, he is dead. Poor things ; what a disappointment for them !"

"Well, *she'll* never know it, for she is most gone," said Johnny ; "but what is to become of the child, I wonder ! They say you can talk furrin language, Miss Temple, perhaps if you would go up you could make her understand something."

Miss Temple's appearance was most warmly greeted by the doctor, who exclaimed, "Oh, my dear young lady ! come and speak to this poor woman, while she can comprehend you ; they don't seem to understand my French at all. She's dying, Miss Temple, and she's a Roman Catholic."

Miss Temple kneeled down by the bed of the sufferer, and addressed her in her own tongue. The child started up and listened eagerly. Miss Temple

told the poor woman gently that she had but a few minutes to live. She whispered that she knew it, and asked "Who will take my poor child to her father?"

"What shall I say, doctor?" asked Miss Temple, "she is poor Monsieur D'Arcy's wife. Shall I tell her he is dead?"

"No, no, don't disturb her with that," said the doctor.

"I would take the child myself," said Miss Temple, "but you know I leave so soon."

She was to be married the next week, and to sail immediately for Europe.

Then my father stepped up to Miss Temple, and said, "Say to her, my dear young lady, that I will be a father to the child till other friends claim her."

The poor lady's look of gratitude was more expressive than words, as she held out her wasted hand to my father.

"And now, my poor lady," said Miss Temple, who was as good as she was lovely and accomplished, "now what is your hope for your soul after death?"

The dying lady pressed her lips to the crucifix.

"*This*, or the Savior who died on the cross for sinners? Let *Him* be your only hope; no saint, or virgin, or priest, can help your poor soul to Heaven, if you do not trust in Him. Can you not let everything else go, and cast yourself upon his mercy?"

The poor woman murmured a request for a priest.

"A priest, a priest, for my mamma," said the child.

"There is no priest for many miles, poor lady, save the High Priest of his people, Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior, who is ever near. Let me repeat to you some of his words to those who love him. She then repeated some verses from that beautiful chapter, the 14th of John.

"Que votre cœur soit point alarmé! vous croyez en *Dieu*; croyez aussi en *moi*."

"Il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père; s'il était autrement je vous l'eusse dit. Je vais vous préparer le lieu."

When she came to the verse—

"Jésus lui dit, je suis le chemin, et la vérité, et la vie; nul ne vient au Père que par moi;"

—the dying eyes opened with a strange lustre, and a fixed gaze upward, and muttering the word "Jésus!" the light faded out of them, they remained fixed and staring, and the poor soul drifted out into the shoreless sea. It may be that in that last moment she caught the life buoy just thrown to her; it may be that the last cry of the poor, helpless soul was, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" and that, ere she sank, she clung to the hand of Him who walked upon the waters, and who bore her safely to one of those "plusieurs demeures, dans la maison de mon Père."

I must pass over the mournful scene of the burial of the stranger, whose remains were taken to Sackville, and laid beside those of her husband. Strange

it seemed, that those two had so longed to meet, when long years and a wide ocean were between them, should now be lying but a few feet apart, and each unconscious of the neighborhood of the other.

The frantic grief of the child was terrible to witness, and aroused our sincerest pity ; but when the earth was heaped over her mother's body, and she was forcibly borne away, it seemed as if every soft and human feeling had been left deep in her mother's grave. She was evidently determined to steel her heart to the approach of kindness or sympathy, and neither gratitude nor affection ever appeared to stir its stagnant depths.

There was, for a long time, an unconquerable aversion to learning our language. She would pore over the few French books which she found in her mother's trunk ; she would talk and sing to herself in her own language continually, as if fearful that its accents might become unfamiliar, and would condescend to say no words of ours, except such as were absolutely necessary to the supply of her wants. In particular, she showed a fierce hostility to the Protestant religion. The little crucifix of her mother was always about her neck. She refused to attend our family worship, or church, or even to remain in the room when the Holy Bible was read.

Though treated with the utmost tenderness by my father and mother, she never sought their advice, or acknowledged their authority ; but was lawless and independent in manner and roving in her

habits. There were Sundays on which she absented herself for the whole day, and we found that she on those occasions accompanied a family of Romanists, who lived about a mile from us, to Sackville, at which place, a priest occasionally officiated. It was doubtless owing to his influence, that this hostility to our religion was kept alive in the mind of the child.

But she grew up singularly beautiful ; and when she chose to be so, in order to accomplish her own ends, very attractive. When Walter or my brothers were by, she was sometimes animated and brilliant, and with them she condescended to speak English, and so she slowly learned the language, though she never spoke it perfectly, or without a decided accent. I forgot to say that she chose to take the name of *De Lisle*, her mother's family name ; for, drawing herself up with pride, she would say, " My mother was of *noble family* ! She did much disgrace herself to marry a teacher."

So, Gabrielle De Lisle had now been with us five years, and was at this time, sixteen years of age ; tall, slight, graceful, but scornful and proud, and quite out of place in our humble kitchen. Still she was not more refined, or half so pleasing, as my sisters, Helen and Flora, who would have graced any circle in the land.

For, please to remember, that, though my father was a farmer, and lived by the labor of his own hands, yet he was as true a gentleman in heart and man-

ners, as ever breathed; and the law of true kindness, consideration for others, and Christian courtesy, ever governed our household. And where can you find a better foundation for the character of a perfect lady or gentleman?

"Papa! Papa!" I cried, and started, and raised my head from my mother's knee. Was it possible I had been asleep, and so long? for the gray light of morning was in the room. I had dreamed that my dear father came in safe, and smiling, and I was screaming with joy, with my arms about his neck, when I awoke. But the pale, care-worn face of my mother told me that no such good news was in store for me. Gabrielle was asleep in her chair, but the rest were still watching.

"Mother," said Arthur, rising, "I can endure this no longer! Anything is better to be borne than this suspense. We cannot blind ourselves to the fact that something unfortunate has occurred, or one of the boys at least would have returned to relieve our minds. Let me go, dear mother, and gather some of our neighbors to assist us in the search?"

My mother readily consented, and Arthur too left us. It was a relief to see the bright light of morning, and to be able to occupy ourselves in some other manner than merely in waiting and watching. Poor old Phillis soon appeared from her little room, her red eye-balls plainly testifying that she too had passed a watchful night.

"Why, Phillis," said Helen, "you have not slept

either. If we had known you were awake, we would have had you here with us."

"Oh, never mind me, Missy dear," said the good old soul, "I could pray better for my poor master alone. But my poor missis looks fit to faint. I will make her a cup of tea, first thing. It's very hard, missis—it's very hard! I never knew no night like this since the house was burnt. But you never fear for my master, missis; whether he's dead, or whether he's alive, he was allers ready to do what the Lord wanted of him, missis. Oh, dear! the Lord's will be done!"

It might be about nine o'clock, when, as I was standing by the front window, I saw my brother Harry, and my cousin Walter, riding up to the gate, while just behind followed a lumber wagon, which seemed black with men.

Harry quickened his speed, and reached the house before the rest. He was drenched with the rain in which he had been out all night, and his face was deadly pale.

He walked straight up to my mother, and putting his strong arm round her, said firmly, "Mother, come with me!" and he supported her into her own room, and closed the door. In another moment we heard a shrill cry. But poor mother was saved the sight of the dear senseless form, as it was borne into the house by kind neighbors, with the water dripping from the garments, and matted hair! Oh, can any one who only reads the story imagine agony like ours?

My brother and cousin had reached the creek, before it was quite dark. The stream was already fearfully swollen, and rushing at a rapid rate. There was no crossing then, by ford or bridge. They went back to a house not far from the stream, where lived a man whom they knew.

"Did you see my father pass here to-day in the buggy, Mr. Grey?" asked Harry.

"Yes, I spoke to him a moment, as he was on his way to Sackville," answered the man.

"And you have not seen him since?"

"No. I'm certain he has not passed here again, for I've been about home all the afternoon."

"We are very anxious on account of the state of the creek," said my brother. "At what time was the stream so swollen that it would have been unsafe to cross?"

"Well, you know it rises very rapid," was the answer. "Let's see, the storm came up about six, and you know how uncommon hard it has poured ever since. I should say in half an hour from the time it began to rain, the water would have been over any horse's back."

"Can you let us take your boat, Mr. Grey, and leave our horses here?" asked my brother.

"Certainly, certainly; I will take care of the horses," answered Mr. Grey.

Harry and Walter crossed the stream, and securing the boat, walked on through the fearful storm to the tavern just over the hill.

Calling to the landlord, Harry again made inquiries about father.

"He stopped here to water his horse as he went out," said the landlord, "and when he came back—"

"*Came back?*" echoed both the boys in a breath.

"Yes, when he came back, no one saw him but my woman, for I was getting the cattle in out of the storm. She told him he'd better not go on, for 'twas raining awful hard then, and she was a leetle afraid about the ford.

"But your father said your mother wasn't well, and she would be so awful anxious if he didn't come home, that he would try the ford before the stream rose any higher. Now, if I'd been about, I wouldn't have let him try it, or I'd have gone down with him. But, bless me! you haven't met him?"

"No," said my brother, with the calmness of despair; "and he has not been beyond the creek; *he has gone down with the waters!*"

The landlord called to his men, and taking with him two or three lanterns, they all went down to the stream together. It was agreed that Harry, with two of the men, should take one side of the stream, while Walter and the landlord should cross, and after securing the assistance of Mr. Grey, should explore the other side.

"It's all useless," said the landlord to Walter, "perfectly useless; but that poor lad will never be satisfied without he's busy looking. If Mr. Linton

had got out alive from either side of the stream, he would have made his way direct, you see, to my house, or Mr. Grey's."

"You think my uncle is drowned, then?" said Walter.

"Can't be otherwise, Walter," said the landlord. "You see there's so many holes about here, and if a wagon just began to tip down stream, why the force of the waters would turn it over, and they'd all go down stream together. Mr. Linton was a powerful man, and a good swimmer; but so many things might happen to a man in a wagon. He might get entangled in the lines, or kicked by the horse in his struggles. Any how, the poor man's gone, most likely, and a better or kinder-hearted neighbor no man ever had."

All night poor Harry wandered up and down. He went miles down the stream, and when the morning light dawned at last, he found dear father's body not half a mile from the bridge, among some bushes he had passed many times, and which all supposed had been carefully searched. And so they brought him to the home which he had never before entered without bringing light and gladness with him.

Dear me! I write it all as I would write if it had been any other child's father; but it seemed to me then beyond the power of human endurance to bear up and live under such a dreadful grief. But there was more yet for us to bear, and we had still

to learn that the heart could be more full of sorrow than ever we had dreamed, and yet not burst.

My mother, as I have intimated, had long been delicate in health, and this sudden blow was too much for her feeble frame, worn out with a night of anxious watching. When we heard that shrill cry from her room, the blood had burst from her mouth, and she had fallen senseless on the floor. From that moment she sank, and the only alleviation to our sorrow was in the fact, that she never again waked to the consciousness of her loss. The skill of our good doctor was tried to its utmost in vain; the silver chord was loosed; the golden bowl was broken; the heart-strings were severed!

For a week she lingered on the verge of the dark river, and in the meantime the funeral of my father was delayed, as it was evident that she must soon follow him. It all seems to me like a fearful dream; a confused horror, through which I passed for days and nights, I knew not how many; till I woke to find myself bereft of both parents, our home broken up, the children scattered, and separated widely from each other.

After a serene and uneventful life, all these great changes happened within a few days.

"Happened, dear child?" said my good old grandmother; "nothing *happens* or comes by chance. *We* see things as they appear; there is *One* who sees them as they *are*. And all things in each one's history are but links in the chain of his

destiny, which are carefully placed by the divine hand, and without each one of which the chain would be imperfect and useless.

"Or like your dissected map, Gracie, every part must be in its fitting place, or it is not perfect, and does not answer its end. It is hard now to feel that these sad trials are for the best, dear child ; but some day we shall look back upon all the way our heavenly Father has led us, and we shall understand why he put an obstacle here, and a hedge of thorns there ; and why he sometimes turned us into a dark and crooked path, which we feared to tread.

"Oh, I have come to spots, my child, where the road parted, and I knew not where to go, or what was right. No guide-board, no friendly finger appeared to point the way. Then my cry went up to my heavenly friend,

"And by a way that I knew not,
Blindfold he guided me."

Chapter Second.

LIFE IN THE RED COTTAGE.

BUSINESS puts in its claims, even while death is in the house ; and before my father was buried, and while my mother lay hovering between life and death, my brothers were harassed by visits from strange men, and by the necessity of talking with them of money, and land, and mortgages. Of course no explanation was given to me of the reason of all these consultations, but I gathered from what I heard, that trouble had long been brewing, owing to the failure of crops, the suspension of a bank in which my father had an interest, and the dishonesty of one whom he had trusted, and for whom he had become security. And too soon the truth was forced upon me, that our house was ours no longer, and that it would be impossible for us to remain together.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Dr. Richards, who was often present during these business consulta-

tions, and who was acquainted with all my father's affairs, "I'll tell you what it is, I have made up my mind to write to those proud, silly aunts of yours. I used to know them when I lived in the city, and a pack of fools they are. But two or three of them are married, and pretty well married, too, I believe, so far as this world's concerns go. If they have never taken any notice of their nieces before, it is time they should now. And they've got to do it; I will write to them this very day!"

The day after mamma's death, a carriage came furiously up the lane, and with a great clatter whirled round the circle and up to the front door. The great parlor was open that day, and we were all assembled there. There were dear grandma in her rocking chair, in the corner, (fortunately old Mr. Blake, being too infirm to be brought out, was left at home,) and Uncle Dan in his best brown suit, and old Aunt Lainy, a sister of grandma's, and my sisters and myself. When these ladies arrived, Dr. Richards, who was in the room with my brothers, went out to assist them from the carriage.

I had never seen stylish city ladies before; the only lady of wealth and much cultivation whom I had known, was Miss Temple; and she was so simple and friendly, and so like one of us, when she was with us, that she never overawed us in the least; even when she found us gathered in the kitchen. But there was a bustle and excitement about the arrival of these aunts of ours, which made

it apparent, that their object was to excite a sensation. My first impression is only of a confusion, and of many voices rattling together. Who spoke, or what each one said, I could not at all distinguish. I noticed, however, that one of them, whom I immediately characterized as my *wooden aunt*, stood apart from the rest, and kept silent.

The conversation, or rather the continued series of exclamations, were somewhat after this fashion.

"How do you do, Dr. Richards? how do you do? Thank you! thank you! Bring in those trunks, driver; this is really dreadful, doctor! And that bandbox, driver; a double funeral! I never heard of such a thing! Oh, that carpet bag; yes, that's mine! Drowned! how shocking! This really might have been made quite a pretty place, Ella! Hannah, just you pay the driver, and we'll settle with you! Shocking! dreadful! certainly! Where are our nieces? Oh, yes, here they are! Quite pretty! quite pretty! want style sadly! Oh, dear, what a fright I am! covered with dust! "Yes," said one of them to the other, looking at me, "*very* different; quite plebeian; like the mother, probably."

I had read in Roman history of plebeians and patricians, but what claim I might possess to a place in either of those classes, I could not divine.

"And who is *this* pretty creature," asked one of them, taking the hand of Gabrielle; "oh, yes, I heard something of it; French girl! noble family!

oh, charming ! charming ! quite out of place here ! a little acquaintance with the world, my dear, would make you positively elegant !”

Gabrielle, much delighted with the flattery which was heaped upon her so lavishly, made an unusual effort to be agreeable, and really appeared quite brilliant beside my sad and dejected sisters. Grandma sat, placid and sweet, in her corner, her thoughts apparently dwelling upon other scenes than those about her ; but Aunt Lainy's restless eyes were eagerly scanning the group, and her ears taking in every word that was said by our talkative and fashionable aunts.

“Oh, here are our nephews, I suppose,” as my brothers and Walter entered the room. “Fine young men, really ! quite surprised ! so much ease—self-possession !—positively, I can't see where they acquired it !”

I was sent to show my aunts to a room, where they might lay aside their outer garments ; and here, as they were perfectly unrestrained before me, I had an opportunity of witnessing some further exhibition of the manners and sentiments of people of “the world.” To be sure what was said was in a sort of undertone, so often used before children, and which only serves to stimulate curiosity.

“I don't know but they'll think it strange that we are in *colors*,” said Aunt Kate—she had been the *brilliant* beauty of the family—“and really, I don't know what to do about black ; if I take one

of the girls, and she is in deep mourning, I suppose it will look odd if I don't put it on too. But really, black is horribly unbecoming to me. Now, *moire antique* and velvet is stylish, and I hear it is worn a good deal now in mourning, and feathers don't look ill.”

“I shall put on deep black,” said Aunt Ella—she had been the *languishing* beauty of the family.

“Oh, yes, I know why,” said Aunt Kate, “you always thought black peculiarly becoming to your fair complexion and light curls. I thought we never should have got black off you after papa died, and Mr. Winthrop paid you that compliment.”

“How common and plain it all looks here,” whispered Aunt Hannah.

“Oh very ! how Robert could endure it I cannot imagine, when he was so differently brought up.”

“It seems to be expected,” said Aunt Kate, with pins in her mouth, and arranging her collar before the glass, “that we should take the've girl. Now if I take any, I prefer Helen. She is more in my *style*—more to my *taste*. I have only boyf, you know, and it will be very nife to have an attractive girl in the house.”

“Well, then I'll take the one they call Flora,” said Aunt Ella. “She ought to save me a governess. I hear they have had a good common-school education, and that is all my children need at present.

"That French girl has got to go somewhere," said Aunt Hannah. "She has no home, and no friends. And I think I should like to have a French young lady with me. Quite an advantage to my girls. Of noble family too, the story goes. Romantic, very."

All this time my wooden aunt said not a word, and no one seemed to think what was to become of poor me. The hair being arranged, and the collars properly adjusted, the ladies all descended to the parlor with a rustling of silks, and a rattling of voices.

"That fine young man, I understand, is not our nephew," said Aunt Kate, pointing to Walter, and speaking to the doctor.

"No," said Dr. Richards, "he was Mrs. Linton's nephew, an uncommon lad," he whispered; "teaches the school here on the hill very satisfactorily; very satisfactorily, indeed!"

"Ah! possible! I understand, Doctor, that my brother's affairs are in a sad way?"

"Very sad! very sad!" sighed the doctor; "when all is settled up, there will be little left for the poor children. The boys are feeling great anxiety for their sisters."

"Oh, *we* will settle all that," said Aunt Kate, brushing down her silk dress, and smiling complacently.

"Do you know I hardly know myself here, doctor!" she continued, in a low tone. "So strange that a *Linton* should have lived in this way. But it was all owing to that unfortunate marriage."

"How unfortunate, madam?" asked the doctor, who knew my mother well, and appreciated the worth of her character.

"Oh, an uneducated country girl, doctor; very worthy, no doubt, respectable, I dare say, but unrefined; knew nothing of the world."

"No, madam!" said the little doctor, indignant, his face becoming purple with excitement, "no madam, she was not governed by the world, or the flesh, or the *devil*! Madam! she was a pure good woman, madam! doing her duty in the sphere where God had placed her, and doing it well."

"Oh certainly, certainly! but uneducated, of course."

"That lady, madam, could repeat to you Pope, or Milton, or any of the old poets, whom any one would care to know anything about; she read Johnson and Bacon, was familiar with ancient and modern history, and best of all, she knew her Bible, madam! she knew it by heart; and she didn't rest in knowing it, she followed its teachings, madam; and she practised them in her life."

"Oh, very likely—I don't dispute that; but then you know, doctor, she could have known nothing about *style*."

"*Stile*," said Aunt Lainy, whose curiosity had caused her to draw up and listen to this part of the conversation, while she slyly ascertained the quality of Aunt Kate's dress with her finger. "Marthy Linton could climb a *stile* when she wa'n't more than four years old, just like the boys."

"Who *is* this person, doctor?" asked Aunt Kate, shrinking from poor old Aunt Lainy, "and who is that very disagreeable common man in brown?"

"This is a sister of Mrs. Linton's mother, the dear old lady in the corner," said the doctor, "and that poor man, is an unfortunate brother of the deceased lady."

"Oh! Doctor! is it possible! Now you see, *that shows.*"

"No, it doesn't *show*, madam; that poor man's history has been peculiar. And but for the visitation of God in almost unexampled trial, he might have been one of the shining lights of the land. For he was an uncommonly bright boy."

"Well, please don't let him come near me, that is all."

"Grace, my child," said the doctor to me, "will you please see that my horse is brought round?"

The opportunity of my absence was taken, as I afterward found, to arrange what should be done with me. No one, as it appeared, had seemed particularly anxious to assume the responsibility; at least my three talkative aunts had each made known their choice. When I entered the door, after giving the Doctor's message, my dear old grandmother opened her arms, and said, "Come to me, my lamb!" and that was all.

Then my wooden aunt spoke for the first time, and said, "I have been waiting to see what my sis-

ters intended to do, because they are in positions as they imagine, to give the nieces they adopt great advantages. I am a lone woman, not in society, not in 'the world,' but if it is thought best that my youngest niece goes with me, I will share with her what I have, and do the best I can by her."

"What do you say, Grace?" asked the Doctor.

"I murmured that I would stay with grandmamma and Walter."

"At the mention of my name, Uncle Dan became excited at once." I was a particular favorite of his, and he had imbibed the idea that the family were to be separated and scattered among these city relations. Hitherto he had sat silent, but now he started up, and hobbling across the room, he addressed first one and then another of my fine aunts, making all manner of grimaces, in his efforts to make himself understood.

"No! no! no! L-l-eave G-G-G-Grace with us! l-l-leave G-G-G-Grace with us!"

When he came to Aunt Kate, she put her hands before her face, crying with a little fashionable scream, "Oh, doctor! take that man away! take that dreadful man away!"

The doctor turned away, muttering something about a "confounded fool!" and instead of going to the terrified lady's assistance, went out and mounted his horse and rode off.

"I wish you would not speak to us, sir!" said Aunt Hannah to poor Uncle Dan, with an attempt at an air of dignity.

"Then will you l-l-leave G-G-Grace with us?" he asked.

"Of course we shall. I take the French girl. I like to see pretty things about me," answered Aunt Hannah.

"Then I advise you n-n-n-never to l-l-look in a g-g-g-glass," said Uncle Dan, who sometimes hit upon a shrewd speech, and he hobbled back to his seat by grandmamma.

The next day was the darkest and saddest of my life; for I saw both my dear parents lowered into their last deep, narrow bed, and their loved faces were hidden from my sight. From that agonizing scene I returned, with the consciousness that soon all the other dear familiar faces, and loved voices, would be far away, and that we should never be one household again.

I will not deny that the bustle and clatter kept up by my lively and voluble aunts, served in some measure to divert my mind, but still the load of grief pressed with crushing weight upon my young heart. It was well for us that after these ladies left, there was enough to do to keep all hands busy, in preparation for the sale of everything, and for the breaking up which was to follow. Fortunately, too, the sale did not take place at home, as it was thought best to remove the furniture to Sackville;

so that we were spared the sight of the passing of papa's chair, and mamma's work-table, and other objects dear to us from long and tender association, into the hands of strangers.

At last all was over. The sad partings, "such as press the life from out young hearts," were gone through with, and my brothers and sisters set out for that "world," of which all I knew was, that it lay beyond the blue Kaatskills, which bounded the distant horizon.

When my wooden aunt bade me good-bye, she said, "Now, child, your grandma's old, and it stands to reason that she can't live forever; and if anything happens, or if you would like another home, remember you've got an Aunt Eunice in the city."

So they all went away, and I found myself settled with grandmother in her little red house, my companions being the old man, and Uncle Dan, Walter, and sometimes Aunt Lainy, who lived in a little home of her own in Sackville. Poor old Phillis begged hard to stay with us, but grandmother was too poor to keep a servant, and there was no room in her little cottage in which to put one. So Phillis followed the fortunes of my sister Helen, and went to live with Aunt Kate.

My brother Arthur had, through the kindness of Doctor Richards, found a situation with a merchant at the West, but Harry and my two sisters were in the one great city together. Of their cir-

cumstances and surroundings I knew little at first, but they became gradually known to me, by letters and in other ways. For the present I will content myself by describing the quiet round of my own daily life.

Grandmamma's little red cottage was by the side of the stream which, farther down toward the road, turned the old mill. It was hidden from our dear old home by a little rise of ground, which was crowned with a half dozen lofty elms. I was glad of this, for it would have been painful to have the view of the old place strike me suddenly, and when I was not in the mood to look at it.

The cottage was very small, three rooms below and three above. The sitting-room was entered directly from the front door, and grandmamma's little bedroom opened from it at the side. Back of these was the kitchen.

The only way to the upper part of the house was by a ladder. It was the same ladder which my dear mother had so often mounted, to find her way to her own little room, and that same little room was now mine. It was very small, with the ceiling sloping on either side, according to the slope of the roof, and one window, from which I often watched those blue Kaatskills which shut out my sister's world from my sight.

My life with grandmamma was quiet and uneventful. Yet there was enough of occupation to keep me from indulging myself in melancholy retro-

spections, at least till I was enabled to seek the solitude of my own room. For I soon found that my younger feet, and more nimble fingers, could save the dear old lady many steps and much toil and trouble.

One evening after I had been about a week at the cottage, I sat on a low stool by the chimney-corner, thinking. Grandmamma was in her rocking-chair knitting. Old Daddy Blake was bolstered up, with a flannel night-cap on his head, and his rheumatic leg on a chair, and Uncle Dan was whittling as usual in the opposite corner. For, given a knife, and a piece of pine wood, and Uncle Dan's comfort was secured.

I sat with my chin in my two hands and my elbows on my knees, and if any one had given himself the trouble to think about me, he would have supposed the child was only watching the sparks, as they flew up the chimney. But little brains are often busy with matters of which we never dream, and a great many "old fashioned" thoughts go revolving round among them.

I was thinking just then of what papa had often said to us, when we were together; for the lessons of love and wisdom spoken to us by those whom we have revered, come back to us when we need them, long after their lips are sealed in the silence of the grave.

"Children," he said, "the time must come when you will be thrown among other scenes and associ-

ations, than those now surrounding you. Then let your first question, honestly asked and answered be, 'Now what is my *duty* here? and how can I accomplish the most good?' "

Here thoughts and eyes were called to old Daddy Blake, by the impatient exclamation: "Here, move my leg, old woman, will you?" which operation was performed with the utmost tenderness by dear grandmamma, but amid howls and contortions horrible to witness.

"Oh dear, what is my duty *here*? and can I ever do any good to old Daddy Blake?" I inwardly groaned. "He is so hateful and cross; and he is evidently not pleased at my introduction into the family. I don't believe it is worth while to try to do anything for him. But there is dear grandma, so kind, and gentle, and patient; it's easy enough to work for her. And Uncle Dan, all he wants is pine sticks; and I am willing to travel to the woodshed all day for him, poor soul! And Walter! oh, it is nothing but a pleasure to help Walter!"

Just then Walter came in with an armful of wood; for after school hours he attended to all the out-door work, and then sat down to his studies. My childish impression of Walter, was only that he was very kind, very good-hearted, and very full of fun. I had not yet taken to any deep study of character, and did not know that he was weak of purpose, vacillating, and easily led by those of

stronger will. But my cousin had always petted me, and I loved him very dearly.

He came in with his light hair all in curls, and his handsome face flushed with exercise; and laying down his load, he stood looking at me for a minute.

"Well, little wifey, what thinking of?" he asked. "Not sorry you've come to live with us, eh?"

"Walter," said I, not directly answering his question, "do you suppose I could ever do anything to please the old gentleman?"

"To please *him*!" exclaimed Walter, laughing so loud that even the old man himself heard, and turned toward him with an angry scowl. "You'd better not try, wifey! The best thing you can do is to bend all your energies toward keeping out of reach of his cane."

"I had no idea he had such an awful temper, Walter! What a time poor grandma does have with him; and did you *ever* see anything to equal her patience?"

"No, I certainly never did; it comes nearer a miracle than anything I ever saw. Grandma, how did you come to marry the old man?" he asked; "was it because you needed a thorn in the side?"

"Hush, my son, don't talk so," said grandma.

"What are you all gabbling about there?" growled the old man.

"About thorns in the side, sir," screamed Walter.

"Horn of cider, eh?" said Daddy Blake. "What do you stand gaping there for, then? Why don't you go down cellar and draw it?"

"Wasn't aware that I *was* gaping, sir," said Walter; "and grandma thinks cider isn't good for you."

"Your grandma's a fool!" roared the old man.

"Now, look here, old gentleman, call me what you please, but when it comes to grandma, you had better keep a civil tongue in your head. Shall I go down for the cider, grandma?"

"Yes, my son, there'll be no peace all night if you don't. But it will be very bad for Mr. Blake; it will certainly shorten his days."

"Oh, then I'll go with the greatest alacrity, dear grandma," said Walter; "come wifey, come down and hold the candle, and get a plate of nice red apples."

"Now, Grace dear, just take my advice," said he, when we were down in the cellar, "and just let that old man alone. You'll get nothing but scolding for it, and then he and I will fight."

"But I might possibly learn to lift that lame leg; grandma is so old to keep jumping up every five minutes."

"You let that lame leg alone, wifey, it's a dangerous thing to meddle with. Unfortunately his arms are not lame, and his old cane is always within reach. Come, here's his 'horn of cider,' as he calls it; I wish it would choke him."

"Oh! Walter, don't talk so. It is wicked."

"You'll change your opinion on that subject I believe before long, wifey," said Walter, as we ascended the stairs. "Here, old gentleman, here's your cider; since it is the only thing I am allowed the supreme happiness of doing for you, except to assist you to your bed and back, I wish you all the happiness and comfort with it, which your unselfish generosity and devotion to others deserve."

"Walter dear, don't make fun of the old gentleman," said grandma, "it pains me."

"Well, I won't then, dear grandma. But candidly, dear grandmother, what is your opinion of the old man?"

"Why, I am afraid Mr. Blake hasn't a great deal of *Grace*," said the dear old lady, with a sigh.

A loud shout of laughter from Walter, was the only reply.

"What are you chattering and cackling about now?" asked the suspicious old man.

"Grandma thinks you hav'n't your full share of *Grace*, sir?" screamed Walter.

"Share of *Grace*! I don't want her! I never asked her to come! The old woman took her in!"

"Yes, she took us all in; and took you in, but you took her in first, I guess," said Walter, in his ordinary tone of voice.

"Old woman, come move my foot," screamed the old man, in more angry tones than usual.

Grandma's imploring looks kept Walter silent for

a time. Bringing up another low stool, and sitting down by me, he said after awhile :

"Gracie, when do you intend to return to the advantages offered by my distinguished institution of learning ?"

"I don't believe I shall be able to go back to school, Walter."

"Why not, wifey ?"

"Oh, I find so much to do here. Grandma works too hard ; I had no idea how hard, till I came to stay. And you know my dear mother brought us up to be such good housekeepers, that I can help her a great deal."

"And give up study altogether ?"

"I suppose so."

"No. I'll tell you what we will do, Gracie. Two evenings in the week, you know, I go to recite Latin and Greek to our minister, Mr. Dutton ; that leaves four evenings which I can devote to you ; and we will read and study together, after we get the old man off to bed. There is no use in trying to do anything before that."

"I suppose those books on the shelves are the same my dear mother used to read to grandmamma," I said.

"Yes, that is all grandma's library, and I do believe she knows every word in those books by heart. Let's see ! Here's Pope, and Cowper, and Milton, and Addison, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the works of Johnson, and Lord Bacon and —"

"What's that you say, sir ?" said the old man.

"I said Lord Bacon last, sir."

"How long will a load of bacon last, eh ? What do you want a load of bacon for ? hav'n't we got three pigs of our own ? Here, old woman, move my leg, will you ?"

"I often think, Gracie," said Walter, "that when people pass up and down the road, and catch a glimpse of our little red cottage, it would surprise them very much to know that there was an old lady here, of such refinement and cultivation of mind as grandmamma possesses. And yet I dare say, it is not uncommon to find just such women in humble and lowly abodes. It is New-England training has made them what they are."

"Come, get me to bed, will you ?" screamed the old man. "Careful now ! there ! you did that a purpose ; you know you did !" and amid howls and groans and angry exclamations the old man was helped off to his room ; and we were left in peace for the rest of the evening.

So our lives passed by. Each day filled up with its busy duties, but all lightened by the prospect of the pleasant evening hour of study and improvement with Walter.

The books on grandmamma's little shelves were duly read and re-read, during those three years in the cottage ; not all with much pleasure at first I must confess ; except so far as it pleased grandma to have me read them to her, when she could get an hour or

two to sit down in quiet with her knitting. But their beautiful and wise thoughts were carefully stowed away in the storehouse of my memory, where they have often since been found, to be brought forth when needed.

But there were three other books in the house which were continual feasts of fat things to me. One day, in looking for something for grandmamma in a little lumber-room in the loft, I came across an old copy of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, which had been read by some person or persons, to me unknown, till both covers were gone. But the story was safe, and upon this I seized, and read it all, unconscious of the beating of the summer's sun upon the sloping roof of my little room; or of the piercing cold of winter, in the loft, where a fire had never been made.

I read and re-read this book, till the characters in it were all as well known to me as were my own sisters and brothers; and every rural spot was located, in rather prescribed limits to be sure, as I had never, in my life, been farther than Johnny Gilmore's tavern on one side, and the town of Sackville on the other.

The city scenes could only be imagined; they were all away beyond the Kaatskills; but every event of Jeannie Dean's lonely journey to London and back, occurred between our farm and the village of Sackville. Gunnerby hill, where the gipsy woman overtook her, lay just beyond the Dote-

man's creek; the spot where the two ruffians dragged her from the road, was at "Jerusalem Four Corners," and the barn in which she passed that dreadful night with the gipsies, was that of old Deacon Osgood.

Another book which I read with infinite delight, was *Hope Leslie*, then not many years old; Walter had brought it with him when he came to grandmamma's. Oh, will any book again ever give me the delight I experienced in reading this!

And Miss Temple, before she left, had presented me with a pretty little copy of the *Lady of the Lake*. What a fascination in the musical roll of those magic rhymes for my youthful mind! I pored over it till there was no need of the book, for every word was imprinted upon my memory.

And here I learned to love more and more the exquisite beauty of the psalms, and the wild strains of the prophets, and became more intimately acquainted with the characters of the old and new Testament. For grandmamma, by long association with these characters, seemed strangely to enter into their life and feelings, and to understand and appreciate the motives of their conduct; and she taught me to look upon them, not as beings of another sphere, or a different race; but as people of like feelings and sympathies with ourselves.

And here, if ever, I formed a friendship most essential to one, whose path is to be through a "vale of tears;" the friendship of One tender to soothe,

and strong to deliver, with a heart to sympathize with suffering humanity, and the power of imparting strength to endure the ills of life—a friend for time and for eternity—a friend whose aid I often needed, and whom I ever found to be “a very present help in time of trouble.”

Chapter Third.

GABRIELLE.

ONE moonlight summer evening, when I had been about a year at grandmamma's, Walter, who had been very absent and uninterested in his studies, looked up suddenly and said :

“Come, Gracie, it is too lovely to be sitting here over these books ; let us go and take a ramble by the stream.” So I threw a handkerchief over my head, and we ran, in quite a frolic, down the slope to the brook ; but there we gradually subsided into a walk, the laugh somehow ceased, and we rambled along in silence. I was admiring the distinct shadows of the trees, as they fell across the grass, and the sparkle of the waters, as they danced along over the pebbles in the moonlight. At length Walter spoke :

“Wifey, Mr. Dutton wishes me to study for the ministry.”

“*He does!* Walter?”

“Why so surprised, wifey?”

"It is such a new idea to me, Walter. Do you really think of it?"

"Well, it seems to me I should like it. I must do something, you know; they say I am a pretty good speaker, and there are such fine opportunities for the display of eloquence in the pulpit."

"Oh, Walter, have you no better motive than that?"

"Why, I should expect to do *good*, of course, wifey!"

"I fear you have not considered this matter with much solemnity, Walter."

"Oh, there will be time enough to be very good before I can preach, Gracie."

His light tone, in speaking of such serious matters, pained me.

"Have you spoken to grandmamma about this, Walter?"

"Of course not, Grace, before speaking to you. I have not presumed too much, have I, in taking it for granted that you feel a deeper interest in my future, than grandmamma, or any one else—you are really going to be my 'little wifey' some day, are you not, Gracie?"

His face was very earnest now, as he bent it toward me in the moonlight.

"Do you really mean it, Walter," I asked, looking up at him. "I thought this talk about 'little wifey' was all fun."

"I really mean it, Gracie."

"Walter, I am very young; only fifteen."

"And, Gracie, I am very young, only twenty; but youth is a weakness of which we shall be getting the better every day we live. I must study as I can. I must work in vacations, to raise money for my education. One year, at least, I must spend in college, and then comes a long course of theological study. Oh, I shall have time to grow old, and grave, and wise, and good, before I can ask you to share my lot. Do you love me well enough to be my wife, Gracie?"

"I have never seen any one I like so well, Walter."

"Which is a great compliment, considering that you have never seen any of the nobler sex, except your own family, and Daddy Blake, and Uncle Dan, and old Doctor Richards."

"Well, I don't believe I ever *shall* see any one I like so well, Walter."

"That sounds better, Gracie. I hope not, I am sure," said Walter.

And I went home very happy in the soft moonlight; very happy, that some day, in the distant future, I was to be Walter's wife. Grandmamma said she knew it would be so all along, and she smiled, and looked pleased, and blessed her two dear children. And Uncle Dan said he would "d-d-dance at the wedding, in spite of his lame leg."

Time passed on very pleasantly, and winter brought us nearly to the time of the Christmas holidays, when Walter was to give his scholars a vaca-

tion of a fortnight. A week or two before this time there came a letter from Harry, begging that Walter and I would come down and spend this vacation in the city. "There was so much to be seen, and there were such fine singers to hear; and it would be such a new world to Gracie." And he enclosed money for Gracie's expenses, and an invitation from Aunt Eunice for me to come and spend my time with her; for she boarded at the same place with Harry.

Walter immediately determined to go, and begged me very urgently to accompany him. "This visit will take all the money I have laid up, I know," he said, "but then it will do me good; and I can go to work and make more."

"But, Walter, I cannot leave them. The old man is so helpless now, and grandma is very feeble this winter."

"But Aunt Lainy is here."

"Oh, that makes it all the worse. She fancies she is such a doctress and nurse, and she is always insisting on trying experiments on the old gentleman, and you know how she exasperates him."

The very next day, as the old man was lying in his bed, for he seldom left it now, he screamed to be moved.

"Now, sister," said Aunt Lainy, "you just sit still, and let me go. I'm considerable stronger than you, and I know I can move him a good deal more easily."

The moment she appeared at the door, the old man screamed—

"Get out, you hag! send the old woman! send the child! but don't you touch me. Let me alone! I'll knock you!"

"Now, Mr. Blake, don't be unreasonable. Just see now how comfortable I can move you. Won't hurt you a speck."

"Get out!" roared the old man. And he made a terrible effort to rise and reach his cane. But his face suddenly became purple, and he fell back heavily upon the pillow.

"Oh dear! oh dear! what is the matter with the old gentleman," cried Aunt Lainy, shaking him. Mr. Blake! Mr. Blake! dear! dear! Dan'l, what is the matter?"

"Old man's d-d-dead, I g-g-guess!" said Uncle Dan.

"Oh dear! and it's all my fault," cried Aunt Lainy. "Dan'l dear, hand me the bellows, quick!" And seizing them from his hand, she began to blow most vigorously, first in one nostril, and then in the she'll other.

"Gracie," said Walter, "I'm dreadfully afraid she'll bring him to life."

"Oh, Walter, hush; death is a fearfully solemn thing. Grandmamma seems to be really distressed."

"I suppose she is afraid her life will be too easy now," said Walter.

"Walter, this is too serious a matter for jesting ; please be quiet."

The bellows, long and energetically applied, did no good. The old man was really dead !

I suppose one can never stand by the empty tabernacle, once containing a human soul, with which one has been in daily intercourse, without feelings of regret, and in some degree of self reproach. / Not one of us but may have been tempted to say and do that, which we should not have said and done, had this hour and scene been vividly before us. There are so many little kindnesses which might have been performed, and were not ; and even the unexpressed *feelings* of impatience, which the tempter may have suggested, are regretted, and we long for the opportunity to express these feeling, and to ask some token of forgiveness from the now silent lips. /

So I felt, as I looked at the now calm and tranquil face of the sleeper ; for the harsh lines had become smoothed out by the hand which will lay its touch upon each of us ; and the old man looked as if, far back in other times, somebody might have loved him.

As soon as possible after the funeral, Walter left for the city. The house seemed very dull after he went away. Everything had lost its charm. My walk to the post-office was taken alone. There was no Walter to come out from the now deserted school-house, and join me ; and the way was long and dreary.

And this reminds me of the pleasant letters I had

received during this year and a half of separation, from the dear ones in the city ; and which, in looking them over, I find will give a better insight into their daily life, than I can give in any other way.

The letters came but once in a fortnight, for this was long before the days of cheap postage, and frequent correspondence was a serious matter for us. Oh ! how eagerly the day was looked forward to, and with what intense interest the letters were pored over, again and again. And though in my eager longing for the faces and voices of my loved ones, I sometimes felt with my dear Jeannie Deans on the subject of letters ; yet, after all, what is there like a letter, when the dear face and voice are so far away !

"A letter," said Jeannie, "canna look, and pray, and beg, and beseech, as the human voice can do to the human heart ; a letter's like the music that the ladies have to their spinnets—naething but black scores compared to the same tune played or sung."

The first letter which I shall transcribe is one from my sister Helen, written a few weeks after their arrival in the city.

" ——— CITY, Sept. 6th, 18—.

" MY DARLING SISTER GRACIE :

"You have long ago received letters from Flora and myself, giving our first impressions of this great, busy, bustling city. These were confused, of course, for it was all confusion, and we hardly feel settled, or as if we could collect our thoughts yet.

I have not yet become accustomed to the constant roll and rattle of carts and other vehicles, and I often laugh when I think how we used to spring to the window, when we heard the sound of wheels rattling over the mill-stream bridge.

"Oh, the mill-stream bridge, and the dear cottage, and home! sweet home! *My* home never again! How I long sometimes for its rest and quiet—for the uninterrupted sight of the blue heavens—for the sun rise, and the moon rise, and the western sky at evening. All these sights are shut out from us by brick walls, except a little strip of sky when one looks straight up. I take a long walk whenever I can find the opportunity, to a small park, where I can see a bit of green grass and something like a tree.

"We gave our first impressions of our new home too; but I for one find that first impressions are not always correct ones. Aunt Kate, as I told you, lives in one of a long row of brick houses on Lafayette street. I thought it all very splendid when I first came here; it was so different from anything I had ever seen before—more showy in the interior, even, than Mr. Temple's house; but somehow there was not the cheerful, comfortable, home-look about it that there was there.

"But I soon found that Aunt Hannah's house was in a more fashionable part of the city, and on a much grander scale than Aunt Kate's, for Mr. Stephens is quite a wealthy banker, while Mr. Harwood

is only a commission merchant. Aunt Kate, however, is always talking about her "*expectations*;" for her husband is an only son, and his father, who is an old widower, is very rich. So one day, Aunt Kate expects to vie with Aunt Hannah, and even to outshine her, I believe.

"I should think Aunt Kate might be very happy here, for her husband is, in general, a slow and easy, meek sort of man, who does not interfere with her plans, or trouble himself to contradict her, unless she is too unreasonable. Once or twice I have seen him when he was quietly but doggedly obstinate, and neither Aunt Kate's scolding nor tears could move him one jot.

"There is little harmony I find between our aunts. Aunt Kate is in a continual state of jealousy, because Aunt Hannah, who is as ambitious as herself, can afford to have everything so much finer.

"I find, too, that there is another sphere, farther 'up town,' within whose magic orbit neither of our aunts are permitted to revolve, but on the confines of which they glide about like comets, hoping, by some lucky *eccentricity*, of course, to dart within the charmed circle. The centre of this system to Aunt Kate, is a Mrs. Elliston, whose name and deeds are forever in her mouth. She has even, of late, taken a pew in the church this lady attends, though it is much farther from us than the one we have heretofore attended. I don't know what she expects to gain by it, for there is little

sympathy of this kind, in this great, heartless city, I fancy. But we shall see.

"But Gabrielle is a puzzle to us all. There is a charm and fascination about this girl, by which she can work her way anywhere; and she does everything with such a bewitching grace that she takes people by surprise, and manages them as she chooses. What would seem in one of us a sort of rude pushing of ourselves into the notice of strangers, appears in her, only like a pretty, foreign sort of artlessness. She goes out alone a great deal, and she makes acquaintances here, and there, and everywhere, and manages to get introductions to places where Aunt Hannah would give her ears to go.

"Often, when we happen to be shopping together, or at a concert, or some other place of amusement, I see Gabrielle bowing to one and nodding to another, and shaking her handkerchief, in her pretty way, at a third. Then Aunt Hannah turns round in amazement—'Why, Gabrielle, how came you to know Mrs. So-and-so, or Miss Such-a-one?'—and Gabrielle puts on her air of impenetrable mystery, and says, carelessly: 'Oh, I have met her,' or, 'I have known her this long time, Mrs. Stephens.' And that is all that can be got out of her.

"But you should have seen Aunt Hannah's vexation the other day, when she saw Gabrielle actually chatting away, easily and carelessly, with the very Mrs. Elliston, of whom I have been telling you. In vain she hovered about them, addressing Gabrielle,

and endeavoring to join in the conversation; but Gabrielle only cut her short, and turned to her new acquaintance. 'I do think that girl is a *witch*!' exclaimed Aunt Kate, in indignant tones; 'her effrontery exceeds anything I ever beheld; and she carries all before her. Gabrielle, how *did* you become acquainted with Mrs. Elliston?'

"'Oh, I have met her *several* times. I know her quite well,' answered Gabrielle.

"Harry, poor fellow, is more and more infatuated. He hangs about Gabrielle like her shadow, and is tormented to death when she flirts with other gentlemen; but then a few low spoken words, and one of her bewitching smiles, carries him straight to the seventh heaven of felicity again. Harry has not told us that they are engaged, and I doubt whether Gabrielle will commit herself so far. But there is evidently what is called an *understanding* between them, perhaps enough to hold Harry, but not to bind her, if she chooses to slip out of it.

"Poor dear Flora is more than a mile from us, and I do not see her very often. Aunt Ella is so indolent, and self-indulgent, that she is quite contented to have found some one, on whom to throw all the care and responsibility of her family. And I can see plainly, that our sweet sister is to have all the toil and trouble of mistress of the house, and teacher of the children, without the independence as to her movements, or the respect from children, or servants, which would be demanded by the lady mistress.

"All the morning she is teaching those troublesome, ungoverned children, while Aunt Ella lies in bed, sleeping, or reading novels; and after school hours, there is so much else for her to do, that she seldom gets an hour to breathe the fresh air, or to run over here for a short visit. Poor child! I would far rather see her a daily school teacher, or a governess; for then she might have a little time to herself; and indeed I think we must bring about some change for her before long, or she will be in her grave.

"I like Mr. Arnold better than any of my uncles. He has a kind, frank, friendly manner, and is really all that makes the house endurable to Flora. He is a man who seems fitted to enjoy a pleasant home, after the duties of the office are over, but there is nothing attractive in his home. His wife is always in bed (I wonder what is the reason of this; Aunt Kate says it is *opium*;) and his children, when not under Flora's care, noisy, and ill-bred. No wonder that he goes down town early in the morning, and does not return till late at night. What a life for a poor man!

"And now, darling little sister, this long letter must close. I have gossiped away to you, as I would if we were chatting together, and have talked of things just as they are. It might seem to some persons ungrateful for me to talk as I have of my aunts; but I feel that for our *board and lodging*, both Flora and I give more than an equivalent. We were brought here for specified purposes, and those we

try to accomplish. I, too, teach the younger boys, (the older ones are at boarding-school;) I entertain company when Aunt Kate does not feel like it; and shop for her, and try to make myself generally useful, and to avoid being a burden, at any rate.

"Gracie, continue to write when you can. I can picture you all to myself in the little room in the cottage, engaged in your simple round of duty. Tell me every thing that is said and done. When have you seen dear old Doctor Richards? Oh! do you know our dear Miss Temple, Mrs. Leighton, is coming home from Europe, and is going to live in this very city? Aunt Kate says she will be one of the 'up town' grandees, and she is counting much on her acquaintance through us, and on that of 'her set,' through her.

"My best and dearest love to dear grandmamma. Tell Uncle Dan, I bought him a fine new knife the other day, which I will send by the first opportunity. And now good-bye my own little darling. When *shall* I see you, Gracie?

"Your own loving sister,

"HELEN LINTON.

"P. S. I must not forget to send dear old Phillis's love; she, poor soul, is more home-sick than any of us. She sighs and groans over the wickedness of this great city in general, and over my aunt's worldliness and vanity in particular. 'I ain't one grain afraid of a *flood*, child,' she says, 'because dere's de *promise*, and dere's de *bow*.' But I think she is

holding herself in daily expectation of destruction by an earthquake, or the sudden descent of a shower of fire and brimstone. She is greatly troubled about getting her *bones* to the old place; because she cannot bear the thought of *rising* with the wicked people of this wicked city. Never forget a message to her; she looks for letters as anxiously as any of us. Again good-by, "HELEN."

I pass over many letters, the contents of which are all familiar as a well learned lesson, and come to one from Flora, written some months later than the last, which runs thus:

"MY DEAR SISTER GRACIE:

"It will soon be my turn to send off a letter to you, and as I have little time that I can call my own, I must use it by scraps, and make out my letter as I can. Aunt Ella's continued indisposition throws the care of everything on my hands, of course, and as she cannot bear the noise of the children, I am obliged to be on the watch every moment, to keep them quiet.

"I know very little about sickness, but Aunt Ella's case seems a strange one to me. She is almost always so unwell that she cannot leave her bed till noon, and sometimes not all day, and yet she has never had a physician since I came here, and Mr. Arnold does not seem to be at all alarmed; though he often looks worried, and as if he had some trouble on his mind.

"Once or twice, I have thought she was going to be quite well again, for she has roused up, and dressed herself with care for company, and appeared unusually animated and agreeable. The other evening Aunt Kate gave a party, and to my surprise Aunt Ella declared her intention of going. I really should not have known her that evening, for the same poor pale creature who lies complaining in bed all day. Her cheeks were quite flushed, I suppose with excitement; (though I heard an ill-natured woman whisper, that Mrs. Arnold laid on *rouge* wretchedly;) and she had her long light hair in a profusion of curls; and I could then realize how beautiful she must once have been. But she has paid for this party, by being obliged to lie in bed ever since.

"I wish you could have seen Gabrielle that evening! She was dressed in a rich pink silk, with flounces of black lace, and a pink wreath around her dark hair, which hung as usual in ringlets; she had a brilliant color, as she always has in the evening, and was perfectly magnificent.

"But no one was so charming in my eyes as our own beautiful sister Helen. She was simply dressed, in white, her rich dark hair smoothed back and knotted behind, with one beautiful white camellia in it, which Mrs. Leighton had sent her in a bunch of hot-house flowers. She was very much admired, and I heard one lady say to another, 'How soon one can tell natural from artificial color; look at Miss Linton, by the side of that French girl!'

"But Helen seems to care very little for admiration; and indeed, Aunt Kate has such a set of disagreeable men at her parties, it is all one can do to speak to them with patience. Gabrielle flirts with any one, and makes her pretty, flattering speeches to all. Harry seems less troubled about it now, for she assures him that it is all nonsense, and that she gives these people to understand that she is engaged.

"This city, Gracie, is a different place to us, since Mrs. Leighton returned. She is so kind to Helen and me. I sometimes reproach myself for going there so much, and for liking to be there so much better than here; but she comes in her carriage, and drags us off, and then she makes it so delightful, that it is almost impossible to get away. Aunt Ella frets and worries at me for hours after I have been there, but I can well bear a little scolding, for the sake of such real happiness.

"And how I feel the difference in the atmosphere of the circle in which Mrs. Leighton moves, from that breathed by our aunts. There is such an air of refinement and high breeding; such an absence of petty gossip; such quiet content; such rational enjoyment; such true charity of heart and hand, and, which is the spring of all, such true piety. The friends who visit familiarly at the house, are people of intelligence and cultivation, whose society is refreshing, and whose conversation is always improving.

"Mr. Leighton is the most polished gentleman I

have ever seen. He seemed a little reserved at first, so that I felt almost afraid of him; but that has all worn off, and I am quite at ease with him now; for I feel that he really likes to have us at his house. The children are lovely little creatures, so different from the poor little neglected ones here.

"Mrs. Leighton says she needs me as much as Aunt Ella does, and she shall not rest till she gets possession of me. Oh! wouldn't that be delightful! If she could only have Helen, too! Poor Helen! She never complains, but I don't think she can be happy at Aunt Kate's. There is not a thing there for her to sympathise with. All is outward show; every thing is done for display and effect. 'What will the world say?' is Aunt Kate's governing motive. So it is with Aunt Hannah, but in all this Gabrielle goes beyond her. Indeed, Gabrielle shows some symptoms of cutting loose from Aunt Hannah, and is already pluming her wings, I fancy, for a flight to another sphere. Indeed, much of her time is passed with quite another set; but she will hold on to Aunt Hannah, as long as she is necessary to her. Poor, dear, Harry! What an unfortunate thing this engagement is!

"I am sorry to hear that dear grandmamma is failing. How I wish I could look in upon you all in the dear little cottage. But that is impossible."

The last day of Walter's vacation arrived, and I sat by the window, in the afternoon, watching for

the stage. I was sure he would come that afternoon, for his scholars would be at the school-house the next morning expecting him. There was no calculating then, as there is in these days of railroad travel, the arrival to a moment, of an absent one. So many things might happen to detain the stage; bad roads in summer, or deep snow in winter; but now the sleighing was excellent, and sure enough, at about the usual time, I heard the bells, and the great stage-sleigh come over the bridge.

How my heart beat as it drew near the gate! But could I believe my eyes? It did not turn up towards the cottage, but passed directly on toward Sackville. Walter must surely be sick, I thought. The next day, and the next, passed. No Walter; no letter! Every day I walked over the deep snowy road to the post-office; and after another week, was rewarded by a letter, but it was from Flora. I opened it, and glanced hastily through it, looking for Walter's name. On the third page I found it.

"Walter seems to be enjoying himself amazingly in the city," she wrote. "He and Gabrielle are always together; indeed she so absorbs his time and attention, that we see very little of him. One evening they are at the opera, another at the theatre; and then Harry is usually with them; but while Harry is busy in the store through the day, Gabrielle is taking Walter to picture-galleries, and museums, and to all manner of places. He goes with her too, to the Cathedral on Sundays, which Harry will

not do. Walter says he goes to hear the music; but I don't think he is acting right. You had better write for him to hasten home, Gracie, dear."

Before this time the children had begun to come, inquiring when Mr. Vernon would be home; and when school would begin again? Three weeks had now passed since he left, and I had had but one letter. All these things made me anxious and nervous. Then one morning Mr. Hornby drove up, and he seemed in an unusual state of excitement.

"Look here, Grace," said he, "I should like to know when Walter Vernon's coming back?"

"I really cannot say, Mr. Hornby; we are looking for him every stage."

"Wa'l, we're gettin' *rayther* out of patience. I want my boys to have an eddication, because I value eddication more'n anything; and winters is the only time I can spare 'em for schoolin'. If Walter's goin' to attend to his business, why he'd better be on the spot! I like to see folks up to their word! And if Walter can't teach the school at the corners, why, I guess we can git some one who will!"

That sickness of the heart came over me, which one always feels, when deserved censure is heaped upon a loved, but erring friend. I cried bitterly after Mr. Hornby went away. It was too bad in Walter! It was a shameful neglect of duty! It was a cruel neglect of me! He might at least have written. I had never had such a settled feeling of sadness before.

A day or two after this, another of the school committee called at the cottage. He seemed very much displeased with Walter, and said, that unless he came that week, they should engage another teacher. I wrote all this to Walter, and on Saturday night, the last night of the fourth week, he came.

His manner was rather subdued, and deprecating, when he came in; and in spite of myself, mine was constrained, and cold.

"Did you think I was lost, Gracie?" he asked.

"I thought you ought to return in time to open your school, Walter; and I was hurt that you did not write."

"Well, you know it was my first visit to the city, and they kept me going so, that I really could not find a minute to write. Every day I intended to leave, and every day they had something for me to see or hear."

"Who were *they*, Walter? I am sure that neither Harry, nor my sisters, would ask you to neglect your duty."

"Oh! your aunts, and other people, had parties, and"——

"And Gabrielle?"

"Oh! Gabrielle—yes—of course—Gabrielle was very agreeable," said Walter, his face flushing suddenly.

"When are Harry and Gabrielle going to be married?"

"I don't know?" he answered, carelessly; "I heard nothing said about that. Harry, you know, is only a clerk yet."

Walter was kind as ever after his return, so far as outward acts were concerned; but he was changed, I could not tell how. There was a little constraint in his manner; he never called me "little wifey" any more; and somehow, a barrier, which I could not explain or understand, seemed to have risen up between us.

The school began on Monday; but Walter appeared to have lost all interest in his scholars, and his duties were evidently irksome to him. His Latin and Greek books remained unopened; and when I reminded him of his recitations, to Mr. Dutton, he always had some excuse. He was tired, or was not well, or the snow was too deep.

At length, when I urged him seriously to go, he said:

"To tell the truth, Grace, I think I was very hasty, in determining to study for the ministry. I don't believe I am fitted for it in any way."

"But, you know, Walter, you were to improve these years of study, in preparing mind and heart for your work."

"Grace, I find that mind and heart are less and less inclined to it; indeed, the idea is positively disagreeable to me. Besides, I have other plans."

"Other plans, Walter? What are they?"

"Why, Mr. Stevens, your aunt Hannah's hus-

band, is a banker, you know ; and they are all very desirous to have me come to the city, and enter into business of some kind there. In fact, Mr. Stevens offered me a place in his bank, which will be vacant in May; but he advised me to spend my spare time this winter, in improving my knowledge of book-keeping."

"And you will go to the city, and leave us, Walter?" said I, my heart standing still, as if paralyzed.

"You did not expect me to stay here all my days, did you, Grace? I would be obliged to go from here to pursue my studies, if I had adhered to the other plan."

"But Walter, Walter, this makes me feel very sad! I have looked forward to a life of pious usefulness for you. I have thought of you as a loved and honored pastor, doing your duty with faithfulness and zeal, and now what will you be? Thrown among different scenes and associations, you will forget the lessons of piety you have learned with grandmamma, and our own good minister! You will forget us all."

"I am sorry you have so little faith in me, Grace," said Walter.

Spring came on very early. The snow melted away, and the grass was green in March; the bright little crocusses sprang up in grandmamma's garden, and in the pretty wood, on the other side of the creek, the air was fragrant with the blue and white sweet-scented wild violets,

The roads were deep and heavy now, and the stage did not pass our gate till after dark. We were all gathered in the little sitting-room one evening, Walter ciphering away on his slate, and the rest of us at our usual occupations, when we heard the sound of wheels, coming up the lane. They stopped; the door opened, and we all rose with astonishment at the sight of *Gabrielle*, standing in the doorway.

In his amazement, Walter nearly overturned the table as he sprang to meet her, but she greeted him very carelessly, and passed on to grandmamma. She was really beautiful, even as she came from her journey, and her manner in meeting us all was so cordial, and apparently so sincere, that it really seemed as if Gabrielle had been growing amiable during our separation.

"Well, how do you all do?" she said, with her pretty accent, not very apparent now, except as appeared subsequently, in the soft hissing of the *s*, and the turning the *r* into a *w*.

"I am weally so tired of city life," she continued, "I thought I must come to the countwy. I have longed so to see the wild flowers, and for the sights and sounds of the countwy. And how do *you* do, grandmamma? How I have longed to see your dear face. And the poor old gentleman is dead, eh! What a happy welease for him, poor man! he suffered so. And how are you, Aunt Lainy? Busy as ever, I see; and Uncle Dan whittling;" and she

laughed such a merry laugh, it was perfectly contagious.

She was very fascinating, and made the cottage brilliant that evening. She took little notice of Walter, and laughed and chatted with the rest of us, telling us just what we wanted to know of Helen and Flora. I noticed that she passed Harry over very lightly.

"Oh, I am so amused with your Aunt Kate," she rattled on, "I make myself so much fun with her. She says I am such a *mystery* to her; and she wonders where I get my beautiful dresses, and bonnets; and I only say, "Oh, they were sent to me by some of my *welations fwom Pawis*. Now she knows vewy well that's a fib, for I never heard a word from anybody in Fwance, since I came from there. You see, when your Aunt Hannah throws aside a silk dress, too old for her to wear, or some old lace, or feathers, or anything of that kind, I take it; and there is a little Fwench woman, on one of the small, back streets, with whom I have made fwiends, and she has taught me many little arts, and she will dye a dwess for me for a twifle; and then I have a nack of fixing it up, and it comes out all new."

"And so with the bonnets. I go with your aunt to a Fwench milliner's, just after she weceives her bonnets, and I give a glance at all, and I go home and make me a bonnet prettier than any of them, and the ladies go into *waptures*. 'Oh, where you get that *exquisite* hat, Mlle. De Lisle?' 'Oh,

I get it stwaight from Pawis.' Then they all come to see Mlle. Delisle's Fwench hat; and they say, 'Oh, how lovely! Now, no one in Amewica could make a hat like that!' and then I laugh—in my sleeve, you know; and your Aunt Kate is weady to expire with jealousy and wage, for she cannot afford to buy Fwench hats, and she cannot make anything even *decent*. Poor woman, I do so laugh at her vexation! But, Gwace, are you not going to give me a cup of tea? I am so howwibly tired, coming over these wough woads. If I had known what they were, I would not have wisked my neck, I can tell you."

"This dress must have cost considerable, I calculate," said Aunt Lainy, feeling it with her fingers.

"Oh, this is one of the old things; and I have worn it a year since Aunt Hannah threw it aside."

"Dew tell," said Aunt Lainey; and, adjusting her spectacles, she went to knitting again.

"You have not grown a bit, Grace," said Gabrielle, laughing, as she watched me preparing the tea. "But you improve; I think, if we could take you down to the city and give you an *air*, you would be quite good looking one of these days."

"Thank you, Gabrielle," said I, setting the tea on the table.

There was quite a scene, when Gabrielle came to go to bed. She was so horrified at that ladder; she could never go up it—never! "But if I must,

Walter, you must go up first, and weach me your hand."

So Walter sprang up the ladder, and stooping down, he reached his hand to the charming French girl, and, amid many exclamations, and little screams, and much pretty laughing, she was safely landed on the platform.

"Oh, dear, now I am up, but how am I ever to get down again; that will be worse! Oh, Gwace, I must stay here all my days! And do you really sleep in this wee little bit of a room, Gwace? Does'nt it seem stwange, Walter, after Mrs. Stevens' beautiful, large bed-rooms? And oh, Gwace, you should see Mrs. Elliston's bwoad marble staircase, with such fine statues all the way up. I wonder how Mrs. Elliston, or one of your aunts, would get up this ladder?"—and again came that ringing, merry laugh. I could hardly realize that this was the same moody, silent, French girl, who used to sit by herself in our own home. I did not know how false she was, or that she was only acting a part then, and now.

"But how *am* I to sleep here, Gwace?" she said; "I can scarcely turn wound in this little woom."

"Very *attic*, but not very elegant!" said Walter, putting in his head.

"Pwetty good, Walter, pwetty good!" said Gabrielle. "Now you may go—good night;" and she shut the door in his face, and chatted and rattled away till she fell asleep.

Chapter Fourth.

THE LIGHT OF THE COTTAGE GOES OUT.

HALF waking and half sleeping, the next morning, I was indistinctly aware, for a long time, of a sawing of boards in the little workshop behind the kitchen, and at length became aroused sufficiently to feel satisfied that some unusual work was going on there. It was daylight too, which was a sure indication that it was time for me to be up, and about my morning duties.

When I descended to the kitchen, and looked into the workshop, there, to be sure, was Walter, with Uncle Dan for an assistant, busily engaged in making a set of stairs, intended, as I afterwards found, to facilitate the access to the loft. They were rough certainly, and very narrow and steep, for there was little room for stair-way in the cottage; but still they were better than the ladder.

"I am making you a stair-case, Grace," said he; "It is too bad for you to have to climb that ladder, every time you go to your room."

I said, "Thank you, Walter, but I have climbed it long enough to have become quite expert by this time." I would have been glad if he had been so considerate for my comfort, before Gabrielle came. I thought I would not disturb Gabrielle this morning as she was so tired after her journey, but before breakfast was ready, I heard her calling—

"Oh, Gwace, I cannot get down! Send Walter here to help me, do!"

Walter was at the foot of the ladder in a moment.

"Oh, Walter, come up, and give me your two hands, and help me down! How must I go, Walter? backward?"

And with a repetition of the pretty little screams and exclamations of the night before, the perilous descent was safely accomplished. She had on a neat, pretty buff morning-dress, and looked more charming, if possible, than the night before. But, in fact, everything this fascinating French girl put on, fitted her so perfectly, and had so exactly the right air, and was so becoming, that it always seemed incapable of improvement.

She rattled away all breakfast-time just as she had done the night before, and was as agreeable and easy with all of us, as if she had never been among different scenes and associations. Her appearance was that of one perfectly at home, and perfectly contented, and even delighted to be so. She praised everything, and was continually drawing favorable

comparisons between our homely fare, and the dainties to which she was accustomed in the city.

Walter lingered, talking and laughing with her, till the hand of the old clock in the corner had passed the point, which usually warned him to be off for school. I reminded him of the fact. "Yes," said he, "I am going;" but still he lingered. Once or twice he started, but came back for something he had forgotten. Once more he said, "Good morning," but in a moment he put his head in at the door again, and said:

"Gabrielle, suppose you walk down to the bridge? The lane is very dry."

"Oh, I will, certainly," she replied; and they walked slowly down the lane, and then standing on the bridge, they lingered till I knew Walter's scholars would be waiting for him. Gabrielle came back, her animation all gone, and her manner listless, and uninterested.

"Oh, dear, I am so tired," she said, "I will go to bed a little while." And she disappeared up the ladder quickly enough, now Walter was not there to help her; and nothing more was heard of her till dinner-time. The intermission was so short that Walter never came home at noon, but dismissing his scholars at four o'clock, he generally took a run to the post-office, and then home.

After dinner Gabrielle sat down and wrote a letter to one of her dear friends, as she said, and then

announced her intention of walking to the post-office, to mail it herself.

"My child," said grandma, "the roads are very muddy; Walter will take your letter for you in the morning."

"Oh no, grandmamma, I want to go myself. I have my over-shoes; and I must see that old tavern, and old Johnny Gilmore and his wife again;" and putting on her pretty straw bonnet, lined with pink, her favorite and most becoming color, she started off. She did not come back till nearly tea-time, and then Walter was with her. Again she was brilliant and fascinating, and made the evening pass quickly, with her lively rattle.

The next morning Walter was up early, and at work again, and before he went to school the rough stairs were finished, and adjusted in their place. If they had only been made with any reference to my comfort and convenience, I am sure I should have gone up and down with more pleasure and pride, than ever Mrs. Elliston, or any other rich lady, feels in ascending and descending her marble stair-case.

The next morning Gabrielle walked out with Walter again, but this time she went beyond the bridge, and the two walked slowly up the hill together and were lost to the sight.

"Heigh ho!" said Aunt Lainy, "how long is that French girl going to stay here, Grace?"

"I don't know, Aunt Lainy."

"What do you think she's come for, Grace?"

"How can I tell, Aunt Lainy?"

"Walter's a fool!" said the old lady. "That girl can appear like an angel of light; and there's another person can appear so, too! And she's considerable like that other person, I can tell you! She's learnt her lessons in his school! I wish she'd go!"

"If Walter likes Gabrielle better than he does me, it would make no difference whether she were here, or away," I said.

"Oh, dear! the men are just the same every where, and in all time!" sighed Aunt Lainy; "I've been through that mill myself, and come out pretty well crushed! Luckily no bones were broken, though."

"Were you ever engaged to be married, Aunt Lainy?"

"To be sure I was, when I was a young, rosy, country girl: tolerable good looking too, some folks said. How was it, sister?"

"There wasn't a prettier girl for thirty miles round Danbury, than Roxalany Plummer," said grandmamma.

"You may well wonder at that, Grace," said Aunt Lainy, "but time makes wonderful changes in a body's face, and Jabez Whittaker was every bit as handsome as Walter. Bless me! I met him the other day. A poor, wrinkled, toothless, white-haired, stooping old man, wheezing and groaning over the troubles of life."

"How came you to break off your engagement, Aunt Lainy?"

"Oh, that Almiry Pettibone came along—a great, awkward, noisy thing, but with a rattling, pleasant way too, and she was mightily taken with Jabez, and that flattered him, and when I see how matters was a goin', I just gave him his walkin' ticket before he asked for it. *She* led him a life, poor man! He's had *enough* to break him down."

"Perhaps he would have been happier after all, if you had married him, Aunt Lainy."

"Perhaps he would, child. There's no tellin'. But, I guess, it's best as it is. Better be a forlorn old maid, child, than marry a man that doesn't love you. But sometimes, I think how bright the world all looked to me, before that 'ere Almiry Pettibone crossed my track; and I think its worth a long, lonely life, to have had so much happiness, even for for a little while."

Oh! the failing memory of old age will let many other things slip, before the romance of "Love's young dream" will pass from the mind.

There I sat a long time, looking at Aunt Lainy steadily, but not seeing her at all. My gaze was fixed on that long, lonely future, and I was trying to penetrate the darkness that was to follow, when youth's bright visions had all gone out.

I went to sleep that night, and dreamed that I met Walter, an old, white-haired, decrepid man, and that he took my hand, and said, "Gracie, why

didn't you keep the promise you made me, when we walked by the mill-stream that moonlight evening?"

But, before I could answer, Gabrielle turned in her sleep, and murmured Walter's name, and that awoke me. The next day brought me a letter from Helen.

"What a strange freak is this, which has taken Gabrielle," she wrote. "There was a quarrel between her and Harry, in consequence of her conduct at a little party at Aunt Hannah's the other evening, and she flew into a great passion, and said she would take the boat the next morning, and go up into the country, to see grandmamma. She so often makes such threats that we thought nothing of it, but sure enough, the next morning her room was empty, and she was off. Harry hurried down to the boat, but did not reach the wharf in time. I am glad of this, for I cannot bear that she should see her power over him. Our poor, foolish brother is quite disconsolate, and looks as if he had lost every friend on earth. I wish he had spirit enough to pretend, at least, that he is perfectly indifferent to these fickle freaks of hers."

After Walter had gone that day, Gabrielle said, yawning:

"Oh, I suppose I must write to poor Hawwy. Poor fellow, I did vex him so. I suppose he is wretched all this time."

"More fool he," said Aunt Lainy. "Do you pretend you are engaged to Harry, Gabrielly?" she asked.

"Oh, I suppose so," she said, scribbling on the paper before her.

"And what do you go carrying on so with Walter for, then?" asked Aunt Lainy. "If you are going to marry a man, and if you like him, why don't you stick to him?"

"Oh, I care not for any of them much," answered Gabrielle. "I cannot help it, if the men like me."

"I wish Harry heard you say that," said Aunt Lainy, with a nervous twitch, which caused the dropping of several stitches. "I only wish Harry heard you say that!"

"Oh, I have said that to him many times," said the French girl.

"Gabrielly, you have no feelin'," said Aunt Lainy, more and more excited. "I would rather see our poor Harry in his grave, than married to such as you."

"Well, perhaps, you will," said Gabrielle, laughing heartily, "perhaps you will, Aunt Lainy; but I can do anything I choose with Hawwy; I can wind him wound my finger just like this bit of yarn."

"You are a miserable, heartless, French little wretch!" said Aunt Lainy, in high tones of indignation; "and I wish you would go away from here—you always make trouble."

"Vewy hospitable you are, Aunt Lainy, when I come so far to see you all."

"Humph!"

"I am not going yet. Walter is going to take

Mr. Hammond's buggy on Saturday and dwive me over to Sackville, to put a crosso on my mother's gwave."

"There you are with your crosses again. What good is a cross going to do your mother, I should like to know?" exclaimed the old lady, her severe Protestant notions taking the alarm."

"Now, old woman, you let my weligion alone. You may say anything else to me you please, but you just let my weligion alone," said Gabrielle, rising, and in a more furious rage than I had ever seen her. "My poor mother lies in unconsecwated gwound," she added. "I am going to see the pwiest, to ask him to consecwate that spot."

"When your father died, Gabrielle," said grand-mamma, "Mr. Temple was kind enough to have him buried in his own lot, and when your mother died, she was laid beside him."

"I care not so much about my father," answered the French girl, "I do not wemember him; but I loved my mother. I never loved anybody so much as I did my mother."

"And what difference will it make to your mother, poor child, whether a few words are said over the spot where her dust lies, by a priest or not? When the Lord comes for us, do you think it will make any difference where our poor bodies are found? No, my child, He will not ask us whether we have been Protestants or Catholics, or anything else, but just whether we have trusted in Him, as our only hope of salvation."

"There is no use in talking to me, gwandmamma; I believe as my Church believes, and as I have been taught. My pwiest takes care of my conscience, and I pay him for it. Mr. Stevens gives me money enough for that, at any rate."

"A horrible doctrine!" said Aunt Lainy.

"A vewy comfortable doctwine anyway," said Gabrielle.

"If it would only work," said grandmamma; "but how would it be, my child, if, when you come to die, you find that this has all been a great mistake; that the priest has had no right to declare your sins forgiven, except so far as you were penitent; and that their whole burden rests on your own head?"

"It would be a mighty burden then, gwandmamma," said Gabrielle, shrugging her shoulders, "but I do believe what my church teaches, and I am not afwaid."

"Blind leaders of the blind!" said Aunt Lainy.

"I tell you I will not hear you abuse my weligion, Aunt Lainy! Gwandmamma may say what she chooses, but you are so hard and so bigoted, I will not hear you." And she flew up to our little room, and shut herself in with a great slamming of the door.

The proposed ride to Sackville was taken on Saturday, but what was done about poor Madam D'Arcy's grave, or whether Gabrielle's mind was relieved by the ground being made sacred, I never

learned. On Sunday, I saw that there was a cloud between Walter and Gabrielle; sometimes she was coaxing in her manner, and sometimes cold.

On entering the sitting-room suddenly, for something for grandmamma, who was quite unwell, I saw Gabrielle standing by Walter, with both of his hands in both of hers, and looking up in his face, with an appealing, fascinating expression.

"Oh, *do*, Walter!" I heard her say; but when they saw me, they sprang from each other suddenly, and tried to begin a conversation on indifferent matters. Gabrielle could do this to perfection, but Walter was not such an adept in the art of deceit, and he could not so readily recover from his confusion.

I found afterwards, that she was urging Walter to take her over to Sackville, to her own church. I have thought since that her pertinacity that day was owing, not so much to her desire to go, or to have Walter go, as to her determination to show her power over him. Walter seemed loth to disappoint Gabrielle, and yet he hardly dared to go in the face of grandmamma, and all of us. How the matter would have turned, I cannot imagine, but luckily for Walter, he saw Mr. Hammond's family driving to church, with both their wagons, so there was no going to Sackville that day, and he was spared the effects of Gabrielle's anger.

In the afternoon Walter made some excuse for not going to church, and he and Gabrielle crossed

the stream, and wandered off to the woods upon the other side.

Grandmamma had a very restless night, and in the morning she was so ill that Uncle Dan was despatched for Dr. Richards, who appeared as quickly as possible.

"Poor Dan! is on the first D. of Doctor, down at my house yet," said he; "but I took it for granted from his hobbling down there in such haste, that I was wanted here for some one. It isn't you, I see, Gracie. *Grandma*, hey? What's the matter with dear grandma?"

"She seems to have taken a heavy cold, Doctor; she was quite sick all day yesterday, and had a restless, feverish night. I think her mind wandered a little; she thought she was with my grandfather, and called me by my mother's name all night."

Doctor Richards immediately went into grandma's room, and after the necessary examination, and inquiries, he came out with me into the sitting-room.

"I cannot tell how it is going, my little girl," he said, "grandmamma has a good sound constitution, but such an attack is apt to go hard, at her time of life. You must be very careful of her, Grace, and keep her very quiet. I wish that old maid was back at her home in Sackville."

"Oh, Aunt Lainy is very useful to me, Doctor, when grandmamma is sick. I am obliged to be in

her room so much, that it is quite important some one should be about the house."

"Is that French girl here yet, Grace?"

"Yes, sir."

"I meet her every morning with Walter," said the Doctor. "She's got to go! This house is too small for such a tongue as hers, now she has found the use of it, especially when there's a sick person in it. It will be better for us all to have her go, won't it, Grace? better for us all, won't it?"

"It will make little difference to me, Doctor," said I; and I suppose I sighed.

"Oh, is that it?" said the good doctor. "Never mind, Gracie; there's as good fish in the sea, &c., &c., you know."

Perhaps I was a little nervous after my wakeful, restless night, but in spite of all my efforts, I could not keep my eyes from filling, till they ran over; and the tears came pouring down my cheeks.

"Oh, Gracie! he is not worth one tear of yours. I am vexed! clear out of patience with Walter! He was not fit for you, Gracie! He has no force of character. He is just fit for the French girl. Let them go, Gracie."

Yes, let all the bright hopes and visions go; and laugh and clap your hands like children, as their bubbles fly up in the air, and burst, and are nothing!

"The *French girl* must go at all events," said the Doctor; "I will tell her."

"She will be very angry, Doctor."

"I care little for that ; but I will lay you a shilling, Grace, that she is not, or that she does not show it to me, at any rate. Call her down, or up, or in, or from wherever she is, will you ?"

Gabrielle came in ecstasies to meet Doctor Richards. "I have hardly seen you, sir, except upon the woad ; and I have wanted to see you so. You and I are vewy old fwiends."

"Oh, yes, very old friends, Mademoiselle ; and I am going to take the privilege of a very old friend, may I ?"

"Oh, certainly, Doctor."

"The old lady is very sick, Miss Gabrielle, and it is necessary that this house be very quiet."

"So I was thinking, so I was thinking, Doctor," said Gabrielle, her ready wit jumping at the conclusion the Doctor had not reached ; "I had quite made up my mind to go home to-morrow ; may I stay till to-morrow, Doctor ?"

"Yes, if you will be very quiet. One thing more, Miss De Lisle"—(I could not help hearing this, as I stood in grandmama's little bed-room)—"I suppose you know that Walter, and my little Grace, are engaged to be married ?"

"I should not think so, from appeawances, Doctor."

"No, you would not think so, and perhaps you would not have it so ; and maybe it will not be so any longer."

"Oh, I care not, I am sure," said Gabrielle, with a significant shrug.

"Well, if you care not, go home, like a good girl, and marry Harry when he's ready, if he's such a—I mean—"

"Say it out, Doctor, 'if he's such a fool, eh,'" laughed Gabrielle. "There is no telling what I will do—I cannot tell myself—nobody can tell ; but I will go home to-morrow—Good-bye, good-bye," and she bowed, and smiled, and courtesied, as the doctor got into his gig.

"Meddlesome old busy-body !" she said, as she shut the door. "I wonder what he wants to come lecturing me for ; I will go home, just because I am so tired here—not for the old doctor. Poor Walter ! he will feel bad ; it is so lonesome for him here, poor fellow !"

Gabrielle could not go till afternoon, as the stage did not pass till that time. When the hour for her departure came, I found to my surprise, that Walter had given his scholars a holiday for the afternoon, and was going to accompany her to Templeton, where she would take the boat. I was much afraid he would go down the river with her, for I knew the dissatisfaction with Walter was increasing ; so that I was very glad, when he came back in the evening stage.

Walter always avoided being alone with me now ; and the next morning, when I was putting our little sitting-room in order, he looked in for a moment, and quickly withdrew his head ; I said—

"Walter, will you come here one moment ? I want to speak to you."

He came, looking, if I must use the expression, rather *sheepish*.

"Walter," said I, "you need not be afraid of me, or avoid me, for the future. I only want to say, that you are no longer bound by the promise made to me ; I absolve you from it from this time."

"Why is this, Gracie?" he asked, as if he hardly knew what to say.

"You must have thought me very blind, Walter, not to have seen that this step would be a great relief to you. I should have spoken to you long before, but there was no need while Gabrielle was here ; now that we are to return to the old way of things, it will prevent awkwardness, to have the matter understood by all."

"You are jealous of Gabrielle, Grace."

"No, not jealous, if I know what it is to be jealous, but I should be stupid, indeed, not to see that Gabrielle's society is much more agreeable to you than mine ; and I know the bonds which bind us are galling to you. From this time I am your cousin, sister, friend, ready to do anything I can for your comfort or happiness, but nothing more, Walter, nothing more."

Just here we were interrupted by a knock at the door, and when it was opened, there stood Mr. Havens, one of the school committee. Mr. Havens was a very nervous, awkward man, and he had a peculiarly frightened look, this morning.

"How d'ye do ? How are ye?" he said, standing first on one foot and then on the other.

"Very well, Mr. Havens, walk in ; sit down."

"Folks all well?" he asked.

"All but grandmamma."

"Old lady enjoys poor health, eh ! what seems to be the matter of her?"

"A severe cold, it seems to be."

A long pause ; Mr. Havens twirling his hat round and round.

"Nice spell of weather we've had."

"Very pleasant," said Walter.

"Quite a freshet. Do-man's-kill's riz quite unusual."

"Yes, so I hear."

Another pause ; the hat twirling round more rapidly.

"Dan'l about hum?"

"Yes, sir ; do you want to see Uncle Dan?"

"No, no, nothing partiklar."

A very long pause, the hat revolving rapidly. After several clearings of the throat, he said, with increasing embarrassment :

"Walter, our committee's had a meetin' ; and they app'inted me to call on you ; I wish they'd app'inted Mr. Hornby, he's got a sight more o' pluck'n I have."

"What is the object of this call, Mr. Havens?"

"Well, they seemed to kind o' think—the committee, mind—that you'd kind o' lost your interest in the school, and they told me to say they thought it advisable for you to resign."

"What is the complaint, sir?"

"Well, they say—the *committee*, mind—that the scholars says, that ever sence you went away, down the river, you know, about Christmas time, that you ha'n't evinced no interest in the school. You know you didn't come home till near about a fortnight after the time; and sence then, they do say, you come late and go early, and don't seem to know what you're about when you're there. This is what the *children* say, mind, Walter."

"There is some truth in this, I confess, Mr. Havens," said Walter, greatly embarrassed. "I have been much occupied of late, but I had intended to begin this morning, in season, and to be regular in attendance upon my duties. The term closes, you know, in about a month, and I expected to resign then, and enter into other business. If the *committee* are willing to let me remain till then, they shall have no cause of complaint."

"Very fair, Walter, very well said; I will tell 'em what you say, and I don't doubt but they'll agree to it. Good day; good day, Grace; hope the old lady'll come round." And poor Mr. Havens' distressing duty was accomplished.

Walter's meekness surprised me, but I have since seen on other occasions, very fiery tempers quite subdued under deserved censure. The result was, that Walter was allowed to remain in his situation, till the close of the term, and during that time he gave, I believe, entire satisfaction.

From this time grandmamma's increasing indisposition kept me so occupied, that I saw little of Walter; and my thoughts were so taken up with her, that I had little time to dwell upon the new aspect things had put on.

Dear grandmamma! how quietly and peacefully she went down toward the dark valley; not dark to her, however, even in the prospect. Her life had been so pure and holy, her Christian hope so clear and distinct, her faith and trust so firm, that when the dying hour came, she had nothing to do but to die, and go home to her Father's house.

She had loved the world, and the beautiful things in it; hers was a sunny, happy temperament, which made her enjoy everything of beauty, whether in nature or in books; but the beauty of the Book of books, was especially the object of her delight.

She was ready to stay, or ready to go; ready to enjoy, or ready to endure. She had ever been a pilgrim and a stranger here, passing on to the heavenly mansion, and at the close of every day, she only

"Pitched her moving tent
A day's march nearer home."

I often think with what intense delight must such a spirit as grandmamma's enjoy those heavenly glories, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Well, soon she went to their enjoyment, placid

and serene ; and the sweet old face still smiled upon us, till it was laid away, beneath the sods of the green yard. There were no harsh lines for the cold hand to smooth out here ; all was lovely and beautiful.

We laid her by the other dear ones, in the burying place at Sackville. I then saw for the first time poor Madam D'Arcy's grave, with its little stone cross. I was more than ever struck with the absurdity of consecrating that spot, so near the place where our sainted ones were lying. We needed nothing to make it a sacred spot to us, save that those honored relics slumbered there.

Around the grave was sung a hymn, as was our country custom. The one selected was sweet and appropriate.

“Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust,
And give these sacred relics room
To slumber in the silent dust.

“Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
Invade thy bounds,—no mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
While angels watch the soft repose.

“So Jesus slept—God's dying son
Passed through the grave, and blest the bed :
Rest here, blest saint, till from his throne
The morning break, and pierce the shade.

“Break from his throne, illustrious morn !
Attend, oh earth ! his sovereign word,
Restore thy trust—a glorious form
Shall then arise to meet the Lord.”

I surely need not describe to one who has returned from a new made grave, to what was so lately the home of the dear one gone, the desolation of heart which comes over you, as you enter the silent dwelling, now like a body without a soul.

“My second home is lost to me,” said I ; “and whither now ?”

For grandmamma, who never left anything undone, or half done, had distinctly expressed her wishes during that last week of her life, as to the future course of each of us. A renewed and very earnest offer of a home had been made by my Aunt Eunice, when she heard of grandmamma's serious illness ; and it was grandmamma's wish that I should accept it.

“I leave this house to my sister,” she said, “trusting and expecting that she will ever care for my poor son. But it is no longer a place for you, my dear. Accept your aunt's offer, and go to be near your sisters. You have had but a dull life here, poor child, but you have been a dear, good child to me. May God bless you and reward you !”

I feel the touch of that dear wrinkled hand on my head to this moment.

“Oh, dear !” thought I, as I went to my little room that night, “I am young, scarcely sixteen, to have borne such a weight of sorrow. I have seen so many changes ; I have lost so many, on whom I leaned ; and Walter ! oh, Walter !”

But the discipline of life is worth little, if it does

not lead us nearer at every stroke, to Him who appoints it—if in each event we do not see the ruling hand ; if each blessing is not dear, because He sends it, and each affliction submissively and cheerfully received, because it has seemed best to the Allwise mind that we suffer it. So I thought, as I dried my tears, and laid me down, saying :

Nearer, my God to thee,
 Nearer to thee ;
 E'en though it be a cross
 That raiseth me.
 Still all my song shall be,
 Nearer, my God to thee—
 Nearer to thee !

Chapter Fifth.

INTRODUCTION TO CITY LIFE.

AWAY ! away ! past the blue Kaatskills, into the untried world on the other side. It is well that the mind is capable of diversion by change of scene, so that in truth there is no possibility of resisting it ; that, away from the associations of our grief, it presses with less crushing weight, and other sights and other sounds attract the senses, and draw the mind from its sorrow.

Down the beautiful river, with its new scenes of beauty opening as we changed our course, with its woods, and lawns, and villas, and oh ! the mountains, with their ever varying lights and shades—the blue Kaatskills, on which, like Rasselas, in the happy valley, I had so often fixed my gaze, and wondered about the world on the other side.

Walter was with me, for I had waited, in order to have his protection upon a journey where all

would be so new. But the charm his presence would once have added to the trip, was gone. There was no sympathy now between us ; indeed, there was an impassable barrier of restraint and silence. Walter was not thinking of me or of my feelings ; he looked happy and excited ; he was going to be near Gabrielle. But how was this all to end ?

“ Oh, blindness to the future kindly given.”

I sat watching the beautiful shores as we glided past them, at times taking in their beauty, and at times thinking of the new world of which I should soon make a part, however insignificant. This Aunt Eunice, to whom I was going. I knew nothing of her. She had hardly opened her lips during that short visit at our old home, the memory of which was like a confused dream. All I remember of her was her stiff, wooden look, and the sentence she had spoken to me at parting. But though the offer she then made was kind, there was no softness of manner, or gentleness of tone, in making it. My sisters had seldom mentioned Aunt Eunice, and what there might be beneath that cold, hard exterior, I was yet to find out. Once more I drew her letter, received during grandmamma's illness, from my pocket, and read it.

“ MY NIECE GRACE :

“ I hear from Harry that your grandmother is ill. I suppose she will not recover. I write to remind

you of what I said on parting. I am lonesome—the other boarders in this house are nothing to me—your aunts are less to me than strangers—I like you ; I like your sisters ; they seem to have hearts ; I hope they won't lose them, in the heartless atmosphere they move in. I have enough for you and me. I want a companion. If your grandmother dies, come down immediately. There is a little room for you here, and you don't have to climb a ladder to get to it, as the French girl says you do at the cottage. Good-by. Your Aunt,
“ EUNICE LINTON.”

My sisters' letters, though graphic and minute, had hardly prepared me for the Babel-like confusion into which I was plunged, on my arrival in the great city. How I was dragged through it, and through whose intervention I was saved from being crushed between the wheels of various moving vehicles, and piloted between horses' heads and horses' heels, I never knew ; but when I was finally seated in a carriage, I drew a long sigh of relief, and felt that the worst was over.

For miles, we rode through the crowded, bustling streets, with their never ceasing, living tide pouring up and down. I had never imagined there were so many people in the world. Up and down, and round, through squares and cross-streets, and by-streets, and at last our long journey is ended, and we stop before a large, brick house, on the corner of a square.

Up-stairs I am led by a servant, and find myself in the presence of my aunt. How chilling and heart sickening is a quiet, calm, indifferent reception, on one's first entrance into new and untried scenes. How I longed to meet some one around whose neck I could throw my arms, and feel, "Here I may rest!"

But I would as soon have thrown my arms about the neck of the image of stone in the centre of the square, upon which my window looked, as round that of Aunt Eunice. It did not seem, certainly, as if she was very much delighted to see me. But I have learned by long experience never to judge from first appearances.

Walter had left me at the door, and the news of my arrival soon reached my sisters. In about an hour, Helen arrived, breathless and beautiful, her brilliant color heightened by haste and excitement. Here was a welcome, warm enough to satisfy even my exacting heart.

"My darling! my darling! Is it actually you? Are you really here, Grace?" while I, like a little fool, only sobbed and cried, with my head on her shoulder, and her arms round me. In another hour I heard another familiar voice—"Where is she? where is she?"—and in rushed Flora.

I was not prepared for the exceeding loveliness of this dear sister. There had always been a peculiar charm about her face, but as she was younger than Helen when we parted, the change to me was

more striking. Both of my sisters had acquired that air of ease, and grace, which constant intercourse with good society imparts. Not such society as that they met at the houses of my aunts, for there was little that was improving or exalting there. But at Mrs. Leighton's they were quite at home, and here they formed part of a circle of refined and cultivated men and women; the true and only nobility of our republican land.

Later in the afternoon Harry came in, with his warm and affectionate greeting. My poor brother looked pale and haggard, and his face carried me back to that dreadful morning, when he came home with the body of dear papa. He was no longer the merry, cheerful boy of our country home, but a man of cares and anxieties; and he often heaved sighs, as if very weary.

Oh, how many questions to ask, and to answer! Fatigue, hunger, everything else was forgotten, while I sat between my two sweet sisters, going over recent events, in answer to their rapid and eager questions, and hearing from them of all that had happened since our separation, and which had not been told by letter.

Oh, Jeannie Deans! the voice of the dear one *is* like music, sweet to the ear, compared to the "black scores on the paper!"

The tea-bell warned them to be off. In vain I urged them to stay, saying I did not wish to go down among strangers that night; but if Aunt Eunice

would allow it, I would take a cup of tea in her own little parlor. However, they insisted that it was time for them to go; "but we shall see you every day, dear Gracie, and you will soon find the way to our homés! Oh, it is so sweet to have you here!"

Aunt Eunice went down to her tea, and I sat alone in the corner of the sofa. I did not know how weary I was, till the opening of the door roused me with such a sudden start, that I knew I had been asleep. It was my aunt.

"Here is your tea, Grace!" she said, and that was all.

"You are very kind to take this trouble, Aunt Eunice," said I.

She did not say it was "no trouble," but only went on with her sewing in her rocking-chair.

"I must study this silent aunt of mine," said I to myself; "she seems to have

'Forgot herself to marble,'

again. It is by deeds, not words, I must judge her, I see."

She sewed away in silence, and I sat closing my eyes, and opening them with a sudden start, and nodding involuntarily at her. At length on opening my eyes suddenly, I found that she had laid aside her sewing, and was looking at me.

"You are tired, Grace," she said, "would you like to go to bed?"

"Yes, aunt, if you please; you know we had to rise very early, in order to reach the boat."

She struck a match, and to my amazement all was made brilliant by a magic touch, and led me to my little room, opening just from the parlor. It was a front room, looking out on the square, twice as large as my little room at home, and neat and pretty.

"What a dear little room, Aunt Eunice," I said, "I am sure I can take real comfort here, if I choose."

I thought she might have said, "I hope so, child;" but she did not.

I was so accustomed to sympathy in all my feelings from grandmamma, and to a kind and ready response to all I said, that I missed it when I spoke. I could not understand how Aunt Eunice could help saying, what would seem so natural; but she too was a creature of habit, and she had been accustomed to sitting alone, with no one to speak to, and so her naturally silent habit had been confirmed.

I slept a dreamless sleep, that first night in the city, in spite of the carts and other vehicles rattling round the square, which kept me awake many a night after; and it seemed as if I had hardly dropped asleep, when I was roused by a tap at my door, and I found the sun streaming in at my window.

It was my Brother Harry, who tapped at my door. "Come, Gracie," said he, "get up and breakfast with me, for I shall have little chance to see you, except at the table."

"In a few minutes, Harry," I said, and I sprang up, and made my toilet as quickly as possible.

I found Harry waiting for me in the parlor.

"I came home earlier than usual last night, my dear little sister, on purpose to see you."

"I thought you might come, Harry, and I tried to keep awake, but I had to give up, I was so tired."

"How bright and fresh you look this morning, Gracie."

"I slept straight through, Harry."

"Why, I thought the unusual noises would disturb you. Didn't you hear the cry of fire, and the engines passing here?"

"Nothing at all."

"There was an awful fire, and I suppose it is burning yet. I went out, for the flame looked as if it were very near Aunt Hannah's. By the way, Gracie, if you will hurry, I will take you down to Aunt Kate's, if Aunt Eunice will spare you. It is all in my way."

"Grace can do as she likes," said Aunt Eunice.

We three took breakfast together alone, for the rest of the boarders were not yet down. Harry told me that some of them did not breakfast till eleven o'clock.

As soon as breakfast was over, I put on my bonnet, and calling an omnibus, we took our seats, and rode down the street. Passing a handsome stone house, Harry said, "That is where Aunt Hannah lives."

"Does Gabrielle live *there*?"

"Yes."

"Oh," said I, laughing, "the cottage, and the ladder, and my little room, must indeed have appeared small and mean to her."

"She seemed to be contented there for a long time, at all events," said Harry.

I only said "yes," for this was an embarrassing subject for me to talk upon with Harry, in every point of view. Down the broad avenue we rode, Harry pointing out to me different objects of interest on the way. At length we stopped before a house not so elegant as Aunt Hannah's. It was, as Helen described it, one of a long row of three-story brick houses.

Helen was the only person to be seen besides the servants. "I have given the older children their breakfast, and they are off to school," she said, "Uncle Harwood has gone down to his business, and Aunt Kate will not be up for some time yet, so I will give the little ones a holiday, and you and I will have a nice morning together. Suppose, before Aunt Kate is up, we go down together to Aunt Ella's, to see Flora—poor child, she never can go out of a morning—and we will all visit together."

This was a delightful plan, and we started on our walk, chatting all the way.

"Oh, Helen, it is so pleasant to hear some one talk. How shall I live with Aunt Eunice? I cannot get anything but 'yes' and 'no' out of her."

"I think Aunt Eunice will have fewer sins of the tongue to answer for than any one I know," said Helen. "I often think of her with envy, when I have made some imprudent speech that makes me ready to bite my tongue off."

"You haven't told me anything of Aunt Hannah's girls, Helen."

"Oh, poor Aurelia and Evelina; they are just what you would suppose children so brought up would be, especially with weak minds at the start. They are poor, little, pale things, accustomed as they are to luxurious fare and late hours. Aunt Hannah prides herself much on their beauty, and anticipates with great delight the sensation they will produce, upon their entrance into the world."

"Everything in their education has reference to this great object. The idea of creating a sensation, and even of making a splendid marriage, is already continually kept before the minds of these poor children. For this they are drilled, to walk, hold their heads, play the piano, and dance, till there is actually not a natural movement about them. With this training, by such a worldly mother, and with Gabrielle constantly before them as an example, how can they grow up otherwise than utterly unprincipled?"

"But the very funniest thing of all is, that Aunt Hannah has begun to send them to *Sunday school*. In making a call the other day she happened to meet a lady (Mrs. Howard Crane, I think she called her) from what is called the upper class; a sort of fash-

ionable, religious woman, who attends the same church with her, but whose acquaintance she has never been able to make before. This lady was expressing her opinion on the subject of Sunday schools. 'Our clergyman has been to see me,' she said, 'and he has convinced me that persons of a certain *rank* and *station* ought to set an example by sending their children to Sunday school. It is so important that the middling and poorer classes should be thus instructed, and they will be more likely to go if *we* set them the example. Now, I have determined to send my girls, and I have engaged Miss Gaston to take them, and made her promise not to take any children but those of our own set. I am so afraid of their forming low associations.'

"From this time it has been Aunt Hannah's aim to get her children into the same class with this lady's daughters, and she has at last succeeded; and she talks as loudly of 'setting a proper example to the middling and lower classes,' as any one."

By this time we had reached Aunt Ella's house, which was in a gloomy, narrow, back street, with no prospect in any direction but long rows of brick houses. As we went up the steps I sighed, and said, "Poor Flora; did she come from our pleasant country home to such a place as this? and she has never complained!"

"No, not even to me. Flora is a wonder; just let her think she is doing her *duty*, and it is all right to her."

Aunt Ella, of course, was in bed, Mr. Arnold was gone, and Flora had begun her morning's task, and was patiently giving a writing lesson to four little careless, blotting scribblers.

She welcomed us with the greatest delight.

"Come, Flora," said Helen, "turn these children over to the nurse, and go back with us, and have a day of leisure. It is a privilege I have taken for myself, and I am going to take it for you."

"Oh, how I should love to! I wish I knew what to do," she said, irresolutely, "I ought not to disturb Aunt Ella to ask her, and she will be very angry if I go without."

"She will not be angry long, she can't keep awake for the purpose," said Helen. "Come, you must go; I'll take the responsibility; you *shall* breathe the fresh air, and have one whole day to yourself, you poor, tired child; there isn't a mill horse, that has such a steady, unbroken round of duties to plod through as you have. I mean to speak to Mr. Arnold about it if I can ever get sight of him. Come, put on your things."

"I will just look in at Aunt Ella's room one moment," said Flora.

Presently she returned, saying that Aunt Ella was sound asleep, and, calling the nurse, she committed the children to her care, and was ready to accompany us. When we reached Aunt Kate's house she was awake, and sent for us all to come to her dressing room, where she was sitting in her

wrapper, while a maid brushed her hair. With her was Aunt Hannah, who had ventured out at an unusually early hour, and was planning, in a state of great excitement, a party she proposed giving the following week.

I found that my aunts could afford to be quite gracious to me, now that they were certain that nothing else would be expected of them.

"Ah, how do you do, my dear, how do you do? Quite improved, Hannah, isn't she? That is one advantage of living in the country, it gives one such a fresh color. It is really surprising, too, what a genteel air deep black gives to *any one*."

"I was just talking to your aunt, girls, about a party I propose giving next week. Of course, Grace, my dear, we shall not expect *you* to join our parties while you are in such deep mourning. We will leave you in quiet, my dear."

"Yes, yes, my dear; come to see us in a quiet way, you know, when we have no company," said Aunt Kate.

"It seems as if my girls would *never* be old enough to come out," said Aunt Hannah; "and yet when I remember that I've got to grow old as fast as they do, I don't feel inclined to hurry them on. If I could only stand still now, while they grow up, it would just suit me. Of course they appear at my own parties, and that is one reason I give them so often. It brings the girls forward. What do you think, Kate, about putting the least blush of rouge

on Aurelia's cheeks? I can't think what makes that child so deadly pale."

"Better let her be pale, than spoil her complexion so early, Hannah. If you begin you must go on."

"That's true. Now, Evelina's hair and eyes are so dark, they contrast well with her pale complexion; but Aurelia would certainly be handsomer, for a little color."

Aunt Kate made a grimace with the side of her face which was toward us.

"Girls," said Aunt Hannah, "I came to say that I will come for you in the carriage at two o'clock, to go and call on Mrs. Leighton. I intend to invite her, and must call first."

"Oh, that is just the thing, Aunt Hannah," said Helen. "We want to take Grace up there as early as possible."

"Oh, *Grace!*" said Aunt Hannah, coldly.

"Never mind me," I said, "I can go at any time."

"I don't think Mrs. Leighton would be very glad to see any of us, without Gracie, after she hears she is in town," said Flora.

"Well, I suppose Gabrielle can stay at home," said Aunt Hannah.

"No, of course," I protested, "no one must stay at home for me."

"I will tell you," said Flora, "Helen can go with you, and Grace and I will ride up in an omnibus."

"No, no," said Helen, "you don't separate me from my little sister, when I have just got her again. Gabrielle knows Mrs. Leighton, Aunt Hannah; she can introduce you."

"Well, I am not so sure about Gabrielle. She has her own plans for the day, I believe."

"Oh, I thought that was the reason you could not take Grace."

"Well, I will call for you, at any rate; and you can take Grace. Good-by."

"There she goes in her handsome carriage," said Aunt Kate, looking out of the window. "All she comes for, is to make me feel envious. Never mind! Wait a bit. The old gentleman is very feeble. Ah! won't I dash then? I guess it will be Aunt Hannah's turn to be envious, before long."

My sisters took the interval to invest me in a bonnet of rather more fashionable make than my Sackville hat, and a new shawl, and at the appointed hour we were ready for Aunt Hannah. She came, very elegantly attired, though in a dress better suited to sixteen than forty.

Our course was up town now, till we came into the region of magnificent dwellings, which seemed to me more like palaces than private residences.

"That is Mrs. Elliston's house; that white marble one. She is your Aunt Kate's divinity, you know. I declare, I don't see how she can toady that woman so! And there—look, girls! there is Mrs. Howard Crane's. Isn't it splendid! She's

an elegant woman ! I know her ! Oh, here she comes in her carriage. What a magnificent livery !”

As the carriage passed by, Aunt Hannah stretched out her long neck and bowed several times ; but was rewarded only by a cold, steady stare.

“Strange she didn’t recognize me,” said Aunt Hannah. “I suppose she must be near-sighted ; indeed I have heard so.”

“It is remarkable,” said my sister Helen, artlessly, “how many persons are near-sighted now-a-days. Aunt Kate is always complaining of it.”

“Oh, *Aunt Kate*,” said Aunt Hannah. “It may be very convenient for people to be near-sighted sometimes, when they meet *her*.”

“‘Oh, wad some power,’ &c.,” whispered Helen to me.

The carriage drew up before a fine, large free-stone mansion ; and Aunt Hannah, who had never been there before, was in ecstasies. Mrs. Leighton was at home, the polished waiter informed us ; and we had not many minutes to wait, before she appeared as lovely and simple as ever.

“And is it possible this is *Gracie* ?” she said, clasping me in her arms. “Oh, I should hardly know you, dear ! And now I have so many questions to ask, I hardly know where to begin. In the first place, how is dear old Doctor Richards ! Do you know I have some hopes of getting him back to the city, girls ? I received a letter from him the other day. He said, ‘Dear old grandma, at the

Mill-stream cottage, is dead ; and now my sweet little Grace is going, and that severs the last strong cord that binds me here.’”

“We are very happy to have my niece Grace among us,” said Aunt Hannah.

“Oh, you must be,” said Mrs. Leighton, “but you must not refuse me my share of her. I wish I could have one of these dear girls with me all the time ; indeed I have serious thoughts of running away with *Flora*. When will you three come and spend a good long, old-fashioned day with me, like those we used to spend together in the country ?”

The day was fixed upon, and we took our leave, Aunt Hannah’s tongue running all the way home, upon the splendors of Mrs. Leighton’s house, and the exquisite taste displayed in the furniture.

Thinking it hardly fair to spend the whole of this first day away from Aunt Eunice, I asked Aunt Hannah to drop me there on her way home. Helen determined to stop, too, and “help me through with my first dinner,” as she said, but poor *Flora*, being fearful of Aunt Ella’s anger, begged to be taken home.

“Well, Aunt Eunice, here we are !” said Helen, “I hope you do not think we have monopolized *Gracie* too completely, this first day.”

“It’s very natural,” said Aunt Eunice.

“Yes—you see it is nearly two years since we have seen her ; and there was so much to say and do. She has been worrying about-leaving you so long.”

"I am accustomed to being alone," said Aunt Eunice ; but whether she was displeased or not, I could not tell ; her manner was so invariably the same.

Harry came in about half an hour before dinner-time, much pleased to find Helen and myself there before him.

"Now, dear Harry, please tell me something about the people I am to meet at the table, will you ? You know I have not seen one of them yet."

"Well, first and foremost, are Mr. and Mrs. Swineburn, and their daughter ; very vulgar, but very rich, and very suddenly rich. Time was, they say, when Mr. Swineburn made *sausages* ; I shouldn't wonder, for I notice that he never touches them himself. But Mr. Swineburn, though he had retired from sausages, and entered the general pork department, had a strong attachment for the place where his honest gains had been made, and till lately has resisted all offers, however tempting, to purchase it. A few months since, however, the property being in a most eligible situation for a row of stores, he was offered so large a sum for it, that his own inclination, and the entreaties of his wife, and daughter, caused him to accept it.

"The daughter and heiress is really a pretty nice girl, and like the daughters of many of our tradespeople, has had a fashionable boarding-school education ; so that though proud enough of papa's wealth, she is very much ashamed of papa's and

mamma's English. The poor girl is really subjected to constant and great mortification ; though with a ready tact, she generally manages to conceal it.

"They are boarding here, while an elegant residence is in the process of erection ; every detail of which is laid before us as regularly as the courses on the table. It is a '*palatable mansion*,' as Mrs. Swineburn says ; the word would be rather more appropriate if applied to their former residence ; I don't know whether she means *palatial* or what.

"Then we have a young clergyman, (you need not set your cap, Gracie, I hear he is engaged,) his name is Malcolm ; a lawyer, Mr. Nevins, and his wife, and two young clerks like myself. Those are all, and I am just through in time, for there goes the dinner bell."

Seated at the table, between Helen and Harry, I found the Swineburn party just opposite to me. The old lady's face reminded me of the full moon surrounded by a double ruffle of lace ; Mr. Swineburn was a small, meek, sharp-faced man, with his short thin hair brushed smooth down to his forehead, and there nipped short. The daughter was like any other boarding-school miss, who has a smattering of many things, and a knowledge of very few ; with a love of being fine, and a desire of being fashionable, and money enough to gratify both.

"How do you do to-day, Mr. Linton," began the old lady ; "Miss Linton, I han't seen you afore to-day ; them your sisters, Mr. Linton ? How d'ye

do, young ladies? this is my darter, Maria Jane. We was late down this mornin', Miss Linton, we was at a weddin' last night. A very splendid weddin', indeed! I never saw nothin' like it! They say the bride's dress was Mahometan lace, but I don't know.

"Maria Jane wore a white satan, with the folds cut squintin', and laid in kind o' straight waves; and I wore my ashes of Moses."

"I am glad to hear that they've ascertained the color of Moses' ashes," said a young man on our side of the table; "by the last advices that reached me, his burying-place had never been discovered."

"What does he mean, Maria Jane?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, mamma; I seldom listen to anything those young men say."

"I wish you wasn't so awful busy, Mr. Linton," said the old lady, still addressing her remarks to Harry; "I want you to go over to our new residence, and look at the mantel-shelves. They've jest come. They're made of Manna marble—I think it is, isn't it, Maria Jane?"

"Oh, mamma—*Sienna*!"

"Oh, yes, *Senna*—not Manna. They always go together in my mind. Now, Mr. Swineburn, he wouldn't care a straw if they was *wood*, painted; but I jest give my orders to Mallet, he's my fac-simile."

"*Factotum*, you mean, mamma," whispered the daughter.

"No, my dear, no, out for once, Maria Jane," said her mother, tapping her on the shoulder. "A

tee-totum, my dear, is one who eschuses the use of spirituary liquors; no, my dear, as I said before, Mr. Mallet is my fac-simile."

Poor Miss Swineburn turned all colors, as two of the young men, I cannot call them gentlemen, one after the other, put their handkerchiefs to their mouths, and made a sudden exit from the room, while the lips of the rest of the party suffered for a long time after, from the severe compression to which they were subjected by the teeth.

Mr. Malcolm, the young clergyman, endeavored in the most gentlemanly manner, to introduce some other topic of conversation, and thus to draw attention from the poor lady, but whether the subject matter were literary, or scientific, or religious, poor Mrs. Swineburn seemed to think it necessary to do her share toward helping it along.

And yet I found that these people were courted. Elegant carriages, with liveried servants, continually stopped before the door of our boarding-house, and cards were sent up for Mrs. and Miss Swineburn. And why? because the god of this world has a way of blinding the eyes of his votaries to everything but the glitter of *Gold*.

"Gold, still gold, hard and yellow and cold,
For gold they live, and they die for *gold*."

Chapter Sixth.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

THE next day Gabrielle came to see me. A mere formal call of ceremony she made, but she rattled away as gayly as ever.

"Can't stay a minute!" she said, jumping up; "the fact is, I wan away with the cawiage, while Mrs. Stevens was dwessing; she'll be in a wage!"

On the stairs she said, "I can't stand that stone image, Gwace; how do you live with her? I feel as if I should be petwified too, whenever I am in her company. Oh, I forgot, Mr. Stevens told me if I should see you before Sunday, to say, that as that is the only day he has at home, he wants you and Helen to come to dinner, or he shall never have a chance of seeing you."

The next day, therefore, which was Sunday, I found myself at noon, at Aunt Hannah's, with Helen.

Harry and Walter were also there, as they usually were on Sunday. I had never seen Gabrielle in company with both Harry and Walter, since the days when we were all together, in the old kitchen at home.

"I don't know what to make of Gabrielle," Aunt Hannah had said, "I don't really know but she is engaged to both of them; you would certainly suppose her to be engaged to either, when she is alone with him; but she carries it off so well, when they are all together, that both are pretty well satisfied. I cannot pretend to understand Gabrielle. She's been threatening to go to live with some of her grand friends, and I don't care if she does. I think I've had her long enough, considering she has no claims upon me."

Gabrielle was easy and talkative all dinner-time, exerting herself apparently for the entertainment of all; I had never seen her appear so well.

Mr. Stevens was a short, thick-set man, with a florid face, and curling yellow hair, except upon the top of his head, which was entirely bald. He was a heavy, dull sort of man, but seemed inclined to be kind and friendly. I had little opportunity to become acquainted with him, however, for all dinner-time, which was at noon on Sunday, he was engaged with his plate, and directly after dinner he fell asleep in his chair.

I had not met Walter before, since we came to the city. He had found a boarding-place down

town, and had entered upon his duties immediately, in the bank. He spoke to me kindly, and asked me what I thought of the city, but farther than that we had little to say to each other.

After dinner, Aunt Hannah said :

"Now, young ladies, I must go up and see that my girls are ready for Sunday-school; you may come up to my room, or remain here, as you choose."

Mr. Stevens was asleep, Harry and Walter were engaged with Gabrielle, so we concluded to accept Aunt Hannah's invitation. And now followed an amusing scene. Would that my pen could do it justice! But there was so much in Aunt Hannah's manner which could never be put upon paper.

Poor woman! she had begun to send her children to Sunday-school, because Mrs. Howard Crane's children went. She had succeeded in getting them into the same class with these young ladies, but she could not keep them there unless they knew their lessons; and the poor little stupid things could not learn their verses, without a deal of drilling from their mother.

"Now come here, Aurelia!" said Aunt Hannah, "and do let me see if you can say those verses, while I curl your hair. I do wonder what Miss Gaston chose two such hard verses for you to learn for, and catechism besides; and the hardest of it comes on me. Come, now, say it after me, and do let your hair alone; it will be all out of curl."

"Whose adorning"—say it."

"Whose adorning"—

"Let it not be"—

"Let it not be"—

"That outward adorning"—stand still, child, do; I shall never make your hair look decent. Where was I—oh, 'that outward'—where's that curling stick?—*that—outward—adorning*—can't you say it, stupid?"

"That outward adorning"—

"Of plaiting the hair—heat this iron, Grace, will you?"

"Of plaiting"—oh, mother! don't pull so."

"I cannot help it, child. *If you want to look well, you must expect to suffer a little.*"

"And of wearing of gold—what is the matter with this child's hair? It seems determined not to curl to-day."

"But let it be—oh dear me!"

"But let it be"—

"The hidden man of the heart—come, say it."

"The hidden man of the heart"—

"Now, Aurelia, when you put on your hat, pull your ear-rings forward, so, right among your curls—where was I, now?"

"The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit"—get your hat; I really wish I had had it lined with pink instead of blue. Come, you'll never have this lesson in the world, child, you are so slow."

"The ornament of a meek and quiet"—stop, don't put on that pin, I guess I'll let you wear my

diamond and pearl one, if you'll be very careful and not lose it. There, right in the middle of your scarf; that is beautiful. I guess I'll give that to you one of these days. Oh, *dear*, this verse."

" 'The ornament of a *meek—and—quiet—spirit*'—here, put on your gloves; put that diamond ring on outside—I see several ladies wearing them so; and sit down and study the rest of that by yourself, while I see to Evelina."

"Why, how nicely cousin Helen has fixed your hair; I couldn't do it better myself. Come here, I want to fix that bow on your hat a little different. What's your verse, now? Oh, here 'tis."

" 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall,' eh?"

"Well, say it. Why, you stupid, you don't know the first word. Begin, now."

" 'Pride'—"

" 'Pride'—"

And so, word by word, it was drilled into the poor child, till at length, after repeated snubbings and scoldings, she began to sniffle, and use her pocket-handkerchief, whereupon her mother told her if she cried, and made her eyes red, she shouldn't wear her new bonnet.

"Here I have been working half an hour to pin on this bow differently," said Aunt Hannah, impatiently. "I wish it wasn't wicked to take a needle and thread to it on Sunday, I could have done it in one minute."

Evelina, still wiping her eyes and worrying about her verse, said, "if they had only given her that one about the 'ear-rings of a meek—and—quite—spirit,' she could have learned it."

At last the drilling was over, and, with a parting admonition "to hold up their heads, and show that they felt as good as anybody, and not to take any notice of the Hubbards, and Flinns, for they were going to cut that set, but to cultivate the acquaintance of the Miss Howard Cranes," the young ladies got into the carriage, and, giving their orders to Thomas, in mamma's peremptory manner, they drove off to Sunday-school.

The bells of the city rang for afternoon service—oh, how sweetly the musical chimes fell on my ear, accustomed as it was only to the faint tinkle of the little bell of the white church at "the corners." Ringing and tolling, now high, now low, now clear, now deep, far and near, the bells everywhere, with united voice, called the people of the wicked city to places of prayer. Oh, that the Christians who crowd the portals beneath those swinging bells, would but learn a lesson from their blended harmony, and work like them in unison!

(Quere: By how many years would the coming of the millennium be hastened?)

Aunt Hannah, having heard that our fellow-boarder was to preach that afternoon in the C—street church, in which Aunt Eunice had a pew, determined to go and hear him; and as she liked to be con-

descending and patronizing, she said, "We have a spare seat, let us drive down for your Aunt Kate."

The conversation on our way to church was not very edifying as a preparation for the house of God, and I was thankful when the carriage stopped, and I was left to my own reflections. Not uninterruptedly, however, for unfortunately I was seated between my two aunts, and there was a constant whispering across me, till Aunt Kate fell asleep.

"Handsome, isn't he?"

"Yes, and how graceful."

"And what a charming voice."

"And what a beautiful hand."

"Just look at that pelerine, Hannah; isn't it exquisite, there, two pews in front?"

"*Be not conformed to this world!*" said the voice of the speaker, in tones clear and distinct; and all eyes were bent upon him.

A bold, earnest sermon, reproving fearlessly the folly and extravagance of the age; the love of dress, and fashion; the fondness for gayety and dissipation; the sin of frittering away a mind, given us for the enjoyment of higher and purer things, upon the vanities of a perishing and fleeting world.

The contrast between the contemptible pleasures of earth, and the never-fading joys of Heaven, was so distinctly drawn, that it seemed as if the glories within the veil were objects of sight, and not merely of faith, to the absorbed and animated speaker. And the appeal to all, with which he closed, to seek

no longer their rest where all was transitory, but to fix their treasure and their hearts in that world where change is unknown, was so solemn, and earnest, and affecting, that it seemed a marvel to me how any one could hear it unmoved.

"*Oh!* what a sermon!" said Helen, as we took our seats in the carriage. "Oh, *what* a sermon!"

"I did not hear much of the sermon," said Aunt Kate, "I'm always so sleepy if I go to church Sunday afternoon. And when I was awake, I was so taken up with the pattern of that pelerine in front of me, I couldn't think of anything else. I never saw anything hang so gracefully! I have been trying to carry the pattern of it in my eye, to have one made like it."

"I heard him say *one* true thing, about 'the fashion of this world passing away.' To be sure it does, and other fashions come up. That set me thinking how soon that style of pelerine would go out. I do wonder where that woman got it!"

Helen was still talking to me of the sermon.

"I don't like such gloomy sermons, for my part," said Aunt Hannah, "but you girls will be in raptures with anything that is said by a young and handsome clergyman. Now what is the use in trying to make people feel melancholy, by croaking about 'things passing away,' and *death*, and all that sort of thing. For my part I think it is the duty of people to be cheerful."

"So do I," I ventured to say. "I think Chris-

tians ought to be cheerful, if any persons ; and, indeed, I don't see how they can help it. Now this Mr. Malcolm seems to be one of the most genial, social, cheerful men, I have ever seen ; and my dear grandmother was so invariably ; and papa, oh, Helen, do you remember papa's cheerful, happy manner ?"

"Well now, for a preacher, give me old Dr. Mildmay," said Aunt Hannah, "he never makes one feel in the least uncomfortable ; but I shan't get over this young man in a week ! I wanted to stop my ears."

"There goes your Gabrielle !" exclaimed Aunt Kate, "walking home from her cathedral ; and I declare there's young Vernon with her ! Hannah, where did she get that bewitching lilac crape hat ?"

"I have no idea ; she came down stairs with it on this morning, and would give me no account of where she got it. It is marvellously like an old torn lilac crape dress of mine, which I put into the rag-bag the other day."

"Well, if she made that bonnet, she *is* a witch ! I only wish she'd set up in the millinery line, and make me such a one."

"She'll have to set up in the millinery line, or something else, before long," said Aunt Hannah. "I've given her several broad hints. She is getting to be unbearable ! Orders the servants, scolds the children, takes the carriage without so much as saying by your leave, and receives com-

pany as if she was mistress of the house ! I shall not stand it much longer !"

"Hannah, if you will drive down here a moment, I want to stop at old Mr. Howard's. Won't detain you a moment ; I heard the old gentleman wasn't well !"

"Certainly ! certainly ! Thomas, drive down this street, I'll tell you where to stop. Shall Thomas inquire ?"

"No, no, I'll go in myself. The old gentleman feels such little attentions. He feels quite slighted, if I don't go two or three times a week !"

"Stuff and nonsense !" exclaimed Aunt Hannah, "he wouldn't care a pin if he never saw her again ; but you see she's determined to *keep herself in mind*."

In two or three minutes Aunt Kate came bustling out, flushed and indignant.

"Perfectly abominable !" said she, as she bounced into the carriage. "The insufferable impertinence of that English nurse ! To tell *me* that I couldn't see the old gentleman !"

"Did she refuse to let you see him, then ?"

"Certainly she did ! 'The hold gentleman was hasleep, and she 'ad 'is horders that 'e shouldn't be disturbed.'"

"I told her the old gentleman would be very much offended to find I had been excluded from his room, and that my husband would let him know of it."

"Well, ma'am," said she, 'it's as much as my place is worth, for me to go for to disturb master. I wouldn't go hin myself, ma'am. I just sits hout-side 'is door, with my sewing.'

"I guess you'll find it as much as your place is worth, to have been so impertinent to me," I said.

"I don't hintend to be himpertinent," she said, 'but I must hobey master's horders.'

"*She'll see!* I'll have her turned out mighty quick!"

The next day, at dinner, Mr. Malcolm was not present, as he dined at Mr. Leighton's. Mrs. Swineburn, who, from her real goodness of heart, took a deep interest in her fellow-boarders, called to me across the table:

"Miss Grace, have you heard our young Dominie discourse yet?"

"Yes, ma'am; he preached in the C—— street church yesterday afternoon."

"Great gift in prayer, I hear."

"I think I never heard a prayer so earnest and comprehensive," I said; "or a more solemn sermon."

"Yes, I hear he's dreadful solemn. They say his church is quite pop'lar. I wonder, now, how much celery he gits?"

"Very good, I should think," said my brother; "some of the wealthiest people up town attend there. Your friends, the Leightons, Grace, are members of his congregation."

"Very pretty church, he's got. Maria Jane wouldn't rest till we went clear up there; and we done so yesterday afternoon, and then, after all, he didn't okkerpy his own desk. Maria Jane's a great admirer of his'n."

"Why, mamma!" exclaimed the young lady, blushing crimson, and poking her never-resting elbow into her mother's soft side.

"I mean of his *discourses*, my dear, of course. What's them verses, Maria Jane, he writ in your album, about 'gems and garlings'? Them as made you take out your ear-rings and wear your second-best hat when we went up to his church, yesterday?"

"Mamma, *do be still!*"—and the poor elbow went into the poor side.

I saw the album afterward. The words, written in a clear, distinct hand, were these:

"I choose not her my soul's elect
From those who seek their Maker's shrine
In gems and garlands proudly decked,
As if themselves were things divine.
No, love but faintly warms the breast
That beats beneath a broidered veil;
And she who comes in glittering vest,
To mourn her frailty, still is frail."

Tuesday was the day we were to spend with Mrs. Leighton, and punctually, at twelve o'clock, the carriage called, and took poor Flora from her dull abode—I cannot call it *home*—and Helen from the

never-ceasing whirl and hurry at Aunt Kate's, and me from my silent aunt's, into an atmosphere so genial, so kindly, and so refreshing, it was like a sudden entrance into a conservatory of rare and fragrant plants.

Up-stairs, into the most charming little boudoir, we were taken, where we spent the morning with our work, and with a constant flow of pleasant talk. At our request, a maid appeared, with three of the loveliest, most winning little creatures, who were just ready for a run in the park, while the nurse followed with a tiny bundle, rolled up like a little mummy in flannel.

The nurse uncovered the little face with pride, and we said "*oh!*" in a tone which might mean anything.

"Be honest, my dear girls, you are not expected to say she is 'charming, and lovely,' and all that sort of thing, as Mrs. Howard Crane did yesterday."

"I was just going to ask," said Flora, "if you would feel hurt, if I did not say it was the image of yourself or Mr. Leighton."

"Oh, no," she answered, laughing, "I should take it as a poor compliment to either of us."

"Did either of those other pretty creatures look like this one?" asked Helen.

"Oh, worse!" said Mrs. Leighton. "I declare, Effie was such a fright, that I made every excuse not to have her brought down, till she was three months old."

"Oh, then, there is hope for the baby," said Helen, laughing.

"It's as pretty a babby as one would wish to see," said the old nurse, indignantly; "come, my darling, we'll away to the nursery; the young ladies doesn't know nothing about babbies;" and off she went with her little bundle.

"Flora, dear," said Mrs. Leighton, suddenly, "the roses are all fading out of your cheeks; come, confess, now, my child, you are not happy, are you?"

Flora did not answer for a moment, and when I looked up, I was surprised to see her with quivering lip, and wet eye-lashes, making a mighty effort to keep the tears within bounds. But they would not be restrained, and in a moment she was sobbing and weeping bitterly.

"I see it, my dear, you are just tired out, and we must make some change; Mr. Leighton and I have often talked of it, but how to contrive it without seeming to interfere impertinently, we could not tell. Your brother is coming to dinner, and we will talk it over by ourselves; and I am much deceived if we don't have you cozily settled with us, before many weeks are over. Come here, Flora, and see what a sweet room I have ready for you. In my own heart, I always call it 'Flora's room.' What do you think of it?"

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Leighton; it seems happiness too great to think of; but why should you be so kind to me?"

"Why, because I love you dearly ; and because I'm a very selfish woman ; and because you are all among my dearest and earliest friends ; and because I loved and revered your dear father, from whom I have received many lessons of wisdom ; and a thousand other reasons, too numerous to mention."

"And principally, because you think I am unhappy, and need a pleasant home."

"Oh, of course, one great charm in the plan would be wanting, if you were not to be made happier by it, too, my dear."

"I wish father and mother could have foreseen what kind friends would be raised up for us," said Flora ; "it would have been such a comfort to them."

"Oh, they left you in better hands, dear girls, than those of earthly friends, and they knew you would be cared for. How happy I should be, now, if I could have you, all three, right here in the house with me, and with my sweet Alice Ward so near me—oh, here she comes !—talk of the angels, Alice."

My sisters had often met this young lady before, and I had heard them speak of her as remarkably lovely. Hers was one of those faces, which, with hardly a pretty feature, are so attractive, from loveliness of expression, that you delight to look at them. Her smile was good nature itself, and her laugh was perfectly contagious.

Flora's little shower was over, and the sun ap-

peared again, and we were a merry party, till called down to the parlor by the arrival of Mr. Malcolm and Harry. Mr. Leighton came in a few minutes after, and greeted us in a quiet, but most kind and courteous manner.

There has always been to me a peculiar charm about the society and conversation of well-informed travellers, who are prepared to tell just what one wishes to know, of places, and people, one never expects to see—who have not travelled for the purpose of giving a passing glance at the objects to which they are directed by the guide-book, and hurrying home to say, "I have seen this," and "I have been there," but who have travelled intelligently, knowing the history of each locality before they saw it, and acquainting themselves with its features, for the benefit of the unfortunates, who will never know them save by description.

The dinner was charming. I had never seen Harry so cheerful, since the old times at home, and the conversation never flagged a moment. Mr. Malcolm had been in Europe at the same time with the Leightons, and much of their tour had been made together ; so that we had the benefit of many pleasant reminiscences, and many interesting scenes were recalled for our amusement. A more agreeable party is seldom gathered, than those who met around that dinner-table.

After dinner, there were many fine pictures, and beautiful pieces of statuary, to be examined, and ad-

mired. Oh, how exquisite were these creations of art to my untutored eyes ! Without knowledge, without the power of criticism, I was in ecstasies, and I could not tell why.

But Mrs. Leighton interrupted us, by calling my brother, my sisters, and myself, into a lovely little parlor which I had not yet seen, "to have a little private talk," leaving Miss Ward to entertain the other gentlemen. Here she opened her plans to Harry, as to Flora, repeating, in substance, what she had said to us in the morning, and urging him to use all his efforts to bring about the proposed change. "I cannot think of another thing now, that would make me happier than this arrangement," she said, "and I shall have a very uneasy feeling till it is settled."

Harry said that Flora's situation had made him very unhappy for a long time, but how to effect any change he had not known. Flora was so convinced that she was most necessary to the household at Aunt Ella's, that nothing would induce her to leave.

"But would not that poor woman be likely to make a little more effort, if Flora were not there to relieve her of all responsibility ?"

"Oh, no," said Flora, "everything would go to ruin ; and Mr. Arnold is so kind to me, and he is such a broken-hearted man, that I am glad to do all I can to make his home comfortable, and that is all that can be done."

"I'll tell you what I will do," said Harry ; "I'll see Mr. Arnold to-morrow, and have a plain talk with him on the subject, and see what can be done. We must do something to bring back the roses to this child's pale cheeks."

Harry rode home with us, and we had hardly started, before the secret of his unusual light-heartedness came out.

"I have been wanting to see you three girls together," he said, "to tell you that Gabrielle has at last consented to fix the day for our marriage—a fortnight from to-day."

There were no rapturous exclamations of delight on our part.

"How will you manage about the ceremony, Harry ?" asked Helen.

"We have not talked of that ; I suppose, however, that Gabrielle will not be satisfied unless she is married in her own church, and neither shall I, unless a Protestant ceremony is also performed."

"Oh, dear, Harry," said Flora, "can you be happy where there is such a difference of creed ?"

"I hope so ; I think we shall not interfere with each other."

"I don't wish to discourage you, dear brother, and I wish you all the happiness in the world ; but do you think Gabrielle will be contented, to come down to the comparatively humble manner of living which your salary will make necessary, after the profuse style in which they live at Aunt Hannah's ?"

"I think so, she promises very fair, and talks very sensibly. Indeed, there is more good in Gabrielle than you are willing to allow, my sisters. How ingenious and economical she is. If you only knew out of what materials those pretty things she wears are contrived, you would be astonished."

"Yes, I know; but she likes a fine house, and to have a carriage at her command, and will wish to entertain her fashionable friends in the style to which they are accustomed."

"That she cannot do, especially as we shall board till my salary is raised, which will be in six months. All these things Gabrielle must do without until I make a fortune, or she receives hers from her grandmother, the old countess, in France."

"Oh, Harry, I believe the old countess, in France, is a humbug. If there is such a person, she is either totally ignorant of the existence of her granddaughter, in America, or else, she chooses to pretend to be. I wouldn't make any calculations on her, Harry."

"Oh, I make no *calculations* on anything but my own brains and hands; but I am very hopeful, and now everything appears *couleur-de-rose*."

"I hope you won't lose the spectacles through which you see the bright tints, dear Harry!" said Helen.

"My poor, dear brother!" said I to myself, as I mounted the stairs, "if he only had loved such a girl as Alice Ward!"

The next day, according to his promise, Harry went to see Mr. Arnold. The poor man seemed broken down, and hopeless.

"I know," said he, "that poor Flora leads a miserable life, and I can see that her efficiency is only increasing my wife's indolence and self-indulgence. I have been trying to decide what to do, and I have about determined to break up my establishment, send your Aunt and the children to my sister in the country, who has offered to take charge of them, and seek a boarding-house for myself. The only obstacle, what should be done with Flora, is now removed. I will therefore make known my plans to her and my wife, and we will proceed to carry them into execution."

So, all was happily settled. Another week found dear Flora in the charming home of our kind friends; and poor Aunt Ella, amid many tears and protestations, removed to the country, where a strict watch was kept over her, and the poor children were placed under kind and judicious management.

I was sitting in our little parlor, with Aunt Eunice, one morning, when Helen burst in with tidings in her face.

"Gracie, what do you think has happened? Think of all the wonderful things you have read in novels, and guess!"

"Oh, I cannot! who is it about?"

"Walter!"

"What! do tell me!"

"Well, do you believe, an old uncle of his father's, of whose existence he never thought, if he knew of it, has died, and a large property comes to Walter, as the only relative!"

"Oh, how strange!"

"Yes—the very last thing one would think of! I fear it will turn Walter's head, coming so suddenly."

"I fear it will turn other heads besides Walter's!" Aunt Eunice had really spoken!

"Do you know that our poor Harry is to be sacrificed next Thursday?"

"Yes; shall we attend?"

"Oh, Gabrielle is all compliance, if she can have her own way, too. She agrees to return from the cathedral to Aunt Hannah's, and be married over again there; and we are all expected to be present. Aunt Hannah explains Gabrielle's sudden determination to be married, by saying that she told her in pretty plain terms, that she must seek another home; and, as it seems none of Gabrielle's fine friends were quite ready to take her in, she suddenly concluded to make poor Harry a happy man."

"And *oh, my dear!* Aunt Kate is preparing for a party! As sure as Aunt Hannah gives a party, Aunt Kate gives one the next week. She has fixed on Tuesday night. Will you come down, Gracie, and help me with the flowers, and cake?"

"Oh, certainly! but you know Aunt Kate has kindly excused me from attending her parties. I will

come and help you, and then I can remain in your room."

"And stay with me all night! delightful!"

"But, Grace, there was such a time about it yesterday! Uncle Harwood was cross at breakfast; he is generally so submissive, but something troubles him lately, and he is sometimes as obstinate as a mule. Aunt Kate broached the subject of the party at the breakfast-table. Uncle H. looked over his paper, and his spectacles, at her.

"Another party! What under the sun do you want to give another party, for?"

"Oh, I want to invite Helen's friend, Mrs. Leighton—she has not been able to go out till now—and Mrs. Elliston, and several others."

"Well now, there's no use in crowding yourself where you aint wanted. You only make enemies, and don't gain friends. I can't afford these parties; you have run me into debt already!"

Aunt Kate was all suavity, for she had a point to gain.

"But you know, dear, you can get anything you please out of the old gentleman, and you will not be in debt long, at any rate."

"I can't get *anything* out of him lately; indeed I can never see him alone; that nurse is always hanging round!"

"Yes—I forgot! we must have her turned off. I'll manage that myself."

"Well now, see here," said Uncle H., "if you

do give this party, you are not going to turn me out of my room, as you did that last time."

At this Aunt Kate looked aghast.

"Why, my love, I must take that room for the supper-room, you know!"

"And pull down the bed, and send me up in the third story to sleep? I won't stand it; I declare I won't!"

Aunt Kate was too wise a general to contest ground so stoutly defended by her usually meek husband; so, thinking discretion the better part of valor, she beat a retreat for the time, determined to carry her point after all. There was a never-failing battery of tears, and entreaties, and reproaches, at hand, as a last resource. So saying:

"Well, well, we'll see what can be done, without discommoding you, my love;" she went on to the next point, which was a waiter for the door.

"A waiter!"

"Yes, dear, a boy will do; Hannah always has a boy, and so have the Hubbards. Just think of *the Hubbards!* and we with a *girl!*"

"Can't a girl turn a door-knob as well as a boy?"

"Certainly, but it doesn't look so well!"

"Well, if you get your boy, you may pay him! Where the money is coming from, for *this* fandango, I don't see!"

Aunt Kate went out, and was absent all the morning, making her arrangements. At dinner-time she

appeared with a bright face. She had *borrowed* a boy.

"*Borrowed a boy?*" said Uncle H.

"Yes, of the Hubbards; Mrs. Hubbard gives a dinner-party on Monday, and she says if I will lend her my new dinner-set for Monday, she will lend me her boy for Tuesday evening. So, you see we are even."

"Not even, by any means. She will break your china, but you can't break her boy, unless I feel as I do to-day; I may possibly break his head. But I thought you were going to cut the Hubbards?"

"So I am, so I am; but I can't get out of their set quite yet. I *must* invite them, if I borrow their boy; it's very vexatious."

"So the party is to be, and don't forget to come and help me." Just here Harry came in, and handed me a letter. The post-mark was "Sackville Corners."

"I do believe it is from Aunt Lainy!" said I, and sure enough it was. I knew nothing of Aunt Lainy's early advantages. If they were the same as my grandmother's, she certainly had not improved them; and her later years had been given to knitting, rather than to reading, and the cultivation of her mind. This was her letter, written in a cramped, old-fashioned hand, and evidently with an effort.

"MY DEAR GRACE :

"I have taken my pen in hand several times sense you left us, to write to you, and answer your kind Letters. But being little Given to writing, and besides the Ink being thick, from the cause of its long standing without any one to use it, and Daniel's knife Wouldn't mend a pen, being exercised only on Wood. Dan'l and I get on very well, and go right along as if We'd always lived under these same circumstances, and death which comes to All, hadn't taken Her away, who left me the house and furniture ; all but the spoons which went to you, and very proper.

"Dan'l worries about you, and says if he Could only see you Once, and how you Was Situated he thinks he would feel Better. I don't know what I should Have done with Dan'l, if it hadn't a been that Pine is Scarce with Us now, and the Roads is so heavy, We han't been Able to draw None. So Dan'l's had to take to Hickory, which because of its being harder is a Diversion to his mind. So you see my dear, there ain't no affliction in Life, but what has its blessing too.

"And every Rose a Thorn, as the hymn says. But I didn't mean to Spiritualize.

"I miss you too awful bad ; but the thing that Troubles me most is *them stairs*. Here you went up and down that there Ladder, a year and a Half ; and just after Walter had took the trouble, and the Lumber, to make them stairs, Sister was took to

a higher sphere, and you went away, And the Loft an't never used, for Dan'l sleeps on the Settee. But we are blind Sighted mortals, and can't Tell what's in the futer.

"Dr. Richards has looked in kindly on us once. he seemed to Calculate to go to the city too. I really don't know who Dan'l and I will die under, but I suppose Some one will be raised up.

"Mr. Hicks continues to farm the place on shares. He has brought me in my Half of the Payments, and as it more than we Need, I think I can't lay it Out more economical, than to take Dan'l down to see how you are Situated. I think he might Safely go to Pine after that.

"Write me when Harry is going to Marry that french Girl. She's an awful Affliction to Bring into a Family. But Goodbye. Give my and Dan'l's best love to your sisters, and Harry ; so no more at present, from your

Affectionate aunt,
ROXALANA PLUMMER."

Chapter Seventh.

A CHAPTER OF SURPRISES.

A BUSY day was the day of preparation for Aunt Kate's party. This bustling aunt of mine ought to have had great credit for hospitality, for so much trouble is seldom taken for the entertainment of company, as she took upon herself. Such a hubbub and turmoil, such a turning up, and pulling down, such running round, such borrowing and contriving, were never known, I am certain, before.

The point was gained; the bedroom *was* a supper-room; the bedstead *was* vanished; and poor Mr. Harwood *did* go up into the third story room, meek as Moses. By what feminine weapons this victory was achieved has never transpired; yet all things did not go on so smoothly or satisfactorily.

" 'Mrs. Elliston regrets; previous engagement'—what a lie! don't believe a word of it! And 'Mrs. Leighton's compliments, and as she is not able to go out in the evening, it will not be in her power to

accept'—pretty blunt, anyway! she might have had the civility to say 'regrets,' whether she wanted to come or not."

"Mrs. Leighton is perfectly truthful and honest; she will say only what she means," said Helen.

"But this, my dear, is a *form*, which every one uses. Every lady conforms to these rules of society."

"But you don't believe them any the more for it, Aunt Kate, when they do. You see Mrs. Elliston flit away from a window when you call at her house, and she sends you word that she is 'not at home,' and the next time she meets you, she tells you how sorry she was to have missed you. Oh, these forms of society! how much they mean."

Poor Aunt Kate! Everybody she wanted declined her invitation, and everybody she did not want accepted. "Those Hubbards, of course! they wouldn't miss coming for anything in the world; and it will be just like them to go and tell everybody that is *their* boy. If they do, I'll take care to let their company know whose china they ate off from."

Evening came. Everything was in readiness, the many lamps and candlesticks, owned and borrowed, gave forth their light; the supper-table shone with other people's glass and silver, and the borrowed boy took his station in the hall. Poor Mr. Harwood, in his Sunday suit, and with the meekness of a martyr, sat in his arm-chair, with a look of

distressed expectation. Aunt Hannah and Gabrielle had come—Gabrielle in white crape, with a drooping white feather among the puffs of her dark hair. Flora, too, was there, her face radiant with new-found happiness.

I was just re-arranging a vase of flowers, which had been overturned, preparatory to absenting myself from the scene of festivity for the evening, when there was a loud ring at the door. Aunt Hannah gave a last look into the mirror over the mantelpiece, with a graceful side toss of her head, and put on her company face. But there seemed to be a commotion outside. The borrowed boy was protesting against the entrance of some person or persons into the house, who seemed pertinacious about making their way in.

"I tell you, you must go down the *ary*! They'r all lightened up for company; besides, they ain't *to home*, I tell you."

"B-b-b-but, g-g-g-Grace is here, we want to see g-g-g-Grace!" said a familiar voice.

"Oh, Gracie!" screamed Helen. "It's Aunt Lainy, and Uncle Dan."

"*Who!!!*" exclaimed Aunt Kate, with a thunder-scowl on her face. "Oh, heavens! this is too much. I'll shut up the house, put out the lights—say I'm taken suddenly ill. Oh dear, oh dear, what *shall* I do!" and she sank into a chair, as the door opened, and the two poor, simple travellers appeared—Aunt Lainy with a little bundle in her hand, and Uncle Dan with an old, ragged carpet-bag.

Utterly unaware of the consternation their arrival had excited, they were only thinking of us, and of their delight at meeting us again. Poor Uncle Dan, unable to find the first word to express his joy, kept hobbling round and round me, with a broad grin of delight on his face.

"How do you do, Miss Harwood?" said Aunt Lainy, when she at length turned from us to Aunt Kate. "You saw me, you know, when you was up to the fun'ral. Didn't expect to see me here, did you? Do you believe, we've been clear up to t'other aunt's—the dumb one—and she wanted us to stay; really spoke two sentences; said they was two rooms we could have, and she would send for Grace. But no, nothing would suit Dan'l, but he must come and see Grace right off. So we had two more sixpences to pay, for omnibus hire. There was a very decent young man there, looked like a preacher, took the trouble to hold me back when I was climbing into three wrong omnibusses, and at last put us in the right one, and told the driver where to hold up"—

"Why how do *you* do, Gabrielly?—and then I found that he was going to put us out down at the corner, and we'd got to walk clear up here. Dan'l was clear beat out; so I said, 'No, you don't do that, sir, we've paid our money, and you've got to drive us to the house;' but he laughed, and said, 'Twasn't his beat.' I even went so fur as to offer him another sixpence; but nothing would move

him. I told him even the Sackville stage would turn up a long lane to a body's house, but he just turned us right out in the street like an inhuman monster, and pointed out No. 41. But we've been ringing at about forty-one doors, I should think, before we got the right one."

"Grace, *can* you get them out of the way?" said Aunt Kate, in imploring tones.

"If you will let them stay here to night, Aunt Kate, I will take all the trouble, and in the morning I will take them up to Mrs. Osborne's, where we can find room for them, I think."

"Yes—yes—put them in the two attic rooms; but for mercy's sake take them quick! there's the bell!"

Aunt Kate now put on her blandest air, as she advanced to Aunt Lainy:

"Miss Plummer, I am very glad to see you here, but we have a little company coming to-night, and as you and this *gentleman* are very tired, we will give you some tea up-stairs; Grace will be there! she will stay with you all the evening."

Uncle Dan would follow Grace to the world's end; and just as his brown coat-tails disappeared round the third flight of stairs, several shawled and cloaked ladies, landed on the second.

"Oh, massy sakes! what a way up! Dan'l dear, won't your lame leg give out? I think these houses was built on the plan of the tower of Babel. *Oh!* its a blessin' to git down in a chair!"

"Now, rest here, Aunt Lainy, while I go and bring you both a cup of tea and some biscuit."

"And a bit of meat, dear, if there's any in the house; we didn't eat no dinner on that 'ere boat, and I'm famished."

Down to the lower regions I descended, to hold a consultation with Phillis, who had not been in the best possible humor all day.

"Now, has them poor critters come here?" she exclaimed. "Well, I must git up and see 'em, if every bone does ache. It'll be good to see anything from home. Git 'em a cup of tea?—be sure I will, and I declare I'll cook 'em some of these oysters. There's more 'n the company 'll eat, child. Laws a me! how did them poor simple critters git here?"

In the interval of a dance, as some of the young people were promenading in the hall, there came a sudden piercing shriek from a feminine voice, the owner of which bounced into the parlor, with terror in her face.

"Oh—a man! a *horrid, squinting, limping* man! right on the stairs! a burglar in disguise! *Oh!* a glass of water!"

"D-d-d-on't be f-f-f-frightened? I only want my c-c-c-carpet b-b-b-bag."

"Here, Uncle Dan," said Helen, "here is your carpet bag, that boy put it behind the door. I will carry it up for you!"

"Did she say *Uncle Dan*?" said one of the young ladies, with a sneer.

"Certainly she did! I heard her!"

"That shows what sort of folks they are ! I shall go away—directly after *supper* ! To think of Mrs. Harwood's turning up her nose at *us* ; and *borrowed our boy*, too !" said Miss Hubbard.

No servant was to be had for anything, so I ransacked closets, and made up beds for our poor tired travellers in the little attic rooms, and after a comfortable supper they were glad to go to bed, where they slept soundly, in spite of the noise of music and merriment below.

In the morning, before any one in the house, except my sister Helen, was awake, I took them up to Mrs. Osborne's, where they were received with an unusual manifestation of kindness from Aunt Eunice.

"You are welcome ; your rooms are ready," was all ; but it meant more than a half hour's palaver from either of my other aunts. We attracted great attention as we passed through the streets ; for my two companions were striking figures, even in the motley crowd, of the city streets. Aunt Lainy's hat, an old yellow Leghorn, with the crown larger at the top than at the bottom, and the front like a coal-scuttle, was perched up behind, and down over her face, and her little shawl, which just reached the waist before and behind, was pinned on in the most precise manner.

Her sleeves were tight, whereas leg-of-muttons, very full at the top, were then the rage ; and her black satin dress was gored, though full skirts had

long been in fashion. Poor Uncle Dan, with his squint, and his limp, and his stutter, was still more an object of attention ; but somehow I could not feel ashamed of them ; I never could, of any one I loved.

Helen had come up to see me several times that evening, to amuse me with what was going on down stairs, and to say how much happier she would be, if she could only sit up there with me. "Gabrielle," she said, "was perfectly devoted to Harry. I am really sorry for poor Walter," she added, "she treats him so coolly, and he has such an uneasy, nervous manner ; I fear the sudden accession of property, and Gabrielle's marriage, will have a serious effect upon his mind."

I had hardly reached home, with Aunt Lainy and Uncle Dan, and established them comfortably in their rooms, when I received a hasty note from Helen.

"Do come back, Gracie, directly ! Aunt Kate is in great trouble !"

"Aunt Lainy, I must leave you ; I am wanted again at Aunt Kate's. What will you do to amuse yourself ?"

"Oh, I have got my knitting, child, and I never should be tired looking out on this square. Such a sight of people ! But look here, Grace ; what to do about Dan ! Could you get him a piece of pine anywhere, and do you think he may whittle here ?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Lainy, I'll pick up all the shavings."

A servant was sent up with the side of an old box, for Uncle Dan, which made him happy for the day ; and I started off for Aunt Kate's.

Helen met me at the door. "Oh, Gracie, Aunt Kate is in hysterics, and these poor children are so terrified, I am obliged to keep them from the room. Will you go up to her, and try to calm her ? She is in her dressing-room."

The house was in the same confusion in which it was left the night before. There was a close smell of flowers, and lamp-smoke, as I passed the parlors, and up-stairs. The supper-room was still a confused mass of glass and china, covered with the remnants of the supper.

"What *is it*, Helen ?" I asked, as we went up the stairs.

"Oh, I forgot, you did not know. About half an hour since, they received tidings of the marriage of old Mr. Harwood, to that nurse, whom Aunt Kate disliked so much. Poor Aunt Kate ! I really do feel sorry for her, because to *her* this is almost the greatest calamity that could happen. Besides the destruction of all her hopes, there is such deep mortification about it, as you know she has made no secret of her plans for the future."

Sobs and screams were now distinctly heard, from the dressing-room, mingled with tones of anger, and lamentation. Such a storm it has never been my lot to encounter, as that which swept round the little dressing-room, lighting occasionally on the head

of poor Mr. Harwood, who sat in the corner, the very personification of dejection and distress.

"Oh, dear ! why *don't* Mr. Arnold come ?"

"What good can Mr. Arnold do you ?" said Mr. Harwood, in despairing tones.

"Why I want him to go, and get them *divorced*, at once ! that's what lawyers do, isn't it ?"

"Oh dear no ! he can't do that !"

"He *can*, I tell you ! and he *must* ! and he *shall* ! Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! oh, dear !"

I applied smelling salts, camphor, everything at hand, for the hysterics were evidently coming on again. But before they had reached their height, Mr. Arnold arrived.

"Oh, Mr. Arnold, I am so glad you have come ! Mr. Harwood sits there so stupid, he don't know anything !"

"But what is the trouble ? no one has informed me."

"Oh, didn't you know ? such an *awful* thing ! oh, such a dreadful thing ! old Mr. Harwood has gone and got married to *that nurse* ; that *miserable, low, ignorant English nurse* ! Oh, dear ! oh, dear !"

"Well, I suppose he had a right to get married if he chose, hadn't he ?"

"Hadn't he ? No—of course he hadn't. She's inveigled him into it ! he never would have thought of it himself."

"Were they regularly married, by a clergyman ?"

"Yes, in his own room ! and he hardly able to

sit up! Who ever heard of such a thing? Poor, feeble, childish old man!"

"Not more than sixty-five, I think. Well, what do you want me to do, Mrs. Harwood?"

"Do? why, I want you to go and get them divorced?"

"Get them *divorced*? That would be beyond my power, Mrs. Harwood, if they are lawfully married, and are contented to be so."

"But what if he goes and makes a will, and leaves her all his money?"

"I suppose she would have it, then!"

"She? *that English nurse*? have the money that ought to come to *my children*?"

"I don't see how it could be prevented, if he wills it to her!"

"Couldn't you make it 'getting money under false pretences,' or something of that sort?"

"I don't see how I could," said Mr. Arnold, laughing.

"Why, what under the sun are lawyers good for?" asked Aunt Kate, starting up in indignation. "Isn't there any one could help us?"

"Not if you wish that kind of help. Perhaps, after all, he will leave you part of his property."

"No—no—not a penny! She won't let him. Oh! oh! oh! my poor children! George Henry will never go to Europe! None of us will ever go! Oh, dear! Mr. Arnold, you needn't stay! you give me no comfort at all!"

"Miserable lawyer *he* is!" she exclaimed, as he left the room. "I wonder why they make such men lawyers for! All my plans overturned! And nothing to depend on but *you*—you miserable, slow, meek creature, to sit there taking it all so quietly."

"*Quietly*! if I was to begin to talk, and tell you how you've run me in debt on the strength of this fortune of father's, I don't know what you'd do."

"Debt! oh, dear! We shall all go to prison! We shall all go to the poor-house! We shall have to go out of town to live, all the year round; and those Hubbards! and Flinns! it'll be nuts to them! *Oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!* and *Hannah* with her carriage!"

Helen having sent the children out with the nurse, now came in and administered a quieting dose; and Aunt Kate consented to lie down on the lounge, where she cried more and more quietly, till at last she fell asleep. And poor Mr. Harwood, wearied out with the party of the night before, and the exciting scene he had just gone through, nodded and snored in his chair. Then Helen and I took the opportunity to put the house in order; after which, I went home to look after our newly arrived relatives.

At the dinner-table that day, Aunt Lainy and Uncle Dan appeared for the first time among our fellow-boarders. The young men, who were unable to control their risibles under poor Mrs. Swineburn's mistakes, seemed to find great amusement in the primitive appearance of our country relatives.

Maria Jane had changed her seat, in consequence of "the heat of the stove," for one next her father, which brought her in close neighborhood to Mr. Malcolm, and opposite these two gentlemanly youths, who made constant efforts to attract the attention of the young heiress. So the poor mother's side was indented by applications from the elbow of her daughter, and she tortured and murdered the king's English without rebuke. Mrs. Swineburn, though considerably exalted by the sudden change in her circumstances (and I have seen wiser heads than her's turned by the unexpected accession of wealth), was, after all, the very essence of good nature; as was shown by the kind notice she immediately took of poor Aunt Lainy.

"From the *kedntry*, ain't you, Miss Plummet?"

"*Plummer*, ma'am. Yes, I'm from up near Sackville, where I have a tenement of my own, in which I have generally lived, till my sister having died, left me her house, where I live with this young man, her son."

(Uncle Dan was about fifty-five.)

"Been in the city before, Miss Plummet?"

"Plummer, ma'am! Plummer is our family name. No, ma'am, I never was. What an *awful* big place it is! I certainly and surely thought there never *was* going to be any end to it, as we drove up here from the boat."

"Yes, and growing all the time. Large, costly eddyfishes like ourn, are putting up all over the city.

You must walk over and see our new residence, Miss Plummet."

"Plummer's the name. Is it near here?"

"Yes, only over in the next avenue. We *might* have the kerridge; a very handsome kerridge ourn is, lined with yaller satting. But then I have to walk for my health."

"Enjoy poor health, eh?"

"Well, my *bodily* health's pretty good, but it's my *head* troubles me. The doctor says, if I don't be very keeful, I'll have a perplexity. So I can't take no good of my kerridge, because I have to walk. We'll walk over there, if you please, this afternoon. I should like to have you see our new residence. Marble front; steps roll down to the sides jest like a water-fall; plated glass winders; and Mr. Mallet is a puttin' in a furnace; somethin' new, he says. Warms the whole house; very convenient, by means of *magistrates* in the corners. Isn't that what they call 'em, Maria Jane?"

"Registers, mamma!" whispered the young lady, across her father.

"Registers, Miss Plummet."

"Plummer, if you please, ma'am. Plummer is our family name; and I am very proud of it, bein' as we're descended from a Plummer that come over in one of the first vessels that come to this country."

"Wonder if that frock and cap came in it!" whispered one of the clerks across the table, to Maria Jane.

"Miss Swineburn, have you seen her *bonnet*? asked the other.

But a look from Mr. Malcolm silenced them both, and they continued their dinner with a very sheepish air.

Aunt Hannah had been up that morning, to ask us how we could contrive to keep Aunt Lainy and Uncle Dan at home the next evening, which was to be that of Harry's wedding.

"For I declare," she said, "if *they* are to come, Harry will have to content himself with a popish ceremony."

I did not know what to say. I could not hurt the feelings of our kind relatives; and yet it would not do to insist that Aunt Hannah should invite them. But Aunt Eunice settled the matter, by proposing to remain at home with them.

"Oh, yes," said Aunt Hannah, "and they need never know that there is any ceremony, besides the one at the church; and nothing would induce them to attend that. But what a strange girl Gabrielle is!" continued she, "here she knows there is so much to do, and for *her* wedding too, and off my lady goes, early this morning, dressed in all her finery, and has not condescended to show her head since."

The afternoon passed away: Aunt Lainy went out with Mrs. Swineburn, to see the new residence; Uncle Dan was in his room, and Aunt Eunice and I were sitting together, when I heard Harry's step

coming up the stairs. He did not stop at our door as usual, but went on up the stairs, toward his own room, which was just over mine. I went into the hall and called him, but he quickened his steps, and with hasty strides went to his own room, where he closed the door, with a heavy slam, and locked it.

The dinner-bell rang, but Harry did not appear. After waiting a few minutes, I went up and called him.

Was it *Harry's* voice that answered, saying he did not want any dinner? It was a voice trying to steady itself, and appear calm; but was it *Harry's*?

I don't know what I feared, but a heart-sickness came over me, and I went down to my own little room. Here I heard a heavy, regular tread in the little room above. Back and forth, back and forth, three long steps, a pause to turn, and three long steps again; the heel coming down each time, as if it would come through the floor.

My door opened, and a white face, with white lips, and the large blue eyes distended with terror, looked in. It was my sister Helen!

"Grace!" she said, in a hoarse whisper, "where is Harry?"

"In his own room, locked up! don't you hear him walking? What *is* it, Helen?"

"Oh, I heard that people had met him striding along like a spectre, and looking so desperate!"

"Oh, Helen, he will not let me in his room, and he speaks so strangely! Helen! Sister! *what is it?*"

"Grace! *Gabrielle and Walter were married this morning!*"

* * * * *

There was water trickling down my face, and I opened my eyes with a sickening sensation, to find Aunt Eunice bathing my forehead, and holding hartshorn to my nose, while Helen was chafing my hands. What had happened? Now I understood it all—oh, *Harry! Walter!*

"Gracie, darling, forgive me. I was too hasty; I was thinking only of poor Harry."

Oh, my heart! I had thought that wound was healed!

Up and down went the heavy steps, back and forth, like a lion in his den, and it seemed at every tread as if the heavy heel descended upon a sore spot in my brain.

"Don't you think he would open the door to me, Grace?" asked Helen, "poor fellow! he needs comfort."

"I don't know, Helen, you can try."

But she came down shaking her head.

"Oh, no, he will not open it. He answered me impatiently and desperately. What *shall* we do?"

"Have you sent for Flora?"

"Yes, I wrote a line before I came, telling her to come here."

It was dark before Flora came. Mr. Leighton brought her, and left her at the door. Poor Flora was sadly shocked, as I saw by her sudden paleness; but her manner was always calm.

We sat down together in Aunt Eunice's little parlor, helpless and powerless.

"Oh, if Mr. Leighton had only come in!" said Flora, "if we had a brother, or any one to call on! We have looked up so to Harry, and now there is no one. If Arthur were only here!"

At about eleven o'clock, Harry's door suddenly opened, and we heard him coming down the stairs. We ran into the hall, but he sprang down the stairs, and we heard the front door bang after him as he went out.

Helen grasped me by the arm so tightly that it was absolutely painful.

"What now!" she said, "oh, Grace, what will he do?"

It was not long before the door opened again, and at the same rapid rate, three steps at a time, my brother sprang up to his room, and again locked his door.

"I can stand this no longer," said I, "I shall call Mr. Malcolm; he is a good man, and a friend of Harry's, and we must have some one to help us."

I went to Mr. Malcolm's room, which was on the same floor, and tapped at the door. It was immediately opened by the young clergyman, who was in his dressing-gown, and seemed to be writing.

"Mr. Malcolm," said I, "we are in great trouble, and we have no one to help us; will you come to our room a few minutes?"

"Certainly! certainly!" he said; "what is the matter, Miss Grace?"

"Oh, sir, my brother!" It was all I could say. Mr. Malcolm led me to our little parlor.

"I see you are all in great trouble," said he; "tell me how I can help you. Is my friend Linton sick, or hurt, or what is it?"

Flora was the one to speak, for she had more self-control than any of us.

"Mr. Malcolm, you know my brother was to have been married to-morrow, to Miss De Lisle, to whom he was most deeply attached."

"Yes, I know; he wished me to perform the second ceremony."

"But did you know that she is *married to-day*, to my cousin, Walter Vernon?"

"Oh, no! no!" exclaimed Mr. Malcolm.

"It is true, sir; they have both so cruelly deceived him! and he seems to be perfectly desperate; I don't know but he has lost his reason."

"Where is he?"

"Locked up in his room; and he will not open the door for any of us. He has been down and out of the house once, a few moments since, but he seemed determined to avoid us — hear his footsteps in the room above! — so they have been going, without any pause, since dinner-time."

"This must not be," said Mr. Malcolm, "I will go up myself."

We heard him at the door.

"Linton, open the door, will you? let me in; I want to speak to you."

"Excuse me, Mr. Malcolm, I am going to bed, to sleep; you may come in, in the morning."

"But I want to see you to-night, Linton; will you not let me in?"

"Not to-night, Mr. Malcolm; I am very tired; I want to rest."

"He is very firm," said Mr. Malcolm, as he came down to us; "but I think he must be calmer. His voice is like itself. Which of you sisters is his favorite, if either?"

"Oh, Gracie is his pet," said Helen and Flora, in a breath.

"Then, Miss Grace, go up once more. I think some softening influence should be thrown around him to-night, to draw him from this desperate mood. Let him see that there are hearts to love him yet, and for whom he must exert himself."

I stole up stairs: "Harry! dear brother! won't you kiss me good night? I have not gone to bed one night since I came, without your good-night kiss. Open the door, Harry, *do!*"

There was a momentary bustle in the room, a movement of some piece of furniture, a shutting of a drawer, and the door opened.

Oh, how haggard! how white! how ghastly!

"To be sure I will kiss you, Gracie! dear little sister! Good-night! bid them all good-night!"

"Harry," said I, clinging to him, "you are father, brother, *everything* to us; what should we do without you?"

"Go! Gracie, go!" he said, "I am going to sleep. Tell them all to go to bed; good-night!" and with another kiss I left him.

We sat till midnight together, and then Mr. Malcolm advised us all to go to bed. Everything was quiet above now, and we hoped that Harry was asleep. Mr. Malcolm went to his own room; and we separated, to lie down, but not to sleep. Flora went with me to my little room, and Helen accompanied Aunt Eunice to hers.

We were hardly in our rooms, when, horrors!—a *sharp report of a pistol!*

I sprang into the hall, but a firm hand held me back. It was Aunt Eunice.

"Stop, Grace! don't go! Girls, stay here! I will go myself."

I have a faint recollection of a gathering of our fellow-boarders, with frightened faces, in the hall; of Mr. Malcolm, very white, but calm and energetic, drawing us into the parlor, and assuring us that he would go, and return to us in a moment.

Oh, the horrors of that night! And did I think I had known trouble before this?

They found my unhappy brother, lying on his bed; the pistol had fallen from his hand. Mr. Malcolm ran to a neighboring boarding-house for a physician; but he was not at that moment in the house, and knowing that no time must be lost, he procured the services of a young surgeon, who was staying there for a short time.

We heard their steps ascending the stairs, and then what an age it seemed before any one came to us! It was but about fifteen minutes, however, when Mr. Malcolm opened the door.

"Thanks be to God! my dear young ladies, your brother is not dead! In a desperate mood, and when stung to madness, he has attempted his life; but his hand was not steady, and his heart has just escaped. Shall I speak for you the thanks with which I know your hearts are full?"

We all kneeled without a word, and the young clergyman expressed for us just what we wished to say, in a fervent prayer of thanksgiving, that our brother's life was spared. Aunt Eunice remained in Harry's room all that night, rendering most prompt and efficient aid to the surgeon, without any flinching, or the betrayal of the slightest weakness. Once she came down, opened a drawer, and took out a roll of linen, which she tore into strips. But the most remarkable thing she did, was to stop one instant as she passed the sofa where I sat, and press a kiss upon my forehead, as she hastened from the room.

This unusual demonstration of feeling from Aunt Eunice, opened the flood-gates till that moment sealed, and a shower of tears relieved my bursting brain. Mr. Malcolm spent the night in rendering any needed assistance in Harry's room, and then returning to us, to give us what strength and encouragement he conscientiously could.

"That is a fine fellow ; the young surgeon upstairs !" said he. "I stumbled upon him accidentally, and yet I do not think I could have found one more skilful or efficient. He has the gentleness of a woman, and seems to be as apt as a nurse, as he is skilful as a physician."

"Is the ball extracted, Mr. Malcolm ?" asked Flora.

"Not yet ! he waits for day-light, and more assistance."

"Oh ! I wish Dr. Richards were here !" said Helen.

"I will write to him this moment, and send the letter by the morning's boat," said Mr. Malcolm.

"And he cannot be here till the evening of the day after to-morrow. Will it do to wait for that ?"

"I do not know. Dr. Herbert will watch to see how your brother's strength will bear it."

"Is he conscious ?" I asked.

"I think not ; he has moaned once or twice on being moved a little."

"Is there still danger, Mr. Malcolm ?"

"I fear there is. Danger of fever and inflammation ; but your brother's good constitution, and regular habits, are in his favor. At all events he is in the hands of the Lord, who is a hearer of prayer."

The next day we were admitted one by one to see Harry. Very cautiously, and quietly, we entered the room to take one look, and satisfy ourselves that he still breathed, Dr. Herbert still sat close by him,

and Aunt Eunice never left the room. As I stood looking at him, he half unclosed his eyes, and made a slight effort to put out his right hand ; but a deadly pallor spread over his face, and he moaned very faintly, and contracted his brow, as if in extreme pain.

Oh, how long it seemed since he had given me that good-night kiss, at the door of his room. Was it only *last night* ?

"Oh, Helen ! Flora !" I cried, as I went down to them. "He is very, very feeble. Is it possible he can live ?"

"Dr. Herbert says his life hangs by a thread, but he hopes for the best," said Flora.

They never told us when the ball was to be extracted, and thus we were saved the intense suffering we should otherwise have endured at the time. Mr. Malcolm was the first to inform us that it was done successfully, and that now all that was needed was the utmost care and quiet ; and we might hope to see our brother restored to health and strength.

"What a wonderful woman that quiet aunt of yours is !" said he ; "she seems to understand just what is wanted of her, and to know just what to do. How many people there are in the world, who are entirely misunderstood, till trial brings out their fine qualities ! But she is tired out, I am sure, and you young ladies will soon have the opportunity to try your skill at nursing, one at a time."

"Oh, it will be such a comfort to be able to *do* something !" said Helen. "It has been so hard to be

excluded from his room, and to wait here for tidings. I don't know what we should have done without you, Mr. Malcolm. But who is this Dr. Herbert, to whom we are under such great obligations?"

"He is a young physician from the country, who happened to be in town on business. When I went for Dr. Wayland, they told me he was not at home; but a friend of mine who was in the hall, seeing from my manner that the case was urgent, informed me that there was a young surgeon in the house, whom he knew well to be exceedingly skilful. So I thought it better to bring him at once, than to spend hours perhaps in hunting up another. A more faithful attendant I am sure I could not have found; he has not taken his eyes from his patient since he came; and he will not leave his post, till Dr. Richards arrives.

The next evening the dear old Doctor came. Oh, how warmly he was welcomed! As for me, I threw my arms round his neck, and kissed him, as I would have done my father. The good old man was agitated, and met us without any of his usual jokes.

"How is he, my dear Grace; how is Harry?"

"Oh, Doctor, the ball has been safely extracted, but he seems so weak, as if just fluttering between life and death. But oh, we feel so much safer since you have come!"

"I'll do my best, you may be sure, dear child; but I can't always save life; or I should not be lonely as I am, in my old age."

Dr. Herbert was called out to meet Dr. Richards, and after a few minutes' conversation, they went into Harry's room together. That night the good old Doctor watched by my brother, and Dr. Herbert consented to lie down on the sofa in the parlor, that he might be called in case of any sudden change.

With such care, and with the best nursing that could be given by the love of sisters, our poor Harry came slowly back to life, and then to strength, and then to health.

Poor Aunt Lainy and Uncle Dan were asleep on that night of horror; and were not startled so as to leave their rooms, by the sound which brought us all together with ashy cheeks in the hall. For they had seen and heard so many surprising sights and sounds during their short stay in the city, that they probably supposed the firing of pistols in private rooms to be an everyday occurrence.

But we were all so distressed, and so occupied, from that time, that Aunt Lainy thought it best to return home. Indeed, everything in the city was so foreign to the taste and habits of our simple country relatives, that they felt uneasy, and longed for the quiet of the little red cottage.

The kindness of our fellow-boarders during this time of anxiety, I shall never forget. The utmost quiet reigned throughout the house, as long as Harry's case was considered critical; and the kindest sympathy was shown us, and the most delicate attentions to our poor sufferer.

Dr. Herbert's devotion to Harry endeared him to us all ; and our constant intercourse in the sick room with him, and Mr. Malcolm, made them seem like dear and intimate friends, though our acquaintance had been so short.

In a few weeks Harry was removed to Aunt Eunice's little parlor, where he occupied the sofa for the day, and my little room at night, while I shared that of Aunt Eunice. Not till then did Dr. Herbert consent to leave him, and return to his home ; but there had been *more* "heart business," as Dr. Richards said, going on in that little room of Harry's, and Helen was in a miserable state of depression after the kind young physician left us.

Chapter Eighth.

THE OUTWARD BOUND.

I THINK it might be called a pleasant party which assembled every day in our little parlor, to cheer the invalid, and render the hours of convalescence less tedious. Flora came every day. Helen had remained with us ; for she had determined from the time of the catastrophe which befell Aunt Kate, to be a burden to her no longer, and was already endeavoring to find a situation for herself, when our need of her became so great and so pressing.

Every day, too, brought Mr. Malcolm, with book or paper, to read to Harry, and of which we took the benefit while we worked. And Dr. Richards was as regular as the clock, and almost as much of a fixture, when he once got among us. No sooner did our invalid begin to rally, than the old man began with his jokes again, with which he sometimes succeeded in bringing a smile, even to my brother's pale cheek.

For poor Harry was very sad. The sin of having attempted his own life, lay heavily upon his conscience, and seemed to him almost an unpardonable one. In the twilight, one evening, I drew up a little bench by him, and began to stroke his forehead and hair, as he loved to have me do. He seemed particularly depressed that evening.

"Why do you sigh so, Harry?" I asked. "Do you not feel so well this evening?"

"Oh, Gracie! I suppose I am well enough in *body*."

"Your *bodily* health is pretty good, but you have distress in your head, eh? as Mrs. Swineburn says."

"This matter is too serious for jesting, Gracie. Such a *coward*! such a *contemptible coward*! to try to escape the troubles of life, instead of bearing them like a man—by rushing, unbidden, into the presence of my Maker. And then, after I was restored to consciousness, a coward again; for I was afraid to die, especially with that sin on my conscience."

This had all staggered me very much. I had thought my brother was a Christian; but how could I reconcile this attempt at self-murder with the fact of his being a really religious man? But I had settled that point, with the aid of Mr. Malcolm, and I said to Harry what I honestly thought.

"My dear brother, I hardly think you are accountable for what you did that afternoon."

"That is all I cling to, except the mercy of Christ," said Harry, "my brain was on fire that day; all was confusion, distress, despair. The idea of escaping, *in that way*, from my troubles, came to me in a flash; I think, as a direct suggestion of the devil. Where did I get that pistol, Gracie? there was none in my room before."

"You went out once that afternoon, in great haste, and returned as rapidly."

"That I do not remember. It is like a long, troubled dream, till I woke and found that stranger sitting by me—that dear friend, gentle nurse, kind physician, Dr. Herbert. Oh, how I miss him!"

"Then, Harry, will you not dismiss these perplexing thoughts from your mind? If you were not an accountable being, then why let it trouble you? If you were, and it was a deliberate sin of a sane mind, the mercy of Christ is broad enough to cover all our sins, and to pardon the greatest of them, if we are repentant. But Mr. Malcolm can talk to you so much better than I can; open your heart to him, Harry; he will know just how to comfort you."

"Well, here I am again!" said old Dr. Richards, coming in at the door, "you see, you sent for me, clear from Sackville, and you've got to put up with me. You thought you could not get me any other way, so Harry had to—"

But Harry's look of distress stopped him, for the kind old man's perceptions were very keen.

"'Twas all an excuse to get me here, Gracie ; you wanted to see me so, didn't you ? After I came, there was nothing to say, but that everything was done just as it ought to be, and to take my station as a watcher by Harry, which any old nurse could have done as well. By the way, I have a letter from Dr. Herbert ; he sends his regards to the young ladies. What are *you* blushing for, Helen ? neither Flora nor Grace thinks it necessary to redden up because of this young doctor's message. I can see how matters stand, with half an eye, and without my glasses. Here's Helen and the doctor, and the young clergyman and Flora—hello ! here's another red face !—and as for poor Gracie, I think I shall have to take her myself. I wish I had a son for you, Gracie ; if my poor boy had lived, he would have been just the right age ; but he's gone, and you will just have to take up with me."

Aunt Eunice, of course, was always one of our party, and, though she seldom spoke, a most important one. There are some silent people, who have the capacity of making themselves *felt*. It is a comfort to look up and see them in their places, and they are sadly missed when out of them. I have often wondered why it was, but there was no one I missed like Aunt Eunice when she was away, or welcomed more gladly when she returned.

Has the reader forgotten that we have another brother, who started off to seek his fortune, in the far West, after our home was broken up ? Ar-

thur's life was so apart from ours, that it has not been woven into the thread of my story ; but by us he was not forgotten, or our interest in him in the least degree abated. Frequent letters passed between us, and nothing that happened to one remained long unknown to the rest.

Arthur had gone to a small, but rapidly-growing place, with which he was rising, and identifying himself with its interests, so that he bade fair to be one of its prominent and important men. In a calamity like this which had befallen Harry, he could remain absent from us no longer ; and a very few days brought him among us ; for already the iron track was laid through the whole length of our own State, and the shrieks of the iron horse resounded through forest and town.

Arthur was no longer the pale, delicate boy who had left us, but a robust and hearty man ; and the very perfection, it seemed to me, of manly beauty. This was all that was needed to make our circle complete, and we were indeed now a happy party.

Thus three months passed away before Harry was able to leave the house. During that time the kindness of our dear friends, the Leightons, was unremitting. The rarest and most fragrant flowers of the conservatory, all found their way to our little parlor ; the choicest fruits that could be found were procured for the invalid ; and best of all, we were often enlivened by the companionship of these kind and agreeable friends.

Aunt Kate was too much wrapped up in her own overwhelming griefs, to have any sympathy to expend upon us. Aunt Hannah stopped in her carriage soon after she heard what had taken place, and after a great many "shockings!" and "horribles!" and much rolling of the eyes, and throwing up of the hands, had taken herself off, and had not been seen since.

Helen and I went out to do a little shopping one day, when Harry was much better, and Arthur accompanied us. We were waiting to find a chance to make our way across the street, among carts, and omnibuses, and vehicles of every description, when a handsome carriage came dashing along.

"There is a splendid turn out!" said Arthur, "and a stylish lady in it."

"Arthur," I whispered, "that is *Gabrielle*!"

"*Gabrielle*? impossible!" he exclaimed, for remember his last impressions of the French girl were as he had seen her in the kitchen of the farm-house.

In turning out for an omnibus, her carriage was brought directly in front of us. In the coolest and most familiar manner possible, she shook her handkerchief at us, in the old pretty way, and ordered her coachman to stop, so that we were brought face to face with her, without any chance of escape.

"How d'ye do! Helen! How d'ye do, Gwace. How's Hawwy? Foolish boy he was to go and shoot himself; vewy foolish! Who's that? Not Arthur! Why, Arthur, how handsome you've

gwown; most as handsome as Hawwy! Well, after all, I don't like any one, as much as I do Hawwy. Walter's so cwooss, Gwace. He didn't use to be so cwooss; but now evewything goes *wong*; you can't come near him. *Why don't you talk to me?* Not vexed are you?"

"Mrs. Vernon, you must be sensible, that this sudden meeting, brings some unpleasant associations to my sisters," said Arthur. "If you will be kind enough to order your coachman to drive on, we shall be able to cross."

"Hoity! toity! We're vewy dignified, I think. I don't see why you should be so angwy. It would be vewy foolish, for me to mawwy Hawwy. He would always be poor. Now, you see, I am willing to be fwends with you; I will be glad to see you at my house. I want to see Hawwy. Do you think he loves me yet?"

"I have not inquired into the state of my brothers feelings; but I think he is getting bravely over all his wounds. Let us pass, if you please, or we must go up to another crossing!"

"Well, pass then! dwive on, James;" and with a sweeping and most dignified bow, *Gabrielle* drove on. Bowing here and there, and courted on all sides, this lady of fashion, and wealth, passed on.

What if she were heartless, and faithless, and utterly unprincipled; she had a fine house, and gave splendid entertainments, was stylish, and rich, and it was well to pay court to her, especially as it cost the flatterers nothing.

Aunt Hannah was among the first to call upon the bride ; and now that their relative positions were somewhat altered, she too could fawn upon, and flatter her former dependant, and boast of her intimacy with the elegant Mrs. Vernon ; but never failed to whisper to her friends, how she had befriended and patronized her in her poverty.

As we walked on up the street, our conversation naturally turned upon Gabrielle, who had just flashed upon us for the first time in months, and then passed out of sight.

"I am thinking," said I, "of the poor little forlorn French girl, crying so bitterly on her mother's dying bed."

"And I am thinking," said Arthur, "of the stranger in our home, so kindly welcomed and cared for, but so silent, so moody, and so unsocial. How changed ! how totally changed !"

"And how she has repaid dear father's and mother's kindness," said Helen, "by her treatment of Harry. What faithlessness, what ingratitude !"

"As for that," said Arthur, "though her fault is none the less, I think we are all under great obligations to her ; for certainly the very best thing she could have done for Harry, and all of us, was to go off and marry some one else. And I am much mistaken, if Harry himself does not come to that conclusion before long."

"Does it not seem strange to you, Arthur, that Harry should have become so strongly attached to such a girl as Gabrielle ?" asked Helen.

"It would, Helen, if stranger things did not happen every day. Gabrielle *was* fascinating, very fascinating, when she chose to be ; there is no denying that ! and she always chose to be so to Harry, when we were boys and girls together. She had such pretty confiding ways, and seemed so childish and artless. But she was *deep* even then. And then Harry had such a tender heart ; and Gabrielle seemed to throw herself on his protection ; and talked so sadly of her loneliness, and her native land, and her mother. Have you ever seen Walter, since his marriage ?"

"Never but once," said Helen, "and that was a few days ago. He was driving, furiously, a pair of elegant horses, while a negro sat behind. Walter had a reckless, dissipated air ; he looked sadly changed."

Changed indeed ! thought I, as I remembered him coming in whistling or singing at the door of the cottage-kitchen, with his arms full of wood, and his cheeks crimson with exercise.

"I hear," continued Helen, "that they are just a fashionable husband and wife—never seen together, and each having their own associates, and favorites ; that they live in a round of dissipation, and Walter is in the habit of giving late dinners to parties of gay young men ; and the fear is that he is going to ruin fast as possible. This Mrs. Leighton told me."

"Poor Walter ! I think we have had an escape all round, Gracie."

"It may be so, Arthur. In all these things we can never go back to try them over. One's destiny seems sometimes to turn on a very small pivot; when the whole course of one's life and associations is changed, by what seems at the time, a trifling event. It is a comfort to fall back on the idea, that all is known before to the Infinite Mind, and that it could not be otherwise."

Dr. Herbert must have been very anxious about his patient. For in two months he was back in the city again, to look after him. It was like an additional ray of sunshine, when he broke in upon us with his cordial cheery manner. This time he had a great deal to tell us of his village home; and indeed his partiality made it seem a perfect paradise. He certainly wished to make it appear very pleasant to some of us.

"It is a village of the kindest, warmest, hearts," he said, "all are like members of one body. If one suffers, all suffer in sympathy, and all rejoice in the happiness of each. I wish you could see how beautiful it is just now, when everything is budding into beauty; and our lake! oh, what a perfect sheet of water, it is. I have seen few lakes so beautiful in Europe, and none in this country. When the moon rises, and reflects itself in a long brilliant column of light across the water, sparkling where the wind stirs it, like a million of topazes; oh, it is enchanting!"

This was addressed seemingly to the whole group but there was one most eager listener.

"I have brought my sister Anna with me," said he, "to take her first look at the great city."

"Oh where is she?" asked Helen, "we will go to see her directly."

"She is at my boarding-house, not far from here," answered Dr. Herbert, and as soon as we were ready, he accompanied us on our walk.

A charming, artless, beautiful country girl was Anna Herbert, in ecstasies with everything in the city, for all was so new. She seemed to have a peculiar faculty of being interested in those she met, and often she looked with a curious eye upon Helen, and so earnestly, as to call the ever-ready blush to her cheek.

The reader has surely anticipated from all this blushing, how the matter stands between Helen and the young Doctor. I have no fancy for relating the minutiae of love stories; the tender scenes, and the whispered words, and the expressive looks, must be left to the imagination of my romantic readers.

Helen was not a sentimental young lady; she was too wise for nonsense; but she had a deep, warm heart, and it was completely won, by this most agreeable and excellent young physician. And before he left for his beautiful village home, Helen had promised to share it, in the autumn.

Three months had passed away and Harry had so far recovered, as to be able to drive out. For this purpose Mrs. Leighton's carriage was sent every day, and some of us always accompanied Harry in these pleasant drives, among the environs of the city.

One day when driving with Harry, I saw him start, and turn suddenly pale, and bite his lip ; and I turned just in time to see Gabrielle dash by. As soon as she recognized us, she shook her handkerchief from the carriage window, and called to her coachman to stop. But we passed on without heeding her.

And once we met Walter ; but he, poor fellow, was in no state to recognize us, and was only an object of pity even to Harry.

I had been dreading the time for my brother, when he should leave our pleasant circle, where everything was done to cheer and divert his mind, and go out to the dull daily routine of business. And I found that he shrank with a keen sensitiveness, from appearing once more in the street, and among his former business associates. Once he hinted something of this to me.

I told him that some months since he might have furnished a nine days' talk to those who knew anything about him, but there had been many a nine days' wonder since, and that affair of his had probably passed out of mind ; that he had not lost character, and therefore there was nothing to be ashamed of.

Harry was lying on the sofa one day, a little short-breathed and exhausted, after riding, when Mr. Leighton came in.

"Linton," said he, "what would you say to a trip to Europe?"

"I? Mr. Leighton!" said Harry in amazement.

"Yes, you."

"Why, I should say, that I should about as soon think of taking a trip to the moon."

"Would you like it?"

"*Like it?* It has been my dream by day, and night, for years ; all my spare hours have been spent upon French and German, in the faint hope that I might some day travel in the countries of Europe."

"Well ; it is just what you need to set you up, and you really are not fit for work yet."

"But what does all this mean, Mr. Leighton?"

"Oh, how stupid I am, to keep the most important part of my errand for the last. My sister, Mrs. Cameron, has a son about eighteen years of age ; a very fine lad, and her hope and pride. He has either grown too fast, or studied too fast, and withal inherits from his father a delicate constitution ; and already gives indication of pulmonary disease. A voyage to Europe is recommended, as most likely to restore his constitution.

"My sister has a young family, and is unable to go ; and she has urged me to find some reliable young man to take charge of her son ; to travel with him as long as may be necessary, to watch over his health and morals, to be his companion and friend."

"But she would not choose *me*, as a proper guardian for her son, if she *knew*."

"She does know all about you, and from all I

have told her, she has come to the conclusion, that there is no one to whom she could more safely trust her son, than yourself. She has abundant means, and you may travel where, and as you choose."

What a charming scheme! What a god-send for Harry! He seemed to wake up to a new existence. There was a pleasant object in view. He would get away from painful associations, for a year or more; from the perplexing cares of business, for which he was as yet totally unfit, and he would be travelling delightfully among those countries and scenes he had so longed to visit.

The last evening before he left we all spent together at Mrs. Leighton's. Mrs. Cameron and her son, Leighton, were there, and so was Alice Ward. We lingered late, unwilling to separate when so long a time must pass, before all would meet together again. Alice had been singing for us, and there was a tenderness and softness in her voice, that was unusual even to her.

"One more song, Alice," said Mr. Leighton; and she set down to the piano, and after running her pretty little hands over the keys, began the song:

"A health to the outward bound!"

To our amazement, when she came to the lines—

"And still our hearts will turn to those
Who plough the tossing wave."

her voice began to falter, and presently she broke down entirely. Of course, there was not a dry eye

in the room; but why Alice should be so overcome, could only be explained by an understanding of her warm sympathetic nature, and her deep feeling for us in our sorrow at parting from our brother.

The sisters had all this time been working with busy hands, to prepare the outfit; and in less than a fortnight from the time of Mr. Leighton's proposition of the plan, we saw the steamer plough its way down the bay; caught the last wave of dear Harry's handkerchief, as he and young Cameron stood together on the deck of the vessel; watched as long as the last faint line of smoke could be discerned, and then turned away with hearts saddened by the parting, but thankful that this melancholy episode in our noble brother's life, was so well and happily over.

So Harry went to the world on the other side of the waters and Arthur went back to his Western home, and we returned to our old way of life, except that we kept Helen with us this summer, while we were busy in making preparations for her marriage.

Poor Aunt Kate took a house in the country, in order to avoid the Hubbards and Flinns, who never lost an opportunity of mortifying her, in retaliation for her scorn of them. The railroad passing near them, her unhappy husband could fly on the wings of steam from her upbraiding tongue, which had not lost its sharpness in consequence of her disappointment and mortification; and so his business took him by the earliest train to the city, and detained him till the latest.

Aunt Hannah's star seemed now in the ascendant. Mr. Stevens had made some fortunate speculations, by which his income was greatly increased; they had taken a house up-town, cutting their former neighbors and acquaintances, and with a golden key, finding a ready access to the circle from which they had been excluded.

Poor Amelia tossed her little head after her mother's fashion, and adopted a convenient near-sightedness when meeting cast-off friends, and put on a haughty supercilious expression, not at all improving to her already plain little face.

One day, at the dinner-table, I noticed a change in the relative positions of my opposite neighbors. Maria Jane had gone back to her mother's side, and was subdued, and quiet; Mr. Malcolm looked pained and uneasy; and altogether, there was something going on which I could not understand; but that it was of a disagreeable nature, was very manifest. Mr. Malcolm never told, not even to one to whom he afterward told everything else; but it crept out, I cannot tell how, that poor Maria Jane, pitying the timidity of the young clergyman, who she supposed would not presume to raise his eyes to the heiress of wealth so great as her father's, had followed the fashion of Victoria, and other eminent female characters, and made the tender of her heart and hand to the young divine.

This was really a painful occurrence. I felt the sincerest pity for the weak, deluded young girl, who

had fallen into such a serious error, and whose mortification and disappointment were extreme; and also for Mr. Malcolm, who seemed really distressed. Every one who had ever seen them together, would exonerate him from all blame in the matter; for while her attachment for him had been open and undisguised, Mr. Malcolm had treated her with no more attention than common courtesy demanded. Fortunately for poor Maria Jane, the new residence was now finished and furnished, and in a few days we lost our opposite neighbors at table. Their places were soon supplied, but by people so utterly commonplace and uninteresting, that it is not worth while to trouble my readers with a description of them.

One morning Flora came to sit with us, bringing her work. There was an unusual little bright spot on her cheek, and a brilliancy about her eye, and she seemed to be absent and preoccupied. Several times she opened her lips as if to speak, and then seemed to change her mind.

I sat looking at her for several minutes, and then said:

"Well, Flora, what is it? Out with it!"

"Why what do you mean, Gracie?" she asked, laughing and blushing.

"What is this you are just on the point of telling?"

"You are a queer girl, Gracie, to read so rightly, for there *is something*."

"It is not hard to read your face this morning, Flora ; and you are usually so calm and composed, that it seems the more strange to see you so excited. *Shall I help you ?*"

"Yes, Gracie ! you have read so far, you may read the rest."

"You are engaged to be married, Flora."

"Yes, yes, and who to ? do you know that ?"

"To no one but Mr. Malcolm, of course. Oh, Flora, I am so glad ! You are just made for a clergyman's wife ; and I do believe Mr. Malcolm is good enough even for you. But what shall I do ; with both sisters married ; and Helen going so far away ; and Harry across the water ; and you will be all absorbed, with your husband and congregation."

"Oh no, Gracie ! Never too much absorbed to devote myself to my dear little sister, whenever I can have her. What do you think Mrs. Leighton says—that Helen and I must be married at her house, at the same time."

"Was there ever anything to equal her kindness ? That will be a delightful plan ; if I *must* lose both my sisters."

I pass hastily over the events of this summer, for they have no decided influence upon my story. An important event to a few anxious hearts, was the arrival of every steamer, with tidings from across the water. Harry's long, delightful letters gave most graphic and minute accounts of the events of their journey, and the places they visited. It was

almost like being there ourselves, to read his descriptions of these places far away. As for me, it was only tantalizing, however, and served but to increase the desire which had been growing upon me since I had become acquainted with modern literature, and especially with works of travel, which were my peculiar delight.

Harry wrote that his young charge was improving in health and strength daily, so that they were taking, slowly and as he could bear it, a pedestrian tour through Switzerland. As for Harry himself, he said he was stout and hearty, and able to endure any amount of fatigue ; and it was evident from the tone of his letters, that his spirits had quite recovered their equilibrium.

His last letter before the wedding of my sisters, was from Rome, expressing his delight at their happy prospects, and telling us that he had sent by an acquaintance returning, some little gifts for us, such as his limited means would allow him to purchase.

This summer, to me, passed only too happily and quickly. The Leightons, like many other people, then as now, were glad to leave the heat and dust of the city for some pleasant country seat. Theirs was a charming spot on the bank of the river. Flora, of course, went with them ; and they kindly insisted that both Helen and myself, should also make their house our home for the summer.

I hesitated about leaving Aunt Eunice, who never could be persuaded to leave the city. But Mrs.

Leighton herself, went to see our kind, quiet aunt, who seemed, as well as we could judge, to be much pleased with the plan. In the most condensed form of words possible, she represented to us, that as we should so soon be separated, it was her desire that we should accept Mrs. Leighton's invitation, and spend this last summer together.

So it passed pleasantly and quietly, for Mrs. Leighton would not invite any but those she loved. Dr. Herbert, and Mr. Malcolm, were much with us there; and as for me, when the time of my sisters was thus claimed, I found companionship in the sweet children, who were very fond of "Cousin Gracie;" and with whom I took long, pleasant rambles on the banks of the river; or sat watching the ever-varying lights and shades, passing over those same Kaatskills, on the other side of which I had so often fixed my gaze, when a child, in my little attic room in the red cottage. With what different eyes I saw them now!

And once, sweet Alice Ward came from their own country home, to see us; and in our close companionship in the same house for a few weeks, I learned to love this charming girl like a sister. She, too, had a great fondness for tales of travel, and never tired of hearing Harry's long and minute letters.

Autumn came, and the Leightons returned to town; and in the pleasant month of October, my two sisters were married. All brides, look their best, 'tis said; but Helen and Flora were always

beautiful, and never were two more lovely-looking creatures than my sisters when they stood up, dressed precisely alike, to be married.

As for me, they persuaded me to lay aside my black dress that evening, and to wear one of white crape. And Mrs. Leighton put a white rose in my hair. I had never been in full dress before, and I felt very strangely. Of course it was no matter how I felt, and I am foolish to speak of my own feelings, as if they were of any importance; but once or twice when I caught sight of myself in one of the large mirrors, I could not imagine who it was.

Old Dr. Richards was in great spirits that evening. I never saw him so happy. "What are you smiling at, little Gracie?" he asked.

"Why I was just wondering who that little lady in white might be, when I found it was myself."

"And a very pretty little lady she is," Dr. Richards was pleased to say. "Come, my little lady, you're dressed up in white on purpose. You know I told you, you would have to take up with me. The minister's here and everything is ready."

"Thank you, dear Doctor; but I think two weddings are enough for one evening."

"Now, Gracie, if you're going to try to get out of this, I'll sue you for a breach of promise.—Mr. Leighton, they sent for me to come here, and when I came, this little lady just threw her arms round my neck, and kissed me. Isn't it so, Gracie?"

"I confess it, Doctor."

"And isn't that what people do when they are engaged? I'll—I'll make you pay damages, Gracie, if you jilt me after this."

"I think we are both too young just yet, Doctor; I am sure you have not arrived at years of discretion."

"Well, you are wise enough for both, my dear, and grave enough to make up for all my follies. Come, you will not refuse my arm to go in to supper, I am sure, will you?"

Flora went to New-England, immediately after her marriage, to visit Mr. Malcolm's parents; and I, according to previous agreement, accompanied Helen and her husband, on a tour through the Canadas, and up the Lakes, returning with them to their village home; for Helen had insisted upon this, as she dreaded going among strangers alone.

There had been no exaggeration, as I soon found, in Dr. Herbert's description of the beauties of the natural scenery, or of the kindness of the inhabitants of this charming place. Dear old Mrs. Herbert opened her arms to receive us, and the people of the village took us to their hearts at once.

This was my first experience of village life. I had known but the two extremes, of isolated life upon a farm, and the bustle and confusion of the crowded city. I had heard and read that *villagers* were always and necessarily gossips.

"Gossips?" said Dr. Herbert; "you will find gossips of course, everywhere, when people have

nothing more important to fill their heads than the affairs of their neighbors. But let not the people of the city, cast a stone at us on this account. See how eagerly any piece of scandal in high life is caught up, and its details eagerly repeated from one to another. How the sale of the papers which pamper the public appetite is increased, when a dainty bit like this is expected! How well every article of the trousseau of a wealthy bride is known, and its price remembered! What an eagerness there is to hear *news*; what a passion for spreading it! Oh, I have seen enough of city life, to make me exclaim 'let me fall into the hands of the kind-hearted people of my own village, rather than into those of the heartless, and worldly, of the great city!'

"There is this about a village: we all know each other well, and take a deep interest in each other's welfare. If a child is very sick, its every symptom is known every morning in every house. If the bell tolls for a funeral, every one knows who is dead. And ready hands are always on the spot to aid, and ready hearts to sympathize, whenever any are in trouble. No need of hired watchers here; the good people vie with each other in performing these duties for the sick. No one has a better opportunity of judging of these things, than a physician."

I remembered how I had laid awake night after night, in my little room at the boarding-house in the city, hearing, through the thin partition, the

mournful wail of a sick child in the next house, and the feeble step of the tired mother, as she walked up and down the room ; and how I had wished I might relieve her, but did not know how. And then one night a stronger step took up the march, and I found the next morning that Aunt Eunice had gone in, and stranger as she was, had taken the sick baby from its fainting mother's arms, and carried it all night.

But the wailing ceased, and a little coffin was carried from the house, and two or three hired carriages followed the little one to the grave. And then I remembered how, when our own dear ones were to be consigned to the grave, the sympathizing neighbors gathered from far and near ; the farmers left their work, and the horses were taken from the field, and not a face among the crowd but was familiar and friendly.

Once, when sitting in Aunt Kate's dressing-room, she looked from its window, and exclaimed :

"I declare, here is a hearse coming to the next house ! It must be that child that has kept me awake so, with its whining and crying."

"Did you know the people, Aunt Kate ?"

"Know them ? of course not. They moved in not long ago ; and you don't suppose I was going to call upon people whom I knew nothing about. Pretty acquaintances I might make. The woman dressed very well though. Her furs were magnificent last winter. There they go. I declare there isn't

a soul but the mother and children. They can't be anything. I'm glad I did not call !"

This is the sympathy one may expect to meet with, where brick partitions divide the dying of one house from the strong and active of another ; unless some more potent claim than that of human brotherhood and pressing need, can be put in by the suffering neighbor.

"Who is thy neighbor," in the great city ? Not even he who is but a foot from thee, whose breathing thou mayst almost hear, whose dying groan disturbs thine afternoon siesta. Thy neighbor is the one who can best help thee up the ladder of fortune and fashion, and hold thee while thou dost spurn with thy foot those who were once side by side with thee !

Chapter Ninth.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

IN the delightful home of dear old Mrs. Herbert, where Helen was to remain till spring, I lingered because kind hands held me, and I could not get away. They were very kind to say all the flattering things they did to me, but if I might believe them, and they seemed very sincere people, they really dreaded the thought of my leaving them.

Anna said she had never had a sister till Helen came, but that I was more to her even than Helen, for I had no one else to engross my thoughts, and time, when she wanted me to read, or to chat, or to ramble with, or for a row upon the lake. For often we would go down to the water's edge, and loosing the boat, we two would go off together, while Anna played the Lady of the Lake, and spend the whole afternoon in rowing, or idly rocking upon the placid waters.

Or, drawing our little boat up on the beach in

some quiet romantic spot, we would ramble in the woods, or among the ravines, or sit under the trees, with our work or books. This to me was perfect enjoyment, for the scenery of nature is never so sweet to me as in the autumn time, when the trees have put on their many-colored dress, and the bright leaves strew the ground beneath them, like a gay carpet.

So the autumn passed away, and winter came, bringing its in-door pleasures: the long cozy evenings with the bright wood fire, the work and the books, and the invariable winding-up of three games of backgammon with the dear old lady, were most delightful. Gladly would I have lingered there till spring, but there were others who had claims upon me, if I could be any comfort to them. Flora was begging me to return and Aunt Eunice, though she still consented to my remaining, did not seem to do so very cordially. But a letter from Aunt Lairy turned my thoughts in another direction, or rather toward a more distant point. This was the letter:

"MY DEAR GRACE:

"I am sorry to inform you that Dan'l's had a Fall. He was going down the steps into the Wood-shed for Pine, when he slipped with his lame Leg on the Ice, and fell and Hurt the Spine of his Back. Mr. Hicks went to Sackville for Doctor Grant, and he thinks He is kind of injured Internal. But he didn't Do much, only left some little Medicine, and some-

thing to rub Him With, and said let him rest. So I have took the Matter into my own hands, for I didn't mean to have the Boy neglected.

"He seems to be kind of run down and Powerful weak the last Few days. I give him elekom-pane and tanzy bitters, and Burdock and narrow-dock tea, and Camomile and poke weed and Fennel Tea, besides Pills and mixtures, and oil and Salts, and Rub Him with Salve and opodildock, and Line-ment, and Blister and mustard Him, and put on Poor man's Plaster, and "all ail cure," and another Dollar-a-bottle Stuff, and many other Things too numerous to mention, and I mus'nt forget Emetics, and Boneset, for I wouldn't have Dr. Herbert think I have neglected Anything; all of which, Dan'l Takes like a Lamb, and yet to my Surprise he gets no stronger, but Weaker.

"I think he might begin to mend, only it seems borne in upon his Mind that He a'nt Long for this World; and when folks get that notion it seems as if no Skill could save 'em. I forgot to say, that I thought it Best to have him Bled the other day, and so I got Mr. Hicks to sharpen Dan'l's knife on the grindstone and jest put it into his arm. I think he cut an Artery by mistake, for it Bled an awful sight, and We had to pull all the Nap off of Dan'l's best hat, to stop it. If I ever thought he would wear it again, I should feel very bad.

"But what I was going to say was this, Dan'l's begun to fret about *Grace*. He hasn't got no

Strength to stammer it out, so he sings it. You know, how you children used to say, 'Sing it Uncle Dan' when he could'nt get anything out. T'other day He began to sing about *Grace*; and For all the World, I thought He was going to sing 'Grace 'tis a charming sound,' which was always a favorite of His'n you know; but he was singing to Have *Grace* come to see Him afore He Died.

"Now if you could make it so as you could come; I know it would be an awful long journey, for I hear the River's friz half-way; but the sleighing's first Rate, and I know you would make a sacrifice for Dan'l if so be He 'aint long to Remain.

"Your affectionate Aunt,
ROXALANA PLUMMER.

"P. S.—Just ask Dr. Herbert if he han't got no little notions in the way of Medicine, to send up for Dan'l; because I should always have to Reproach myself, if He Died of neglect because I hadn't give Him enough Medicine. Tell Him there an't any Ten minutes in the Day, but what something's going Down his Throat, or onto the Spine of His Back, So I think I ought to have a Clear Conscience, if He don't get up.

"Oh—one more thing; please Tell Dr. Herbert that Miss Hackett says, if I was to put a Live Spider in a pipe and tie it Round His neck, it would be a speedy Relief, and Miss Munger wants me to open His mouth and Let a Live Toad jump down

His Throat. Jest you ask Him if there's anything in it, Will you?"

I was really distressed at this account of poor Uncle Daniel's sufferings, so patiently endured; but Dr. Herbert laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, at the details of Aunt Lainy's practice.

"I think you will have to go, Grace, if only to save the poor man from the hands of Aunt Lainy. If he stands all this, I think he must *literally* have an *iron* constitution; he ought to have an iron frame, too, into which to pour all these teas and mixtures."

"But what can I do, Doctor? Aunt Lainy is in her element now, and will not be interfered with."

"Whenever you get a chance, throw the tea and drugs out of the window, and tell her, I send her word, that unless she wants to kill him she must let him lie and rest, and nature will do her own work."

The next morning I started upon my journey for the city, where I was to take the boat. On my arrival there, I found that I had a few hours to spare, and so rode up to see Aunt Eunice, and my dear Flora, who was delightfully settled in her own house, a neat little parsonage near Mr. Malcolm's church.

At Flora's house, I was so fortunate as to find Dr. Richards, who gave me his usual kind and hearty greeting.

"But, my child," he said, "you must not take this long tedious journey alone, at this season of the

year. I have been wanting to go up to the old place myself, to settle my affairs, but I dreaded it, and put it off from day to day; I suppose I must have been waiting for you. Now, I will just go and put up a few things, and join you at the boat."

No one can tell how I had shrunk from taking this long journey alone, and unprotected; for traveling in those days was quite a different thing from what it is now; and the relief was inexpressible, when the kind old doctor made this proposition to accompany me.

An hour or two with Flora and Aunt Eunice, a cup of tea by way of refreshment, and off again. The part of the journey taken on the boat was easy enough, but that was not more than half-way up the river, for the rest was frozen; and, in the night the boat stopped at a wharf, where we were obliged to go on shore, and take the stage.

It had been snowing steadily all night, and as the wind was blowing a gale, the snow was piled into drifts among the hills, which it was hard to work through, so that sometimes, the driver was obliged to leave us and call in the aid of men with shovels, to clear a road. This delayed us greatly, and as the cold was intense, we suffered extremely.

But the good old doctor never lost courage or spirits, and his cheery manner served to keep up mine, through that long dismal journey. On the second day we reached Templeton, and took our journey northward, amid old familiar scenes.

This was always a cold snowy region, but the winter of which I am writing, was a remarkable one. Such a depth of snow was not remembered, by that interesting individual, "the oldest inhabitant." There was no sign of a fence to be seen, and we never knew whether we were in the road, or in the fields. For great distances the road was cut out just wide enough for one vehicle, along which we rode with high walls of snow towering above us on either side.

Of course, that oftener happened which might have been foreseen, the meeting of two teams; and then all hands was obliged to turn out, and taking the horses from one of the sleighs, lead them floundering through the snow, and break a track as well as they might for the sleigh. Everything turned out for the stage, but those frequent meetings caused us great detention.

At length, however, the little church, and old Johnny Gilmore's tavern, appeared in sight. The same—the very same; but oh! so small.

The driver stopped to water his horses at the trough, and to throw off his mail-bag; and old Johnny appeared. He, at least, had not diminished in size since I last saw him. He wheezed out a hearty greeting to us, and then putting his head in at the door, he called out:

"Wife! old woman! here's Grace; Squire Linton's daughter; and Doctor Richards."

The old woman came out wiping her red hands on her apron, and apparently much pleased to see us;

making many inquiries about my sisters, and brothers, and Phillis, who was always considered one of the family.

"How is Dan'l, Johnny?" asked Doctor Richards.

"Well, Dan'l's *alive*. Hicks was down here, an hour or two ago, for hops, and yarbs for poultices. Old woman sent him."

"We had better push on, Grace," said Doctor Richards; "she'll poultice him out of existence, before we reach there, if we don't hurry."

We crossed the mill-stream bridge; the dam was a mass of piled up ice, and the stream all frozen. Just there above the dam I used to slide on the ice, with my brothers and Walter, and sometimes my sisters; while Gabrielle stood and screamed for Harry to help her.

And up this very hill Walter used to draw me on his sled, as we went home from school. Poor Walter! he was very kind and good-hearted!

"But is *that* the Red Cottage? That little shanty standing back from the road? One's ideas of things are very much changed by acquaintance with "the world," and life in the great city.

Aunt Lainy was very glad to see us; but she was in that state of excitement into which she was always thrown, when she had the opportunity to exert herself in the chamber of sickness or death.

There are some people, and very kind-hearted people I doubt not they are, who seem actually to

revel in such scenes. They rush to the house where there is serious illness, whether they are needed or not ; they mention with great gusto the number of new victims of an epidemic, and each death is reported with a doleful tone of voice to be sure, but with a mixed feeling, which perhaps they would not themselves be able to analyze or explain.

Aunt Lainy was one of these, and now that the sole responsibility of an extreme case rested on her, she bustled about with an important air, which was almost amusing.

She met us, with a pan filled with some sort of poultice in one hand, and a bottle, probably of "dollar-stuff," in the other ; and stretching apart her hands so as not to scald me with the one, or spill upon me the other, she allowed me to kiss her wrinkled cheek.

"Glad to see you, Grace ; it's well you have come in time ; and Dr. Richards, I'm glad to see *you* ; but you can't do no good here. He's going, Doctor, in spite of *everything*.

"In consequence of *everything* ! I should think, from what Grace tells me," said the Doctor. "Mercy on me ! look at the drugs, and the cups, and the pans, and the bottles ; did you expect him to live through all this, Lainy ?"

"Well, I think, perhaps if you'd bleed him, Doctor, and if Mr. Hicks would only come with that stuff I sent for to Sackville. But, I don't see as there's any use."

"No—no use," said the Doctor, coming into the room where I stood by the poor feeble sufferer. "He has been drugged out of existence, but the poor fool meant it kindly, I suppose."

"I don't know as he'll know you, Grace ; he lays in that kind of stupid state all the time," said Aunt Lainy, in her loud tones, bustling in. "I can't hardly ever rouse him. Here, *Dan'l ! Dan'l !*"

She shook him, and the poor creature instinctively opened his mouth, thinking that some nauseous dose was about to be put down his throat.

"Please don't, Aunt Lainy," said I.

Then, taking his hand gently, I stooped down and said : "Uncle Dan ; here's Gracie !"

He opened his lustreless eyes, and a faint attempt at a smile, which was enough to break one's heart, stole over his face. But he only took my hand, and feebly putting it up to his face, laid his cheek upon it, and held it there, while a placid satisfied expression settled on his features.

So with my hand under his cheek, he rested. Dr. Richards pushed me a chair, and I sat down, while he stood guard to keep off Aunt Lainy, who was determined to shake up the poor sufferer, to administer his ten-minutes dose.

"How is his mind, Aunt Lainy ?"

"Pleasant frame ! Singing hymns as long as he was able. Anxious to go !"

"I should think so !" said Dr. Richards, "if only to get to a land where there are no medicinal herbs

among the fields. You must be tired out, dear child," he said to me, "riding so many nights."

"I am tired, Doctor, very tired; but I cannot leave him now. Do you think it will be long?"

"He is sleeping his last sleep, Gracie, this side the long one from which he'll never wake."

So we sat for two hours or more, my hand tightly clasped in that of the dying man, and his cheek resting on it.

At length he started, and woke. A brighter smile passed on his face as he saw me, and patting his own cheek gently, I saw that he wanted me to kiss him. In a few moments he began to sing, softly and sweetly, the words which seemed to have been written expressly for him:

"And when this feeble stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave;
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save."

The last notes were faint; the fingers relaxed their hold of mine, he gave one gentle sigh, and all was still.

"Ah, Gracie! he has begun that song already," said the Doctor; "and from this time the tongue of the stammerer shall speak plainly."

Dear Uncle Dan! A simpler, gentler spirit never breathed; a kinder or more harmless creature never existed on the earth.

We carried him through the deep, deep snow, to

the Sackville burying-place, where another grave was dug in the family enclosure. A winding-sheet of snow covered all the others, and not even the head-stones were visible.

I could not remain longer than just to rest, for I was wanted by my friends in the city. But I disliked to leave poor Aunt Lainy in this desolate condition. "How are you going to live here all alone, Aunt Lainy?"

"Well—I don't know," she answered, with a most peculiar expression on her face.

"I cannot bear to leave you so," said I.

"Well—Grace—I've been wanting to tell you; but I thought I'd wait till after the funeral."

"What, Aunt Lainy?"

"Well—that creature of a Hicks is fool enough to want me to *marry him!* did you ever!"

"Possible?"

"*He does!* and what's more, I don't know but I shall be fool enough to do it."

"Why, Aunt Lainy!"

"Yes, I certainly think I shall. He farms the place on shares anyway. And I don't know but its as well to make it a partnership business."

"What sort of a man is he, Aunt Lainy?"

"Well enough—good natured I guess; he isn't so handsome as Jabez Whittaker was, but he's better looking than Jabez is now, and considerably better tempered. Anyhow, he'll be company for me, and I guess I can't do better."

"Well, if you are contented, it is all I care for, Aunt Lainy."

Just then Mr. Hicks came in, in his shirt sleeves, and pulling his front lock of hair, and scraping his left foot, he made "his manners" to me; and I thought "every one to his taste."

The fourth day from the funeral, Dr. Richards being ready, we started for home. I had climbed the stairs poor Walter made, and slept in my own little room, and looked from the window on the snow covered Kaatskills, the other side of which was no longer a matter of conjecture to me; and I had felt sad and desolate enough, when I thought of the voices which once resounded through the little red cottage. Now I bade it my last good-by, and started for my city home.

It was such a comfort to me that I had not allowed my fear of the perils of the journey to prevent my obeying Aunt Lainy's summons. I would have taken that long journey many times over to bring such comfort to my poor uncle as was betrayed in that last bright smile, though no word was spoken.

Farewell, dear Uncle Dan! Farewell forever scenes of my childhood! and graves of my parents!

I was glad to find myself once more in my own little room at Mrs. Osborne's, and with the prospect of sitting down in quiet with Aunt Eunice again, who seemed really happy to have me back. But I

had hardly taken off my things, when she told me that Mr. Leighton had been several times to ask when I would be back. The children had the scarlet fever, she said, and had been calling for me.

This alarmed me, for Dr. Richards had told me, a most malignant type of this frightful disease, was raging in the city, and carrying off numbers of children. These precious, idolized little ones! How could their parents live without them! But it might be. Many another mother's children had been taken; and three little coffins had been borne in one day from the same house, and the cemetery was fast filling with little graves.

The next morning early I went up to Mr. Leighton's. Flora had watched there the night before, and was just leaving the house as I reached it.

"Oh, Gracie," said she, "I am so glad you have come. Little Effie cannot live, the Doctor says, and we have fears that little Kate will not. Effie has called for 'Cousin Gracie' as long as she could call, but her throat is too bad now."

Anxious faces met me on the stairs, and I was led to the room where my sweet little pet lay. She looked at me eagerly as I approached her little bed, and tried to smile.

"My little darling is sick," said I, as I kissed her.

"My head aches, Cousin Gracie," she whispered, "and I'm so hot, and so thirsty. I wanted you to

come and sing, 'As rain on meadows ;' mamma cannot sing your tune."

I cannot think why the child loved this tune so. I had often sung it to the children on Sunday, when we were up the river the summer before. I loved it, because it had been one of the songs with which my mother sang me to sleep, when a child.

"As rain on meadows newly mown,
So shall he send his influence down,
His grace on fainting souls distils,
Like heavenly dew, on thirsty hills."

"That sounds so cool!" whispered the lovely child, "sing it again, Cousin Gracie."

As the poor mother had been going from one sick-room to another, all night, Mr. Leighton persuaded her to leave Effie with me, while the nurse held little Kate, and to try and take a little rest.

As soon as her father and mother had left the room, little Effie put her arm round my neck, and drawing me down close to her, she whispered :

"Cousin Gracie ! I am going away to the 'Heavenly Land.'"

"Why do you think so, darling ? other little children who have been very sick, have got well."

"But *I know it*, Cousin Gracie ! Jesus will come for me very soon, I think. Will you tell poor mamma ? Don't cry about it, Cousin Gracie. I shall be very glad when I am *once there*. But I do not

like to die. Does it hurt people *very much* to die, Cousin Gracie ?"

"Those I have seen die, my sweet one, have gone to sleep just as sweetly as your little baby sister does in her mother's arms."

"Oh, how nice to go to sleep, and wake up in the 'Heavenly Land.' Tell mamma I didn't want to stay, even with her, and papa, and Katie, and Freddy, and the darling baby. It is so beautiful in Heaven. I can't tell her, she will cry so."

Precious little darling ! These were the last words she spoke, for the little throat was fast closing, but over the agony of the next twelve hours I must draw a veil. How the parents bore it as they did, I could not tell, if I had not so often seen how strength was meted out just as it is needed for the hour of trial. It was a relief to all when the patient little sufferer breathed her last. Then I gave them the message little Effie had left for them, and it comforted their aching hearts.

But there was no time to brood over their sorrow, for that same day the same distressing symptoms appeared in little Kate. This sweet child was different from Effie. Effie was confiding and friendly ; would climb upon the knee of any stranger who called her, and answer questions in her pretty artless open way, looking full into his face, with her deep blue eyes.

But little Kate was shrinking, and timid, and

could scarcely ever be drawn from behind her mother's chair, when strangers were present. It was long before I gained her confidence, but during that summer in the country, she had become very much attached to me.

How it pained my heart to see her put her little hand to her throat, as Effie had done; and when the physicians proposed making an incision in her throat, as they had done in that of her little sister, I could not help saying:

"Oh, dear, Mrs. Leighton! you will not have it done?"

"We must endure everything to save her," she said.

Then she asked the physicians, for Dr. Richards had been called as soon as he returned:

"Is there any hope, *the slightest hope* of her life being saved by it?"

"My dear madam, it will only *prolong* her life."

"And her sufferings!" said her mother. "No, I will take the responsibility; she shall not be put to the torture. If she must die, let her die in peace."

Poor little darling! she was so timid; and yet with the instinct which I have seen in very little children, she knew that she was going to die.

In her broken language I heard her saying:—"I don't want to go *alone*! Don't let me go *alone*!"

"Where, darling?" I asked, for I thought her mind wandered.

"I don't want to go to Heaven *alone*. I don't know them. Katie will be afraid. Mamma can't go; baby would be hungry; and papa can't go; they want him here. Cousin Gracie, *couldn't you go?*"

This was said in her old, winning, coaxing way, but only in a whisper.

"Not just yet, my precious pet! but we will all come. But Effie will be with you. Sister Effie is waiting for you, on the other side."

"*That will do*," she whispered, with a sigh of relief, and laying her little cheek on her hand, she breathed shorter, and quicker, and heavier, till with a little start she opened her beautiful eyes, pointed with her little finger upward, smiled, oh, so sweetly, and went to join her little sister.

The two little darlings were carried from the house together, and laid in one grave; and the destroying angel passed on, leaving two little comforts, to the smitten but grateful hearts, of the bereaved parents.

While watching by Effie's side, I received a note from Aunt Hannah.

"I hear you are in the midst of scarlet fever, at the Leightons," she wrote. "I want to ask you not to come here, if you please, as Evelina has never had it. I am keeping her closely shut up at home. Don't answer this note, if you please. I have told the messenger not even to come into the upper part of the house when he returns. By-the-way

Grace, I wish you would go down to see Thomas's family. There is a great fuss there about the death of their boy. Thomas is sick, too ; I cannot go, because in those tenement houses it is very likely they have the scarlet fever, and I might bring it back to Evelina. But, *under the circumstances*, I think one of the family ought to go ; though I cannot blame myself ; they ought to have wrapped the boy up better."

All this was a mystery to me ; but we were in too much distress, and my time was too much occupied with the sick and dying children, to make any inquiry into the matter, or to attend to Aunt Hannah's request. An acquaintance with the facts, afterward brought a circumstance to my mind which I had forgotten.

The night before little Effie died, we were all up watching in one or the other of the rooms, where the two sick children lay. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and oh, so bitterly cold ; the coldest night of an unusually cold winter.

There seemed to be a very large party at Mrs. Howard Crane's, on the other side of the street. I could hear the constant ringing of sleigh-bells, as one gay party after another was deposited at the brilliantly-lighted house. And after a time, the sound of the band of music reached us in the chamber of sickness, and suffering, and I thought, "How different a scene there, and here."

So it is. Some are dancing, while others are dying. Little do they think that the time will come, when they, too, will lie in a darkened chamber, and that the world will go dancing on then, as it does now.

Sometimes, when unable to endure the sight of little Effie's sufferings, I walked to the window and stood looking out, hardly knowing what I saw, my mind was so absorbed with the dying child. But I remember a feeling of pity for the poor drivers and horses, who stood hour after hour in the bitter cold, waiting for the gay dancers, who, in the warm, light rooms, never thought of them.

I saw the men stamping up and down, and striking themselves with their arms to keep their blood in circulation ; and I afterward remember seeing a little boy get off from the box of a sleigh many times, and go up the steps, and ring the door bell, and then come back and climb into his seat again, and draw the buffalo robe up round him. All this, I could see as distinctly as if it were day, in the clear cold moonlight. I remember, too, thinking that the horses and sleigh were like Aunt Hannah's, but her driver, Thomas, was a man of middle age.

I heard afterward, that about two o'clock in the morning, when Amelia was fairly tired of dancing, and after Mrs. Stevens' sleigh had been many times announced, they concluded to take their departure.

Cloaked and hooded, and wrapped in furs, they approached the sleigh, with one or two gentlemen in attendance.

Little Jimmy did not spring down to open the door for them, and when Mrs. Stevens called him, he made no answer.

"I declare if that child is not asleep," said she; "Mr. Clark, will you be kind enough to shake him up for me?"

But no shaking was of any avail; the little boy was frozen stiff, and dead! Fair lady! when you next dance the hours away, on some bitter cold winter night, will you think of this little *true story*, and remember those who wait outside—it may be in intense suffering.

And Reverend Divine, will you have the humanity to shorten by a half hour your eulogy over the next influential parishioner who is to be carried to his grave amid frost and snows, and in your respect for the dead, have some pity for the living.

This I say, for my heart has ached for the poor drivers whom I have seen standing for hours before a church, in the coldest weather, while funeral services were going on within.

As soon as I could be spared from the house of mourning, where I had been in attendance for several days, I found my way to another and more desolate abode of sorrow. It was that of little Jimmy's mother. Thomas, the father, who had been

Aunt Hannah's coachman, had died that morning; little frozen Jimmy was buried, and the younger children were down with the scarlet fever.

Poor Mary was almost distracted; but the necessity of attending to her sick, moaning children, somewhat diverted her mind from her heavy grief.

"Oh, to think that he needn't have died at all, at all, dear; if they'd only coom'd away when they said they would. My poor b'y! The father was sick with a *faver*, and when the time came when the ladies said they would want Jimmy, I shook him up, an' he fast asleep; and I niver see him agin, till hours after, he was brought home a stiff little corups. But the poor foolish woman has a dale to answer for, dear; for that was what killed Thomas jest. Oh dear! oh dear! *what iver* shall I do, dear! wid' em both afther dying!"

This was a case beyond even my *attempts* at consolation. Our sources of comfort were not the same. All was desolation to poor Mary; and indeed, the prospect was dark, for this world and the next.

There was a very, very old Irish woman sitting rocking herself back and forth in the chimney corner, and crooning her complaints to any who might listen. I went and spoke to her.

"O-o-o! I tell o-o, dear, they can all die but me. Here's Thomas, the strong stout man he was, dear, he can die of a *faver*, and they wantin' him, that *couldn't* want him; and Jimmy, he could be friz, and the young 'uns can die; an' there's little coffins,

and big coffins, afthur been carried down them stairs ; and I tell o-o dear, the Lords afthur forgetting old Bridget. I wonder will he *iver* comeforme, dear ?”

On this point I could satisfy the poor old soul, but as for their other distresses, I could only promise temporal relief, and comforts for the sick. My mind was so worked up by all this, that I could not help stopping at Aunt Hannah's as I went up the street.

“Tell her not to come in,” were the first words I heard, as the door was opened to my ring.

“Aunt Hannah !” I called out : “Cannot you go down to see Thomas's wife ? They are in great distress. Thomas is dead, and the children have the scarlet fever !”

“*Scarlet fever* ! of course not, my dear ! How could you think of such a thing ; expose my precious Evelina ?”

“Jimmy was as precious to his mother, perhaps, as Evelina is to you, Aunt Hannah ; and a great deal more necessary. Won't you at least send them something ? they are miserably poor.”

“Yes ; I'll send something down, if I can find any one who will not be coming back here. But please go, Grace ; I am so afraid.”

As soon as Aunt Eunice heard the circumstances, she started directly for the abode of suffering, and from that time I felt sure that a reliable friend was secured to the family of poor Thomas.

Chapter Tenth.

A DREAM OF DELIRIUM.

RIGHT glad was I to find myself once more settled in my own quarters, with my quiet aunt. For I felt weary and languid ; more so than the watching, and fatigue, of the few previous nights, would account for ; and a slight headache was my constant attendant. All elasticity of spirit seemed to have deserted me, and I felt as if some *woe* was impending over me. This it seemed to me was wrong, and I tried my best to shake it off, and I prayed that it might be removed.

I had been at home (for this boarding-house was the only place I could call *home*) but two days, still struggling with this feeling of weariness and depression, when I received a hurried and anxious note from Aunt Hannah, begging me to come to her, for Evelina was sick.

Aunt Hannah, in the vain attempt to keep thoughts of gloom and death from her own mind, and that of her daughters, and determined to have gayety within, even if streets, and houses, and other hearts, were draped in mourning, had sent out invitations for a children's fancy ball. But how small was the list when she came to make it out. Like the house of the Egyptians, at the time of the tenth plague, there was hardly one dwelling in which there was not at least *one* dead.

Many a little one, who would have been there personating some fine dame of the olden time, was lying stiff and cold in the distant cemetery; and the little soul had gone to the place where there are no mummeries or disguises, but all are known *for what they are*.

Aurelia was to appear as Queen Elizabeth, and Evelina as Marie Antoinette; it being necessary, in compliance with the limited historical knowledge of these young ladies (and that of their mother, possibly), to select prominent and well-known characters. The time to array themselves for the ball, arrived. The hair-dresser came and puffed and powdered the poor children; Aunt Hannah herself laid on rouge and patches; and the bed was strewn with velvets and laces, feathers and jewels.

But poor Evelina's eye gazed languidly upon it all, as she sat bolt upright, according to her mother's direction; and her weary, aching head would fain

have dropped its heavy finery, and nestled in the pillows of the bed. But it would not do to be sick *that evening*; she must rouse up, and not give way to these feelings.

There is *one* visitor who will not be put off in this way. When he knocks, it is in vain to close the door, and say, "Not at home;" wherever you may hide, he will find you.

Find you? he is by you always. Death is not before you, he is behind you—by your side, from the moment you enter life; doing his work silently and unsuspected; putting in a pain here, and a wrinkle there, knocking out a prop in one place, and tearing away a heart-string at another; and when he can get a chance, grasping you with one clutch into his keeping.

But we all go on blind to the strange companion who dogs our footsteps like our shadows.

"Come, Evelina, child! here it is eight o'clock, and you not dressed! Here, stand up, and I will fasten on your train."

The poor child made an effort to rise, but fell back in the chair.

"Oh, mother I cannot stand! this burning pain in my head! I have had it all the afternoon, but it is worse now. Oh, let me lie down on the bed, mother?"

"Nonsense, child! it's nothing! Just make an effort! here, I have been to such trouble and ex-

pense for your dress ; it would be too provoking if you could not wear it after all ; and what would the children say ; to come to a party here, and you not down ?”

“I cannot help it, mother !” she moaned. “Give me some water, do ; and help me to the bed.”

Beyond the rouge, extended a line of deeper red, laid on by the hand of fever. There was no concealing the fact, Evelina was very ill. It was too late to send away the little guests ; but how the noise of voices, and laughter, and music, went through the aching brain of the sick child.

“Oh, send them away, do !” she said many times, after calling for her mother ; “but that would never do ; and besides, it would be admitting that Evelina was very sick ; whereas, it was only a little headache ; a *little indigestion*, that was all.”

But the headache increased, and by morning the poor child was quite delirious. It was then that Aunt Hannah sent for me. A strange sight met my eyes as I entered the room where Evelina lay. Her hair, still puffed and powdered, was disarranged and partly hanging about her face, which was purple with inflammation, but still retaining, in the centre of each cheek, the red of different hue, which had been laid on by the hand of art, while some of the black patches still remained upon her forehead and chin ; for she had moaned so when they touched her, that they had been obliged to let her lie in quiet.

“Scarlet fever ; and a very bad case,” said the physician to me. Indeed, it ran its course most quickly, and that night, he asked me to tell Mrs. Stevens, that there was no possibility of saving her child. This was the hardest task I had ever undertaken ; for Aunt Hannah did love her children. All her hope and pride centred in them. And where would such as she turn for consolation when their earthly hopes were torn away !

She had succeeded in blinding herself to the danger most completely. Other children might die, but death would not snatch her darlings from her. It was a thought on which she would not allow her mind to rest ; and it was very hard to be obliged to bring it before her, so that there was no escape. But the physician’s hands were full, dealing with disease ; he had no time to stop and linger over feelings. He knew that there would be a terrible scene for some one to encounter, and leaving the task to me, he went to other sick and dying beds.

As I was deliberating how to break this terrible tidings to Aunt Hannah, I was summoned to the parlor, where I found Flora and Mr. Malcolm.

“Grace !” exclaimed Flora, the moment I entered the room, “do you know that you have never had the scarlet fever ?”

“I never thought anything about it,” I answered.

“I was so stupid as not to think of it myself, till

I mentioned to Edward having met you on the Leightons' steps. He immediately asked me if you had had the disease. I did not know, but I wrote that moment to Helen, and I have just received an answer. She says, when all the rest had it, you were a baby, and escaped ; and she has often heard mother say, that you were the only one who had not had the fever. And here you are in the midst of it again !”

“ Oh, Flora ! poor Evelina is going to die ! so unprepared, I fear ; and Aunt Hannah is deluding herself with the idea, that she is getting better ; and the Doctor says I must tell her. *How can I ?*”

“ Grace, you must think of yourself. Your hand is hot and dry ; and I know by the look of your eyes, that your head aches terribly this minute. Is it not so ?”

“ Yes, it aches so that I can scarcely see ; but I must stay to-night ; oh, I must break this news to Aunt Hannah !”

“ All this excitement is the worst thing for you, Grace,” said my good brother-in-law ; “ let me tell Mrs. Stevens ; I will do it as gently as I know how.”

Just then, Aunt Hannah came into the room.

“ Flora ! You have not come to take Grace away ! You must not think of it ! We need her every moment !”

“ Aunt Hannah, Grace needs care this moment

herself. She is suffering ! and she has never had the scarlet fever.”

“ Oh, it's only a little headache, I'll be bound. Besides, if she did not take it at the Leightons she will not be likely to here.”

“ But Grace is called upon everywhere ; she has had a fatiguing journey, and has been up many nights ; and she is worn out. Are there none of your friends who could take her place, at least, while she rests ?”

“ Not one. There is not even a nurse to be found. And my friends will not come near me ! So selfish ! They are afraid of taking the fever home. Deliver me from such friends !”

Poor Aunt Hannah ! The finger of selfishness pointed only to her own interests ; and she forgot her own fears of only a few days before.

Mr. Malcolm said : “ Flora and I will stay with you to night, Mrs. Stevens ; and if you please, I would like to speak with you alone a moment.”

There was something in his manner that startled Aunt Hannah ; she looked wildly up at him, for, with all her confidence as to Evelina's getting better, there had been an under current of fear in her heart all the time.

They went into the next room together, and Mr. Malcolm closed the folding doors.

We heard his voice in low tones, and then a loud, fierce cry from Aunt Hannah.

"Oh, *no! no!*; *don't* say it! don't tell it to me! It cannot be! Where is Flora? Where is that Doctor? Why does he stay away? he ought to be here. He neglects us; he will let her die!"

"Flora!" she said, bursting in like a maniac; "where is your Doctor Richards? Perhaps he can save her. Send for him!"

"All skill has failed this season," said Mr. Malcolm; "but I will go and try to find your own physician, and ask him to call Dr. Richards."

"Aunt Hannah," said I, taking her hand; "it is all in vain. Dr. Wayland assured me of it, before he left the house. Those symptoms have set in, which cannot be arrested. You must try to bear it, Aunt Hannah; but not in your own strength. Mr. and Mrs. Leighton have had afflictions sorer than this. They have lost two little treasures, as dear to them, as Evelina is to you; but God has given them strength to bear it; because they have 'cast all their care on Him.'"

But I was like one talking in an unknown tongue to the poor woman, whose hopes had all centred here. How should the simple mysteries of our blessed religion be made clear to her darkened understanding, upon which no ray from the cross had ever beamed? All was darkness, and desolation, and despair!

A fearful night of delirium, and suffering, and anguish. Poor Mr. Stevens walked his room all

night, occasionally coming in to bend over the suffering child, who was all unconscious of his presence, and then, with deep groans, fearful to hear, going out to pace his room again. All night she was raving, and generally of something in connection with that fancy ball, which was the last event impressed upon her mind.

"Don't put it on my face, mother; it burns in so! and those patches eat *holes*, clear to the bone. Oh, the feathers are so heavy; they press into my brain; they curl up round it and squeeze it so tight! Oh, take them off! Don't put on the train, mother! it's so heavy to drag! It tires me so!"

After a few minutes of silence, she screamed in a shrill voice:

"Marie Antoinette! she is all in flames; her hair is all crisped. Don't touch her; she will burn you!"

"Oh, that hair-dresser! he heats his irons, and puts them right through my head! He burns my brain all up!" And so she continued her ravings through the hours of the night.

A little before she died, she had a short lucid interval, through which she sank rapidly; and it seemed as if you could see the sands of her life running out, like those in an hour-glass.

Finding that she recognized us all, I said to her mother:

"She is going fast, Aunt Hannah ; and she has a gleam of reason at the last. You will not let her die without telling her of her condition."

"Don't say a word to her, Grace ; not for the world ! Oh ! if she *must* go, let her go in peace."

"That would be but a delusive peace, Aunt Hannah. Do you not know that there are but two states of being after death, and your poor child must enter one or the other in a very short time ? After that, Aunt Hannah, there is no change."

"Grace, don't torture me. Do you suppose God would be so unjust as to send my darling to the wicked place ?"

"I know that none can go to heaven but those who trust in Christ, Aunt Hannah."

"Oh ! I don't know anything about it. You all talk such strange things. I should think I had enough to drive me frantic, without being tormented in this way."

"Cousin Grace, is that you ?" said the sick girl.

"Yes, my dear ; do you know you are very sick, Evelina ?"

"I think so. I cannot raise my hand." Then looking into my face, she screamed with an energy that startled us all :

"Cousin Grace ! I cannot die ! Mother ! mother ! I cannot die ! Save me ! keep me ! Don't let me go ! There's a bad place ; flames ! torments !

the minister said so. Oh, hold me, mother ! Tell the Doctor not to let me go."

"No, my love ! no ! You shall go to the *beautiful place*," said her mother, deceiving her to the last, in order to give her present peace.

"But I can't, mother ! I can't ! They will not let me in ! Oh, mother ! you never told me ! *you never told me !* I can't find the way !"

Oh, what words for a mother to hear from a dying child !

"Cousin Grace," said the sick child, turning to me (her voice was growing faint now) ; "I heard you and Cousin Flora talking together one day, and one of you said : '*What should we do but for the mercy of Christ !*' I've thought of those words so often."

Words are lightly spoken, but oh, their power for good or ill. We go through life, dropping not pearls from our mouths, like the girl in the fairy tale, but seeds, forever springing up, to bear good or evil fruit ; all, unconsciously using influence wherever we go, the results of which will only be known in the last great day, but the effects of which will *never cease*. It is, indeed, a fearful thing to live in a world which God has made, and which the Son of God has died to redeem.

"*What should we do but for the mercy of Christ !* Talk to me about it, Cousin Grace."

I tried to point the dying child to the Lamb of

God ; but Mr. Malcolm coming in just then, I called to him, for he could do it so much better ; and indeed, by that time, I was obliged to confess, I was very sick. I did not witness that dying scene. I remember the jolting of the carriage on the rough stones ; and how it hurt my head, and being carried up stairs, and laid in my own bed.

Oh, I was so cold ! so icy cold ! My teeth chattering with the chills, and my whole frame shaking. And soon so burning hot. Oh, the fierceness of that fever ; and could any one live with such an aching head ; such excruciating pain ?

Well, then ; all I have to do is to go away to the place where there is no more pain. Thank God, there is one point not to be settled now, with this poor, aching, bewildered brain. If He who died on Calvary took me for his child years ago, when I gave myself to him in my cottage home, I am his child still ; “for he will not leave me to perish, neither shall any pluck me out of his hand.”

“If my eternal Saviour lives,
Then my eternal life is sure ;”

for “I know in whom I have believed.”

Oh, weary, weary head ! oh, busy thoughts ! if they would but rest ! Snatches of silly songs I had heard in the streets ; fragments of foolish rhymes Aunt Katie's little boys used to repeat from Mother Goose, went round and round through

my brain, till I was so tired of them. I would say a hymn ; I would repeat the Lord's Prayer ; but back came the silly song, and the foolish rhyme, over, and over, and over ! No sleep ! no rest !

The fever increased. Was it possible it could be cold, even at the North Pole ? How could it be that little Jimmy could *freeze* to death ? A casing of ice and snow would be so comfortable now !

All this time I was sensible of a soft, quiet presence in the room. A gentle hand often changed the cloth upon my temples, or put the ice to my lips. Sometimes it was my mother ; but by a little effort I could bring myself to comprehend that it was Aunt Eunice, or my dear Flora. And I was sometimes dimly conscious of the presence of Doctor Richards by my bedside.

It was beginning to snow now. Faster, and thicker, and larger, came the flakes all round my bed ; but they did not lie there or melt, they only vanished. Now they swept by, till I was tired of watching them, so rapidly they flew. They were fleecy feathers next, and then little rainbows—thousands of bright little rainbows chasing each other—but oh, how the eyeballs ached that could do nothing else but watch them !

A strange thing next. A figure like a chromatrope, which I had never then seen, filled with concentric circles, shifting and changing, advancing and retreating, but at each advance coming nearer and

nearer to my face, and bringing a horrid, loathsome, leering face in its centre. Oh, the next time it would surely touch my cheek, and I had no power to get away from it!

It receded, but came back, bringing in its centre a *skull*—a horrid, grinning skull—and this, too, advanced and receded, each time approaching me more closely. "*Oh, take it away! take it away!*" I screamed.

Oh, the shifting, changing fancies; more rapid by far than those of a dream, and a thousand-fold more intense. I might write for many days describing them, but I will spare the reader a portion of the vagaries of a diseased brain. There was one horrid scene, which is vivid to me yet, though long years have rolled away since I lay on that bed of suffering.

I was standing by the shore of the lake, on whose bank stands the lovely village in which my sister Helen lives. It was no longer a lake of water, its placid surface reflecting the blue sky and the fleecy clouds, or tossed by the south wind, its dark blue and green waves capped by wreaths of pure white foam, but a lake of molten lead, its billows rolling heavily, and red with intense heat.

In this burning lake of metal were thousands of struggling, tormented creatures, and their united cries and howls filled the air through the long hours of the night. In the midst of them I saw a face I

knew, and a hand beckoning me to come. It was the face of one I had loved, and he was calling me to help him. I had promised, and I must go.

I stepped into the heavily-rolling billows, and slowly made my way towards the beckoning hand. Hot and dense was the molten sea, and I sank to the knee at every step. Oh, toilsome way! oh, weary limbs! But the hand still beckoned, and the face grew more and more anxious. As I wearily approached the spot, other tormented ones thrust their faces between me and him, and intercepted the way; and when at last I stood where he had stood, he was farther away than ever, still beckoning, still anxiously looking for my coming.

Weary, weary limbs! No rest, no sleep!

* * * * *

Oh, what heavenly music! what exquisite strains! It was the blended harmony of thousands of golden harps, in the far, far distance.

Long afterward I found, that in order to quiet my excited nerves, Aunt Eunice had called in the aid of music, which I loved so much, and had introduced into my room a little musical box. I had never heard one of these enchanting pieces of mechanism wind off its delicate music, and the effect was magical.

The whole scene changed; a sudden glory was around me! The strong, loving arms, once stretched on Calvary, were thrown about me, and I was borne

aloft, floating through the purest atmosphere, till I found myself just within the heavenly gate.

"Oh, pleasing and transporting scene,
That rises to my sight;
Sweet fields, arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight!"

All this and more; but the exceeding loveliness of that scene I have no words to portray. Were I a painter, I would give worlds for such a vision, that I might grasp it, and retain it on the canvass. But, could that soft, sunny glory, be imitated? That brightness, never dazzling, could it be depicted by the painter's brush? No, I verily believe not.

Among these bright, green fields, and by the gently flowing streams, and through the cool, shady groves, walked the white-robed ones, "with their harps in their hands," singing as they roamed.

And the two dear little sisters who had gone from us together came hand-in-hand to meet me; and another group followed—*father! mother!* Oh, to see the dear faces once more, after so many years of yearning to look upon them; it would repay me for months of suffering, amid fever heat, and with weary, aching brain.

I had found rest! The music sounded fainter and fainter; the tones were dim and indistinct; the visions all faded away, and I slept—day and night! day and night!

At length I awoke. All about my little room was as when I *left it*; for it seemed that I had been long away. How long? Something had been taken out of my life, and that time would always be a blank. But, was it weeks or years? Was I a young girl still, or a woman of many years?

Thank Heaven! there was Flora, pure and peaceful as ever, with the same young, fresh look—and Aunt Eunice, not a day older, only a shade more anxious—and here was Dr. Richards, the very same.

"The crisis is past, thank God!" said he. "Grace, my dear, do you know me?"

"Yes, I know you, Dr. Richards." But it was a great effort to speak; it tired me.

"How long have I been lying here, Doctor?"

"Ten days, my child."

Had all this happened in *ten days*!

"Did Evelina die, Doctor?"

"Yes, dear; soon after we brought you away."

Flora brought her husband to see me for a moment that afternoon.

"Mr. Malcolm," I whispered, "have you any hope for Evelina?"

"The last words she said, Grace, were, '*What should I do but for the mercy of Christ?*' The poor, ignorant, misguided child, may have been enabled to cast herself upon that mercy; we will trust she did, and that she, too, is among the white-robed host."

As I grew stronger, I questioned Flora about Aunt Hannah, and found that the unhappy woman, blinding herself to the only source of consolation, and cut off by the "forms of society" from the diversion which the gay world would offer, had taken to the excitement of novel-reading; and, as she had little attention now to bestow upon Aurelia, she, poor child, followed her mother's example, and took up with eagerness these works of fiction as fast as her mother laid them down.

"But Aunt Hannah suffers, in spite of all this," said Flora. "I can see it in her face. She will not allow Evelina's name to be mentioned, and everything that would recall her to mind is put out of sight. How different from sweet Mrs. Leighton. Without brooding over her grief, she loves to talk of her little transplanted flowers, and to keep a cheerful remembrance of their pretty ways in mind. But, poor Aunt Hannah! Grief like hers is hard indeed to bear alone; or, as Phillis says, "widout any one to carry t'other end of the load."

"*All the load*, Flora! He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Dr. Richards came in just then and felt my pulse.

"Is it not strange, Doctor, that I should have had no sore throat with the scarlet fever?"

"This has not been the scarlet fever, my child, but a *brain fever*, brought on by over-fatigue and great excitement. I saw it coming on when you

were at the Leightons', and you know I remonstrated, but it was of no avail. No, Grace, you will yet have the opportunity to go through that other fiery trial when you recover sufficient strength to rush into the midst of it, at your Aunt Kate's, or wherever else your services may be required."

Chapter Eleventh.

THE FUGITIVES.

THE days of convalescence passed slowly, but not tediously, away ; for dear friends, such as mine, were made for hours of trial and sickness, and when they were not with me there was always something to keep them in mind, in the way of flowers, or fruit, or books. And Aunt Eunice was just the person for a sick room ; always at hand when needed—always ready and efficient—but never opening her lips except when compelled by necessity to do so. Always there for companionship, but never for annoyance.

But by the time of the warm spring days I could enjoy riding, and even walking, for a short distance. Mrs. Leighton was always ready to accompany me, and her carriage ever at my disposal ; but one afternoon, thinking of something I needed much that day, I started out alone, and seating myself in an omni-

bus, I rode down town. After my shopping was completed, I started upon my homeward journey, but by that time the men of business were going up to their homes, and every stage was full.

I walked along slowly and languidly, looking in vain for a driver who would answer my uplifted hand, when a handsome establishment came dashing along, and just as it passed me it suddenly stopped. A gentleman, who was driving, handed the reins to his servant, and springing from the seat, he came to meet me, but not till he spoke did I recognize Walter, for his whole air and manner were changed, and the addition of whiskers and moustache had altered the appearance of his face.

"You don't know me, Grace," he said.

"I did not at first, Walter, but I should know your *voice* anywhere."

"And you are just the same, only pale and thin, and more womanly. Come, let me drive you home."

"No, thank you, Walter, I shall find a seat presently."

"Are you angry at me, Grace, or are you ashamed to be seen with me?"

"Angry, Walter ! I have nothing to be offended at."

"Only ashamed of me, eh?"

I did not know what to say ; I hardly understood my own reasons, but I did not wish to be seen dashing along by Walter's side, in his handsome carriage.

"You will at least let me walk by you, Grace ; it is so refreshing to see you."

This I could not refuse without hurting his feelings ; and, bidding his servant drive on, and wait for him at the corner of the square to which I was destined, he walked beside me up the street.

More and more I kept saying to myself, "Is this Walter ?—Walter who lived with me in the Red Cottage ; who taught me in the little school-house ; who helped me with my studies ; who dragged me on my sled ; Walter, who wished to be a *minister of the Gospel* ?"

He was a gay, reckless man of the world now ; and he tried to talk in a careless, indifferent sort of way ; but it was plain to see that he was wearing a mask, to hide an aching heart.

Suddenly he turned to me, and said :

"Grace, I have a little daughter ; did you know it ?"

"No, Walter ; oh, I hope she may be a comfort to you."

"Comfort ! I need it, Grace. My little cousin, I am very unhappy."

"Don't talk of that to me, Walter. What do you call the little girl ?"

"Oh, I wanted so to call her after you ; but Gabrielle would name her '*Nathalie*,' after her mother."

We walked on till we reached the square, and

the steps of my boarding-house. I turned to say good-by.

"Will you not shake hands with me, Grace ?"

"Certainly, Walter."

"Grace, I am an unhappy man."

"I see it, Walter. You have been trying an experiment to see what this world would do for you, and you are finding out its worth. Walter, once you knew, at least in theory, the way to find happiness and peace ; you were near it once, when we were in the cottage together."

"Oh, don't talk of those days, Grace ! There is a great gulf, a great dark gulf between them and me. Gracie——"

He took my hand. I had the feeling which we all have occasionally, that this same scene had all been acted over before. And I cried, "Don't say it, Walter ! But, Walter, after trying the pleasures which wealth, and fashion, and gayety, bring, and like Solomon, declaring them all 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' will you not make a trial of something higher and more enduring ? You may find happiness there, and there alone."

"Oh, Grace, I have so much to drag me down ! And I have no time to think. Oh, to stop and *think*, is torture."

"Walter, do you know that God can find ways to make you 'stop and think' ? Oh, it would be torture indeed, to lie and think, with death staring

one in the face, as was the case with me a few weeks ago, and with such a bewildered, aching brain, that there was no possibility of calm reflection. Oh, Walter, what would *this* be, with only a 'fearful looking for of judgment' for the trembling soul!"

"The worst thing I can do is to *think*, Grace. I would rather go blindly on, and then take a 'leap in the dark.'"

"And wake, *where*?"

"Good-by, Grace. May you be happy as you deserve; as for me, happiness is a myth."

"Happiness may be a reality for you, Walter; oh, *you know* where, and how to seek it. Have you a Bible, Walter?"

"I do not believe there is one in my house. Gabrielle would have burned it up long ago if there had been."

"Wait one moment, if you please."

I went up stairs and brought down a little pocket Testament, and handed it to him.

"Will you read this, Walter, for the sake of your old friend and playfellow?"

"I will, Grace."

"Walter, you never broke a promise to me yet."

"Never but *one*."

"Will you promise me to read every day, if it is only *one verse* in that book?"

"I will, Grace. Good-by."

There was something of his old smile for a moment, as he shook my hand, but he sighed as he went down the steps. I had felt annoyed when Walter joined me in the street, but when I parted from him, it was with a feeling of the sincerest pity. It must be hard, indeed, to take this world for one's *all*, and then to find its utter hollowness.

I went slowly up the stairs, thinking of my conversation with Walter, and on opening the parlor-door, was surprised to find Aunt Katy, sitting with Aunt Eunice.

"I have come to claim my sister's hospitality for the night, Grace," said she; "I thought I would come in town, and see the poor old gentleman."

"Old Mr. Howard?" I asked.

"Yes, my dear; perhaps you did not know that that English nurse is dead. Did you ever know anything so lucky? I suppose it was the different manner of life, or the possession of the keys of the wine-cellar; but something or other brought on apoplexy, and she died last week. If I had only foreseen this, I would have continued on good terms with the old gentleman, and would even have tried to be civil to her. As it is, I must do my best to make it all smooth. He certainly will not be such a fool as to marry again; I am going to look up a nurse for him, and the only requisites I shall insist upon, will be *age* and *ugliness*. We shall stay out in the country this summer, but in the fall, we shall

come back to the dear, delightful city again. Such a winter, my dear! I have never been free from the blues a moment."

Aunt Kate succeeded in playing the affectionate daughter-in-law to such an extent, that she was received into the good graces of the old gentleman; who even opened his heart so far as to give his son a house much farther up town than the former one, and to furnish it in handsome style. Aunt Kate had now realized what to her was once a vision of perfect happiness; but now—if she could only keep her carriage!

Another year passed without any very material changes among the groups most prominent in our story. My brother Arthur, who had now set up in business for himself, had again been to the east, and had lingered long with Helen. The *interested* villagers (now, don't call them "*gossips*") said that he came to see sweet Anna Herbert. "And they had good reason to say so," Helen wrote, "for the two were always together, walking, or riding, or wooing."

Harry was still away, for young Cameron was not yet tired of travelling. They were now in Egypt, visiting the pyramids and other wonders of the Nile, and, after a tour through the Holy Land, they were to turn their faces homeward.

Aunt Eunice and I lived on in our old quiet way, and every day I appreciated more and more her worth, and loved her more dearly. Helen had been

to see us once, bringing a darling little boy with her, and up in the parsonage there was the sweetest little girl that ever was petted to death by a young aunty.

To Aunt Hannah and Aurelia novels and romances had lost their charm, and in order to find the excitement they needed, they had again rushed into the gay world, and seemed entirely absorbed in its pleasures. Aunt Hannah, having now but one daughter to plot for, concentrated all her energies on the great object of a splendid match for Aurelia. Like a skilful angler, with hook and bait in hand, she sat watching for prey, while shoals of large and small fish darted by, some of them of sufficient magnitude to engage her efforts. Then she showed her skill by playing her little fly upon the surface of the water, so as to attract attention; but, though some rose to take a nearer look at the gaudy insect, none as yet seemed inclined to carry off the bait.

But now the fashionable circles of the great city were agitated, and thrown into an unusual state of excitement, by the appearance of a distinguished stranger in their midst.

"*Only think*, my dear," said Aunt Hannah to me, "a count—a live count—a French count! the Count de l'Amoureux! He had letters, among others, to Mrs. Howard Crane's husband; letters from Mr. Plum, in Paris; indeed, his credentials are unquestionable. And he seems to be inclined

to be so agreeable ; though, to be sure, he can say but very few words of English ; but he seems pleased with everything and everybody."

"Only think how lucky ! Aurelia and I happened to be at Mrs. Howard Crane's when he arrived, and so we were among the very first introduced to him. Between you and me, my dear, he seemed quite struck with Aurelia. I intend to give a party for the purpose of introducing him ; no one need be in the least afraid of him—his affability is one of his greatest charms. He seems so modest, too ; never mentions anything of his property, though it is plain to see, from his magnificent pin and ring, that he is rich."

Here was an object worthy the ambition and efforts of Aunt Hannah. The house which but a year before was opened for the funeral of poor Evelina, now spread wide its doors for the reception of guests, to do honor to the titled stranger. It was amusing to hear with what emphasis Aunt Hannah introduced "*the count*." Indeed, "*the count*" was in every one's mouth, and all eyes were fixed upon him as the common centre of attraction, wherever he moved.

But Aunt Hannah was sometimes heard saying softly to herself, "the countess ! the Countess de l'Amoureux !" And then,

"What a very fine thing to be *mother-in-law*
To a very magnificent three-tailed bashaw !"

The Count de l'Amoureux was a very diminutive,

very obsequious, grinning little Frenchman, speaking very few words of English, but equally disinclined to speak his own language with those who had any understanding of it. Gabrielle, who, to Aunt Hannah's disgust, seemed to take the little foreigner under her own special protection, could not persuade him to converse with her in French.

"I mus' talk de English," said he ; "I will learn."

"You came from Pau, you say," said Gabrielle to him, "surely, then, you knew my gwandmother, the Countess de Lisle."

"Yesh, yesh ; *ole* lady, *ver'* *ole* lady."

"I suppose she is ; I never saw her. Does she live in a chateau ?"

"Oh, yesh—chateau—*ver'* fine."

"Is she wick ?"

"*Riche ? riche ?* I don't know vat you mean—*riche ?*"

"*Money ; silver—gold.* Has she money ?"

"Oh—yesh—*ver'* mooshe money—*ver'* *riche*."

"I have very little acquaintance with French gentlemen," whispered Flora to me ; "but this little monkey seems very different from those I have seen at Mrs. Leighton's. See him open the door, now, for those ladies to pass out ; can you not imagine that he has opened it just so, many times, for his master ?"

"He certainly appears like a very obsequious little servant," said I, "but I supposed that was the French way."

"Oh, no, not like that ! they are generally volatile and lively, to be sure, but not cringing and servile, like this little specimen."

"Grace," said Aunt Hannah, who was darting here and there, and taking every opportunity to draw the distinguished stranger from the side of Gabrielle, "you have not been introduced to the count, my dear ; I will introduce *the count* to you."

"No, thank you, Aunt Hannah, I prefer not."

"My dear, you need not be in the least afraid ; he is so friendly ; just like other people."

"I don't think he is at all, Aunt Hannah."

"I declare, Gabrielle is perfectly disgusting in her devotion to the count !" said Aunt Hannah. "She will not allow him to look at any one else. I know he wants to dance the next set with Aurelia, but Gabrielle keeps him busy every moment. I am sorry I invited her to-night."

The Count de l'Amoureux was fêted, and dined, and supped, at Aunt Hannah's, the Howard Cranes', and the Ellistons', and the rest of his time was spent at the house of Gabrielle, or seated by her side in driving with her through the streets of the city. But when he sprang out to assist her to alight, it was with an air strikingly like that of one who had once made it his business.

Aunt Kate was as much delighted as any one, to make the acquaintance of the distinguished foreigner ; and once when he joined her in the street, her

exultation knew no bounds. Such an honor ; such a distinguishing honor ; it was a day always to be marked with white, when she walked the street attended by a French count. She had almost a mind to call on her former friends, the Hubbards and Flinns, just to mention the circumstance. But the Hubbards and Flinns had their necks stretched out of the windows to look at her, and they called to one another—

"Isn't she proud now, with her French count !"

But the delight of the fashionable world in the society of the interesting titled stranger was of short continuance ; for one fine morning he was missing from his apartments at the hotel which he had honored by his patronage ; and alas, *he had forgotten to call for his bill !*

This news had hardly burst upon the astonished ears of the world of fashion, when still more astounding tidings reached them. Mrs. Vernon was missing also ; and the white sails of a vessel bound for Havre, which had that day been seen in the bay, were now, thanks to a favoring breeze, beyond the line of vision.

Gabrielle had taken with her all her own jewelry, besides all the money and everything else of value on which she could lay her hands. But the most precious thing to Walter which she had taken, was his little girl, who had crept into that one tender spot in Gabrielle's heart which had been left vacant by her mother.

Poor Aunt Hannah's hopes were shattered !

Oh, how the gossips of the city caught up this bit of scandal, and made the very most of it ; and fresh food was furnished them every day. For hardly had the vessel departed with the fugitives, when a letter arrived to " Mrs. Howard Crane's husband," containing interesting intelligence for those who had been at such pains to entertain the distinguished Frenchman.

The husband of Mrs. Howard Crane was a gentleman of a suspicious turn of mind, and he had little faith in the count from the first ; perhaps because his wife and other ladies of his acquaintance had so much. So he wrote to his friend in Paris, immediately after the arrival of the young foreigner, describing his person, and asking if he were the veritable Count de l'Amoureux.

Now came the answer. A friend of Mr. Plum, the Count de l'Amoureux, desirous to visit America, had asked of this gentleman letters to friends in this country. He had given him one to Mr. Howard Crane, as his old friend and partner in business. But just as he was about to sail he had the misfortune to be taken seriously ill with a fever ; and a few days after it was found that his valet had absconded, taking with him everything of value that belonged to his master.

" The police have been on the look out for him for some time," continued the letter, " and by the same

steamer which takes out this letter, an agent will sail for America, with instructions to conduct the gentleman home."

" The gentleman," as we have seen, had the start of the friend who came with such kind intentions toward him, but other friends were anxiously waiting for him—friends who are famous in France for finding those to whom they wish to offer the hospitalities of a substantial abode, from whose walls it is a difficult matter to make one's escape.

This whole affair caused unspeakable mortification to Aunt Hannah ; there were, however, two grains of alleviation in the matter : one of which was, the failure of her plans as to Aurelia ; and the other, that the deluded victim was Gabrielle, instead of her own daughter.

" Ah," said Aunt Kate, laughing maliciously, but with a pretended heartiness : " Ah, I *thought* your count was a humbug, when you were making such a fuss over him, and giving him those expensive entertainments."

" As for you, Kate, *the will* was not wanting, or you would have done the same. I never saw such an expression of delight on any face as on yours, when you were introduced to him. And how you sailed down street that day, with such pride, when he joined you ; and the Hubbards and Flinns laughing at you all the time. They are having a good hearty laugh *now*, you may depend !"

"Well," said Aunt Kate, reddening, "neither of us can laugh at the other after all. I am not sorry, however, that Gabrielle is so completely taken in."

"No ; that is the best part of it," answered Aunt Hannah.

And how did Walter bear this desertion ? There was, probably, little feeling in the matter, so far as Gabrielle was concerned ; if there was even mortification he was too proud to show it. But the abduction of his child undoubtedly caused him great grief, for his love for her was unbounded. In order to regain possession of the child, he determined to take the next steamer for France, and to spare no effort to find her. As for Gabrielle, she might go ! There was no steamer to sail for several days, and in the meantime, in a spirit of bravado, Walter continued to drive about town in his old reckless manner, and to show himself in his usual haunts of dissipation.

He would not even decline attending a dinner-party, to which he had been invited before Gabrielle left. He would carry it all off with an air of indifference, publicly announcing that he should sail in the next steamer, in order to reclaim his child. The dinner-party was late, and the drinking excessive. When Walter left his friend's house to go home, he found his servant waiting for him with the carriage, and springing in he seized the reins, while the spirited horses, who had been long standing, dashed off at fearful speed.

At a sudden turning he was just on the point of collision with another carriage, when his servant, seeing the danger, made an effort to catch the reins, but in his haste he caught but one of them ; the carriage wheeled shortly round, and was overturned with a tremendous crash, throwing Walter upon a heap of bricks before an unfinished house.

He was taken up insensible, and, as was at first supposed, dead, and borne to his deserted home. Physicians were soon in attendance, who discovered that this last supposition was a mistake, but that he was seriously injured about the head, and that there was a compound fracture of one of the legs. Here, then, was an end, or at least a long postponement of Walter's plans and projects. Now came the time of which I had warned him, without thinking how true a prophet I might be, when he was to "lie and think."

Many letters were written to France, but no tidings were received of the lost Gabrielle and little Nathalie, and Walter chafed and worried on the bed of pain from which he could not stir, till at length he brought on fever and inflammation. This, settling in the injured limb, produced a fever-sore, and at length, on the approach of mortification, it became necessary to amputate the limb. Poor Walter ! *A cripple for life !*

At Aunt Hannah's, too, there was soon a disastrous overturning of plans and projects. Poor Au-

relia! seeing the importance into which Gabrielle had risen by her sudden flight, and in order to prove that she had not been an unapt scholar in the line of literature to which she had devoted her attention, determined to create a sensation, also, by eloping with her mother's waiter; for Aunt Hannah had had no occasion to "borrow a boy" for a year or two past. Had the foolish child waited till these days, her object would probably have been defeated, for this kind of monomania has become so common that it no longer creates much excitement in the public mind.

Her mother, of course, would storm for awhile, but, like the mother of Seraphina Angelina, she would soon receive her only daughter with open arms. And Joseph was really a very good-looking young fellow, and, after all, appeared quite as well as "the count" her mother made such a fuss over.

Aunt Hannah's consternation and distress were unspeakable, when she found that Aurelia was actually married. Her other affliction sank with insignificance beside this. Both daughters were equally lost to her; but what was death to disgrace! I cannot describe her ravings on this occasion, for she would not admit one of us to her presence. I heard, however, that she was totally crushed. There was no alleviation to be found in works of romance now; indeed, the sight of them was torture, for by

these she had sown the wind which had been the forerunner of the whirlwind she was now reaping.

One thing she was determined on, which was that her disgraced daughter's name should never be mentioned in her presence, and that no note or message from her should ever be brought into the house. She never asked where she had gone, or how she lived, but she sat alone, brooding over this terrible catastrophe—the very worst form in which affliction could have come to her.

No comfort for her in the world now. She could not trust her friends in sickness, or in trouble like this; she knew they were laughing at her, and rejoicing over her mortification. I hope my reader has a little pity to bestow on poor Aunt Hannah, for she is really an object of compassion now.

Walter had been chained to his bed of suffering about six months, for his illness had been more serious than was anticipated at the time of the accident, when I received one day a message from Mrs. Leighton, desiring me to jump into her carriage and come to her immediately.

I went without delay, and found her with a letter spread out on the table before her.

"Grace," said she, the moment I entered the room, "here is a letter from my friend Mrs. Grantley, in Paris, with important tidings for your cousin, Walter Vernon. I will read you the part of the letter in which he is interested.

"A case of distress has just come to me, my dear Katharine, in which I think you can aid me. A young girl has lived with me since I came to Paris, whose father is an artisan, living in one of those over-crowded dwellings, in a narrow, crooked alley, which are so common in many districts of Paris.

"She sometimes goes home to visit her parents, and she has had much to say to me lately of a young woman who is dying in a room on the same floor as that of her mother. 'She has nothing,' my little girl says, 'and, if it were not for my mother, the little child would die; and my mother is so poor.'

"I was about to direct Antoinette to carry some little delicacies to the poor woman, when she said, 'She is a stranger, madame, from America.'

"The mention of that name, Katharine, always stirs my heart to its very depths; the idea that a countrywoman of my own was suffering in one of those human hives, was more than I could bear, so I ordered the carriage at once, and drove to the entrance of this alley, for farther it could not go, and, bidding my footman follow me, for I did not dare to go alone, I at length reached the house indicated by Antoinette.

"After a perilous ascent of the steep, narrow stairs, I found myself in the wretched room where the sick woman lay. Her face was very beautiful; her long black hair hung in matted ringlets around

her wan, sunken cheeks, and her large dark eyes were bright from the hectic fever which burned on her cheeks. A delicate little creature about eighteen months old was sitting on the bed beside her. It was neglected and dirty, but had a lovely face, entirely different from that of the mother; for the eyes were large and deep blue, while the unbrushed curls which shaded them were flaxen.

"I gave the poor creature the delicacies I had brought, but she turned from me with pride, and almost with disdain, and would answer no question that I asked her. The poor little child devoured some jelly I brought with me so eagerly that I was certain she had had little to eat that day.

"Since then, I have made them my daily care. My own physician has been to see the poor woman with me, and has requested me to inform her that her time is short. Since then she has been rather more communicative with me, on account of the child, which she is most anxious should be taken back to its father.

"Finding that I knew you well, she said to me:

"Write to her to say to Grace Linton that *Gabrielle* is dying in Paris, and ask her to find some way to take little Nathalie home to her father.'

"In case the poor woman dies soon, I will take the child home with me, till I hear from you what is to be done with her."

"Let me take this letter home with me, if you

please, Mrs. Leighton," said I, "and consult with Aunt Eunice as to what is the best course to pursue."

The result of the consultation was, that I was to go and make known the contents of this letter to Walter. I never stopped to think whether it was "indelicate" or "unwomanly" for me thus to go to Walter's house alone, considering the relationship in which we had once stood to each other. The only relationship in which we stood now, or ever again should stand, was that of cousins.

Walter, maimed and helpless, crushed by desertion and neglect, and with a heart torn with anguish on account of his child, needed my help now. He was in the midst of the billows of despair; he was beckoning to me, perhaps, to come to his aid; what cared I if sneering, mocking faces came between us! I would reach him and help him, if the thing was possible.

I had never been in Walter's house, and its magnificence astonished me. The servant looked surprised at this visit from a lady, but he ushered me into one of the long unused parlors, and took up for me a card to Walter.

"Poor Gabrielle!" thought I, as tears which I never should have supposed I could shed for her, rose to my eyes, "and did she leave this luxurious abode for the path of sin and misery, and for an early death-bed amid the extreme of poverty?"

All round me, in the exquisitely-furnished rooms, were evidences of her pretty taste. Beautiful little nick-nacks of every kind stood where her hand had placed them—on the tables, and etagères; and pictures, and statuary, no doubt of her selection, adorned the rooms. Over the mantelpiece hung an exquisite painting of Gabrielle, partly reclining in a large easy chair, with both of her beautiful arms thrown up to hold the little Nathalie, who was standing in the chair behind her mother, her little hands playing with her long black ringlets.

The contrast between the two was most striking. The beautiful infant, which I had never seen, had Walter's light curling hair, and large blue eyes, while her cheeks were like roses, and she was represented as smiling, and showing a row of pearly teeth. I was absorbed in gazing at this picture, when the servant entered, and requested me to follow him to his master's room.

I had not seen Walter before since the accident, and I found him emaciated with suffering and anxiety, to a degree I had not conceived possible. I was glad to see open before him the little Testament I had given him.

"Grace! is it indeed you?" he said, faintly; "you see the time has come of which you prophesied, when 'I have nothing to do but to lie and think.' God did find the way, and of late my only comfort has been this little book you gave me."

"Oh, I am so thankful for that," said I; "but, Walter, I have come to you with tidings."

"Of my child?" he asked, flushing for a moment, and then becoming so deadly pale that I thought he was fainting, and sprang to ring the bell.

"No, no," said he faintly, with a motion of his hand to stop me; "tell me quick!"

"She has found a kind friend in Paris, Walter, who will take care of her for the present. But, Walter, Gabrielle is dying there, in extreme wretchedness."

He gave a start, but said nothing.

"She will live but a short time, and she wishes to have the child sent to you."

"Yes—yes—but how can that be done? Here I am chained fast; my poor little Nathalie is nothing but a baby, and should have female care on the passage over."

"Walter," said I, by a sudden impulse, "*I will go for her*, if my friends will consent."

"Oh, Grace! dearest and best of cousins; will you go for my child?"

"I will, Walter, if I may."

Aunt Eunice and Flora did not seem to think it so wild a scheme as I feared they would; at least, after a little time to get accustomed to the thought, they gave their consent; the more readily as some friends of Mr. and Mrs. Leighton's were going out in the next steamer.

"But about returning, Grace; don't come, unless under the care of friends," said Flora.

"And," added Mrs. Leighton, "remember you are to go directly to the house of Mrs. Grantley; I have given you her direction."

The means for the voyage were not wanting, for Walter was rich; and surely no lady was ever ready on such short notice to cross the Atlantic. But, as a general thing, ladies go to Paris either to see or to be seen, or both; I went for the sole purpose of finding my Cousin Walter's child, and bringing her home as soon as might be to her father.

Chapter Twelfth.

THE VOYAGE.

THE little country-bred girl whose range of vision had once been so circumscribed, was now tossing on the restless waves—water below, sky above, and naught to bound the view save the distant horizon. But little recked she of the magnificence of the ocean storms, a sight which she had once so longed to see ; for that apathy and indifference to all things external had settled down upon her, which is invariably caused by that most distressing of all maladies, to which those are subject who “go down to the sea in ships.”

The tidings of an approaching water-spout would have been insufficient to induce her to raise her aching head from the pillow ; the cry that the ship was on fire, or sinking in the deep waters, would have caused no sensation of fear. Oh, for the quiet of the little room at home, with a firm, stationary bed, and dear Aunt Eunice to bathe the aching temples !

Mrs. Lamar, the lady under whose care I was travelling, and who, being an old sailor, suffered little from sea-sickness, kindly came in many times a day to look after me, but it was such an exertion even to speak that I much preferred being left alone.

But, after we had been out seven or eight days, the storm abated, and the sea was comparatively calm. Then Mrs. Lamar came into my state-room, and begged me to make an effort to come up on deck, for I was losing many beautiful sights, which the ocean had to offer. So, though still somewhat dizzy, and disinclined to exertion, I rose and dressed and accompanied her to the deck. Here the soft breezes, now playing over the water, cooled my temples and invigorated my exhausted frame.

The rest of the voyage was passed delightfully, with the pleasant party who were accompanying Mr. and Mrs. Lamar for the purpose of making a tour of the continent. Landing at Havre, we proceeded directly to Paris, and Mr. and Mrs. Lamar did not leave me till they saw me safely at the hotel of Mr. Grantley. Here, as soon as my name was made known and Mrs. Leighton's letter handed to them, I was received as if I, too, were an old and dearly-loved friend. Oh, it was pleasant indeed, in a strange land, to receive so warm a greeting !

My first questions were about poor Gabrielle, whom, to my surprise, I found to be still living.

"She has lingered beyond all expectations," said Mr. Grantley; "indeed it seems little short of a miracle that the spark of life can exist in such a wasted frame."

I did not wait even to recover from my fatigue before I urged Mrs. Grantley to take me to see her. She immediately ordered her carriage, and we drove to the entrance of the narrow street, or dark winding alley, of which Mrs. Grantley had spoken.

A man might have stretched out his arms and almost have touched the tall dark houses on either side, which rose to an immense height, excluding every ray of the sun from the alley, through which we groped our way. It seemed impossible for human beings to live in so foul a place; and I walked along as in a dream, thinking, can it be *Gabrielle* whom I shall find here? *Gabrielle*, the beautiful, the witty, the admired! I thought of her in the dance, with her white crape dress floating round her like a light cloud, and the feather drooping amid her dark curls. I thought of her dashing along in her beautiful carriage, like those ladies I had just passed in one of the broad, handsome streets: and I looked up at the dark, dingy house before which we stopped and almost groaned aloud.

Mrs. Grantley, I should have said, had wished to have *Gabrielle* removed to a more comfortable place, but the physician pronounced her too weak to bear it, even so long ago as when she first wrote.

We began the ascent up the steep, narrow, dirty staircase, passing the open doors of many rooms which were thronged with men, women, and children, in all stages of wretchedness and filth. But I found that *Gabrielle*, through Mrs. Grantley's kindness, was much more comfortable than I should have supposed it possible to be, under such uncompromising circumstances. I could never have dreamed that that wasted creature with the skin cleaving to her bones was *Gabrielle*, till, in a faint, trembling tone, she said—

"*Gwace!*"

I had but three interviews with her, for death was near when I first saw her. The hope of seeing some one who would take charge of her child, had seemed to keep her up, and now that this care was off her mind she sank most rapidly.

Little *Nathalie*, who had passed so lonely and dull a life in her mother's room, seemed to welcome me with delight after my first visit, and by an orange or a fig, I could easily induce her to climb on to my knee, where she sat looking in my face with her beautiful great earnest eyes. Oh, how she reminded me of *Walter* in his boyhood; though *Walter* was gay and joyous, and the child looked only thoughtful and melancholy.

Gabrielle was more frank and open with me than I had expected; but the near approach of death makes even such as she honest and truthful. From

the little she could say, feebly, and at long intervals, I gathered that the *soi-disant* count, whom she mentioned with loathing and abhorrence, had been arrested immediately on his arrival at Havre, and consigned to prison. She soon found that he had succeeded in robbing her of all her money.

Turned adrift in Paris, she inquired her way to a pawnbroker's establishment, where she exchanged some of the jewelry in which she had once glittered for money, and immediately set out with her little girl for Pau, clinging to her last hope of being welcomed by her grandmother, at her chateau.

But, alas for Gabrielle! her grandmother had long been dead, and in her lifetime had dwelt, in extreme poverty, on the outskirts of the town of Pau; for, like many of the once noble families of France, nothing but the *title* remained; and Gabrielle could not ascertain that any relative of her mother's was then living. The old woman had lived alone, and was very poor, but the people still called her "*the old countess*."

Here was an end of Gabrielle's hopes. Broken in spirit, and oppressed with illness, she once more turned her face toward Paris, in the hope of finding some means of maintaining herself and her child till Walter should come for them—for Walter would surely come!

But immediately on her arrival in Paris, and while wandering in search of a lodging, she found herself

very ill in the street, and sat down at the corner of the lane of which I have spoken, unable to take another step. Here she was found by the mother of Antoinette, the little girl who lived with Mrs. Grantley. This kind woman took her home with her, carrying little Nathalie in her arms, and established her in an unoccupied room in the same miserable house with herself. Here the few things which were indispensable were purchased, by means of the pawning of her jewelry; and everything was now gone except a little topaz cross, and the crucifix, which had once been her mother's.

I talked much with Gabrielle, during those three interviews, of her hopes for the future, but found her mind all dark. She was sometimes visited by an old priest, and seemed trying to cling to the hopes he held out to her. But, though she had tried so hard to close her eyes to gospel truths, when living under my dear father's roof, yet, in spite of her efforts, some rays of truth had found their way into her mind, to which she could not blind herself, and there seemed now to be a painful doubt and uncertainty as to what might be before her.

"I often think, Gwace," she said, feebly and gaspingly, "of what your good gwandmother once said to me, 'What if this should all be a mistake!' *What—if—it—should—be?*'"

"It may not be too late to remedy it, Gabrielle."

"Oh, it is too late. I must twust my old pwiest.

Oh, will Walter, do you think, purchase masses for my soul?"

"Gabrielle, there is a *better* way than that. The salvation Christ offers your poor soul is 'without money and without price.' I have taken this long voyage, Gabrielle, on purpose to take your little girl back to her father. I will take, oh, such tender care of her. Will you not, for my sake, give up that false faith, and trust in the Saviour alone?"

"Oh, Gwace," she said, suddenly, with a wild, startled look of terror, "oh, *it's death!* Pway for me, Gwace! Oh, let me kiss her!"

I caught up the little girl, and held her cheek to her mother's cold lips, but they made no motion to kiss the baby's face. Gabrielle was beyond my prayers!

Mr. Grantley kindly undertook to see that everything about the funeral should be decently conducted, and his own carriage followed poor Gabrielle to her lonely grave, in her native land. Little Nathalie sat on my knee, gazing with her great wondering eyes at the rough men putting a long box into a deep hole in the ground. Little did she know what the box contained!

She fretted, and moaned, and often called for her mamma, during the first few days after her removal to the house of Mrs. Grantley. In that abode of luxury, with everything to divert her mind and pamper her appetite, she pined for the bare wretch-

edness, in the dirty alley, with its poverty and discomfort, because there a mother's love had fed the wants of her little aching heart.

Out on the broad ocean again, with clear skies, placid water, and the vessel's prow turned toward home. My little charge seemed drooping, though I could hardly think her ill; perhaps she was showing the effects of long confinement and poor food, in the wretched place where I found her with her mother. I hoped much that the sea air, and change of climate, might bring back the bloom to her cheeks before I should give her into her father's hands.

But, during the first days of the voyage, she was disinclined to move, and I sat in the cabin holding her in my arms. There was a lovely little family of children, whom I delighted to watch at their pleasant play around the cabin floor. They were beautiful children, five of them; the eldest not more than eight years of age; and they seemed so gentle, and loving, and yielding to each other, that it was really charming to see them. And when their mother joined them, with her little chubby baby in her arms, I thought I had never beheld a more lovely group. I heard the nurse call her Mrs. Orme.

There were gay groups of young people, who seemed full of life and merriment; who were frolic-

ing on deck all day, and dancing in the cabin all the evening ; there were young men who seemed to have come to sea for nothing but to play cards ; and sometimes, to my great gratification, there was very delightful music in the cabin. This lovely Mrs. Orme and her husband sang most charmingly together ; indeed, her voice was enough to "wile the bird from off the tree," it was so full of touching melody.

There was a dear little fair-haired creature in the cabin, who darted about like a bright little butterfly ; sometimes joining the group of children playing with their blocks on the floor, and sometimes coming to try and amuse my little charge, in whom she seemed to take a great interest. While seeming much engaged in building a house for one of the little Ormes, she would suddenly leave it and dart toward little Nathalie, crying, "*I've got her !*"

Then my poor little girl would hide her face under my arm, with a quiet smile, and the persevering little stranger would dart round behind my chair, and dropping on her knees would steal a kiss, and shout, "*Now I've got her !*"

"What is your name, my dear ?" I asked.

"My name is Florence, because I was born in a city called Florence, and my mamma died there. *Now I'll have her !*"

"And where have you been since then ?"

"I've been with my aunty in France ; and now

I'm going with my papa to his home in America. *I'm coming !—I'm coming !—I'm coming ! Now I've got her !*"

"*This little girl has not got a mother either, Florence.*"

"Poor little thing ! I'm sorry for her. Has she got a papa ?"

"Yes ; she is going to her papa in America."

"Oh, then, I'm not sorry for her if she has a papa ; that's enough. *My papa is any way. Now ! I'm going to have her this time !*"

And so, all day, she prattled and played and amused the quiet little creature in my arms.

The next day was Sunday ; our first Sunday on the water. At the breakfast table, a gentleman who sat at the lower end of the table, called out in a distinct voice, and with a tone and manner which bespoke the gentleman, most unmistakably :

"Captain W., is there a clergyman on board this vessel ?"

"No, sir, there is not."

"Then, as all here who are accustomed to reverence the Lord's day will see the propriety of observing it on the water, I will be happy to meet them in the cabin, and read a sermon to them if it will be agreeable."

"I agree to that most cordially," said Mr. Orme.

There was a good deal of sneering among some of the young people ; and one man, whom I afterward

found to be an unbeliever in the truths of Christianity, grumbled out—

“Then I’ll take *myself* out of the way.”

But a goodly number assembled in the cabin at the appointed hour, and the gentleman who had first spoken to the captain, and whom I afterward knew to be the father of little Florence, took his seat by the table, with an open Bible and hymn-book beside him.

He read the 46th Psalm, that Psalm which always brings such painful associations to my mind :

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.”

And then he read the words of the hymn :

“If through unruffled seas,
Toward Heaven we calmly sail,
With grateful hearts, O God, to Thee,
We’ll own the fostering gale.

“But should the surges rise,
And rest delay to come,
Blest be the sorrow—kind the storm,
Which drives us nearer home.”

Mrs. Orme gave her dear little baby into her husband’s hands, and took her seat at the piano ; and many voices of those who had never exchanged a word with each other, joined in the harmony of the hymn.

The infidel, whom I had before noticed as being extravagantly fond of music, remained in the cabin

till the singing was over, and then rose to leave ; but he did not make his escape till the words of the text had sounded in his ears :

“The *fool* hath said in his heart, There is no God !”

With which flattering declaration as regarded himself, he betook himself to the deck. That evening, Mr. and Mrs. Orme gave us some charming sacred music, and the infidel listened as if entranced with the music, and yet with a sneer on his face which, doubtless, was intended for the words. Their songs were generally appropriate to our circumstances ; such as “The Star of Bethlehem,” “The Mariner’s Hymn,” and “Tossed upon Life’s Raging Billow.” It seemed to me that nothing could exceed the harmony of that music, as Mr. and Mrs. Orme sang together, accompanied by a rich tenor from Mr. Maitland, the father of little Florence.

The next day we came into the region of fogs, which settled thickly around us, so that we could hardly see the bow of the ship from the place where we sat on the deck. For Mrs. Orme had kindly urged me to come up and notice the singular appearance of the fog. “See,” said she, “for about eight or ten feet above the water it is perfectly clear, so that you might see *under* the fog for miles ; and then it rests down as solid and smooth as the ceiling of a room.”

Little Nathalie seemed to enjoy being on deck that day, and we all remained talking together for some time. On a sudden there was a loud sharp cry from the captain, which was re-echoed from various parts of the ship, and at the same moment a great sweeping cloud of canvas loomed up out of the fog, and passed almost over our heads. We had just *grazed* an outward bound vessel, so closely that we might almost have shaken hands with those on board. Every heart stood still, and every face gathered paleness. Even the infidel's cheek was blanched for a moment, but soon, in a mocking tone, he said :

"I suppose we are indebted to one of that long-faced fellow's prayers, for that escape?"

I could not help saying :

"Then you should be thankful, sir, that there is some one to pray, on board this vessel. But do you not believe in prayer, sir?"

"I? No, indeed. My motto is, 'Let every man take care of himself!' I have done so thus far, and I don't see but I get along as well as the praying ones."

That evening, as I was sitting in the cabin, with little Nathalie in my arms, and dear little Florence playing round her, Mr. Maitland came in, and took a seat beside me.

"Miss Linton," said he, "those who are thrown together as this little company of people are, upon the water, should not allow reserve, or the *want of*

an introduction, to prevent acquaintance, as we Americans are too apt to do; but I find I have some claim upon yours, if you are one of the Miss Lintons, of whom my friends, the Leightons, have so often written to me."

"Ah, I have been wondering, since I heard your name, whether you were Mr. Leighton's particular friend."

"Yes; and a desire to see them, more than anything else, determined me to revisit my native land, which I left seven years ago."

Of course, with such pleasant mutual associations, there was abundant food for conversation, and the evening passed pleasantly away.

The next day was stormy, and the passengers generally remained in the cabin. Directly after tea, I noticed that the captain entered the cabin with an anxious expression upon his frank, handsome countenance, and speaking in a low voice to Mr. Maitland and Mr. Orme, they rose and left the cabin with him. Gradually I found that we were deserted by all the gentlemen, and that they remained absent all the evening.

The young ladies yawned, and said, "Those gentlemen are very unsocial to-night;" and one of them rose, and said :

"Well, I am going to bed—"

when the door opened and Mr. Maitland entered. He looked very pale and worn, and immediately

proceeded to the room of his little girl, whom he took from her bed, and wrapping her in a large shawl, he came out among us.

"Ladies," said he, "do not think of going to your state-rooms to night ; summon up your fortitude and strength of mind, and try to act calmly and for the best. I *must* tell you that we are in great danger. We have been trying to keep it under for three hours past, but it has resisted all our efforts. Trust in God, for He may yet save us !"

There was no shrieking, or confusion, but every face was white as the new-fallen snow, and every eye dilated with terror. No one asked what was the peril ; but that it was imminent, and inevitable, was felt by all.

Chapter Thirteenth.

"PERILS BY SEA."

"*Fi-re!—fi-re!—fi-re!*" — the most appalling sound that can be heard at sea ! The red flames burst above the deck, lighting up, with their fearful glare, every terror-stricken face. While the quick ringing of the bell, the booming of the gun, and the hurrying to and fro on deck, added to the confusion and alarm.

Walter's little girl was still in my arms, for she had not been asleep that evening, and I rose and drew near Mrs. Orme and her children, who were gathered closely round her, looking anxiously up into their mother's face.

"Mamma, why doesn't papa come ?" asked one, her voice shaking as if with a chill.

"Papa will not forget us, my love ; he is probably working for us now, by helping the captain."

Just then Mr. Orme and Mr. Maitland came hurrying into the cabin. "All hope of saving the ship

is gone," said Mr. Orme; "we must do the best we can for ourselves; come, Fanny! come, children! keep together closely, and follow me."

"Miss Linton, will you trust yourself to my guidance!" asked Mr. Maitland. And hugging little Nathalie close to me, I followed him to the deck. The flames were roaring among the rigging now, but owing to the position of the ship, they blew from us for the present.

"Keep to the ship as long as possible," said Mr. Maitland. "In the providence of God, a vessel may heave in sight, before the flames reach us; if not, we must still trust Him, and taking whatever we can find to buoy us up, we must spring into the water."

There were but two small boats attached to the steamer. These were soon lowered, but the passengers sprang into them in such frantic haste that they were immediately swamped, and floating off, keel upward, they left us to our fate.

The wind had been rising for some hours, and now blew fearfully; but so far it had wafted the flames from us. Now the vessel swung round in the contrary direction, and destruction stared us in the face. The flames were nearing us every moment. The despairing passengers were throwing over everything on which they could lay their hands, and one by one springing into the water, as the flames reached them.

I saw two sisters, who had been the gayest in the dance, kiss each other, and taking hold of hands, spring over the vessel's side together. I saw many whose faces had been full of fun and merriment on the voyage, give one last agonized look at the mass of flame which was rushing toward them, and just as it scorched their cheeks, spring with a shriek of despair into the boiling waves.

All this time Mr. Orme and his family, Mr. Maitland and his little girl, and I with my little Nathalie, had stood closely together in the stern of the vessel. The gentlemen had been making preparations for us, by getting together whatever would float, and making it ready to throw over, when the time should come.

A frantic woman came rushing up to Mr. Maitland, crying:

"Oh, sir, pray for me!"

"Pray for *yourself*, poor soul," said he.

"Oh, I do not know how."

"The time for prayer has passed," said Mr. Maitland. "This is the time to work; God will take care of those who trust Him, and even if their bodies are swallowed up in the waves, their souls will be secure."

Just then the flames seized on the poor woman's dress, and with a cry I shall never forget, she went over the side, a mass of flame, extinguished in a moment.

"Now is the time!" said Mr. Orme, with a sort of firm desperation; "my darlings, you must go!"

He took the oldest little girl in his arms, kissed her passionately, held her to her mother and each of the little group to kiss, and directing her to cling to whatever she could find that was floating, he at the last bade her put her hands together, and say: "Lord Jesus, take care of me;" and he threw her into the water. This was done with each of the lovely little creatures, and the poor mother leaned over the side, and strained her eyes through the darkness (for they fell where the ship shadowed the water) to catch the last glimpse of them.

When he came to the fourth, a most interesting little boy, the sweetest of the group, the child exclaimed, in the most piteous, imploring tones:

"Papa, dear papa, don't throw Franky over into the cold, deep water; please don't, papa."

"I *must*, my darling!" said the agonized father. The number to be kissed was diminished now, and as the father raised the little boy to the bulwarks, without waiting for the dictation, he put his little hands together, and looked up with his beautiful eyes, and in trembling tones, cried:

"Lord Jesus, take care of little Franky!" and he was gone.

"Now, Fanny; oh, my wife, this *is* hard!" said the husband, turning away completely unmanned for the moment. But the merciless flames, like

hungry wolves, thrust out their red tongues, and almost licked our cheeks. There was no time to lose. He tied the sweet baby tightly to its mother, with her shawl, the little creature smiling in his face as he did so, and looking up with wonder at the beautiful blaze just over its head.

"Kiss little Nelly good-by, mamma," said Mr. Orme, holding up the last little pet which had all the time been clinging to his knee. "*Now go!*" There was a plunge, followed quickly by another, as Mr. Orme, with little Nelly in his arms, sprang into the water after his wife.

This, which has taken so long to describe, occupied but very few moments, and I saw and heard all, while making my own preparations, with Mr. Maitland's assistance, for a plunge in the water.

Choosing the side of the vessel from which the fewest had jumped, Mr. Maitland threw over two settees and several planks, and then as the flames were fast surrounding us, he bade me jump. Holding to Walter's baby with a grasp like death, I mounted the bulwarks with Mr. Maitland's help, and sprang over the side.

Down, down, I went into deep, dreadful darkness, and when I rose, I found a settee within reach. I had reason to be thankful now, that I had learned to swim and float, with my sisters, in the deep bend in the mill-stream, near my childhood's home. I felt little fear now, though I saw no prospect of

being rescued. "Poor Walter!" I thought, "he will never see his little Nathalie!"

As the steamer floated away from us, or we from her, the red light of her burning hull shone out upon the waters. Human faces were thick around me now, some calm and tranquil, some agonized and full of terror.

I heard greetings interchanged, and messages of love sent to friends, in case those who were parting thus upon the waters, were any of them rescued. The infidel floated by me. Poor man! He was hurrying over the words of the *Lord's Prayer*. Perhaps the only prayer he had ever learned, when he said it years ago at his mother's knee.

What good was the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," to him now? Better for him, if he had known it, the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" And one of those scoffing young men, who had played cards in the cabin, and sneered at our Sunday service, went by on the crest of a wave. When I hear of those who weep and wail, and gnash their teeth in torment, that face of untold agony rises up before me.

But some sank to rise no more, and others floated away, till few were left around me, and the burning vessel was now some distance off. I had held on to my little Nathalie, whose pretty head lay on my breast; but suddenly my settee was seized by some

poor struggling creature, who was sinking, and down we went.

I rose in a few moments, but my little charge was gone. Perhaps the drowning man had caught at the little straw, and dragged it down with him.

But no! A little fair head comes gliding down a steep wave toward me. I have her again—my little treasure! She raised her eyes toward me; the light was full on her face. They were not the eyes of Walter's child, but the deep, hazel eyes of little Florence!

Not a word was spoken, but she clung with one arm to me, and with the other to the strip of plank I had caught as I rose the last time; and so we tossed upon the waves.

A shout far over the waters! A shout echoed and re-echoed by nearer voices! "A ship! A ship! Ship-ahoy!" Oh, would they see us?

The ship hove to, and boats were lowered and sent out to pick up the floating sufferers. I saw one not far from us.

"Shout, Florence!" I said. "Scream with all your might!"

And we raised our voices together.

"They hear us! they hear us! they are coming! Hold on, darling, don't slip now. Father of mercies! we are saved!"

I felt myself dragged into the boat, and then I knew nothing till I came to myself in a dry, warm

berth, and found little Florence sleeping sweetly beside me.

When I stirred she woke, and asked dreamily, "Where are we?"

I told her that we had been rescued and kindly cared for, but that I did not know by whom.

"Do you know anything of my papa?" she asked.

"I remember nothing, my love, since we were taken into the boat, and I do not know how many besides you and I are saved. But I must get up, and find out all about it. Where did you last see your father, Florence?"

"We were floating together on one of those settees papa threw over, when some person threw a great heavy plank from the ship, and it struck papa, and we both went down; and then I rose, and floated without anything, till you caught me."

I rose and dressed as well as I could, though I was very weak, and aching in every joint, and went into the cabin. Here kind people immediately gathered round me, and in answer to my eager inquiries, I learned that about twenty persons had been saved from the waters. The ladies were all in bed, and the gentlemen had not been seen.

"I am anxious to know," I said, "whether the father of a little girl who is with me is saved. A tall gentleman with dark hair."

"My husband was speaking of a tall gentleman

who is in the captain's room, having his arm set, it is badly broken," said one of the ladies.

It now occurred to me that both Mr. Maitland and Mr. Orme were tall, and I thought it best not to give little Florence any hope for the present.

I wrapped her up in a shawl kindly lent me by one of the ladies, and took her out into the cabin, and sat down by the stove, with the child in my arms. Presently the door opened, and little Florence started up with a cry of joy. *It was her father!* He was very pale, and had his arm in a sling, but his face lighted up with joy and thankfulness, as he sprang toward his little daughter.

"Oh, is my darling saved; and by you, Miss Linton! The Lord is very good to me!" And he laid his head upon the table, while his one arm was round little Florence, and said not a word for many minutes; but he pressed her closer and closer to his breast.

"Oh," said he at length, "I heard that a young lady and little girl were saved, and I have been trying to get out of that surgeon's hands before his work was half done. The pain of the limb was nothing to the torture of anxiety and suspense. When that plank broke my arm, darling, and I went down and rose without you, I thought I should never see you any more."

"Are any of the Ormes saved, Mr. Maitland?" I asked.

"Not one, so far as I can ascertain But one child was brought on board this vessel, and that is my little Florence. One of our fellow passengers tells me that the dead body of a lady, with an infant tied to her breast, floated past him."

"Oh, that lovely Mrs. Orme!" said I. "Well, I am almost thankful that none of them are saved, unless all could be."

The packet which had so kindly picked us up, was detained by head winds, and driven out to sea, so that we were a fortnight longer on the water than we should have been had the steamer continued safely on her way.

The surviving passengers of the ill-fated vessel met like brothers and sisters, for fellowship in peril had bound them together in the bonds of a strong friendship. Many of them were mourning the loss of dear ones who had gone down in the waters, while some were clinging to the hope that those they loved might have been saved by some other vessel.

Many most touching incidents of that night of peril came out, as we sat together round the cabin stove. One gentleman mentioned this singular circumstance:

"Thirty years ago," said he, "I committed a sin in childhood, which has passed out of my mind from the time it happened till now. I had a sick little sister; she had the consumption, and some fine grapes which were sent to her were left in my

room. The temptation proved too great for me, and I ate them. In the night, my poor little sister asked for some grapes to moisten her parched lips; but when my mother came to get them, they had been eaten.

"She knew well who was the culprit, and coming to my bed she said, in sad and reproachful tones:

"My son, *why* did you eat your sister's grapes?"

"I suppose I felt very badly about it at the time; I know I ought to have done so; but I soon forgot it, and it never crossed my mind again.

"The other night, after tossing long upon the waves, everything suddenly seemed hushed around me; and in the midst of the silence came the voice of my mother, long since dead, in *distinct tones* to me: 'My son, *why* did you eat your sister's grapes?'"

The following lines, written soon after hearing this incident, may be read or not, as suits the whim of the reader:

Far, far out mid ocean billows, tossed and whirled in angry strife,
Was a swimmer in his agony, swimming for his very life;
On the deep the wreck was burning, hundreds had gone down to
death,
Hundreds more upon the wild waves, howled and shrieked away
their breath.

One by one they sank and perished, and the swimmer was alone,
Then the waves seemed hushed to silence, and there came a gentle
tone,

One that oft in days of childhood made his tender heart rejoice ;
Oh, how many years had vanished since he heard his *mother's voice* !

Now in tones reproachful, tender, on his ear its murmurs come,
Telling of a sin of childhood, when he was a boy at home ;
Of a long forgot transgression which he ne'er had thought to meet—
Is there *ought* will be forgotten when we reach the judgment seat ?

No—'tis true that every vain thought, every secret little sin
On the tablet of the memory, is indelibly *burnt in* ;
Not a thought that passes o'er it but impresses its own hue,
Oh, amid a world of falsehood—memory, thou art ever true.

Like the sheet which blank appeareth, till the light brings out its
story,

So the page of memory fadeth ; so, amid the blaze of glory,
Of that day of wrath so dreadful, all the page will be made bright,
" Every idle word " revealed, every secret brought to light.

Is the " book that shall be opened " then, the record that I keep
In my memory's secret chambers, where they long in darkness
sleep ?

Oh, my Saviour ! let thy kind hand, ere that great eventful day,
Pass across the blotted record, wiping every trace away !

When the sea restores its treasures, when the earth gives up its
dead,

When before Thy dread tribunal all mankind are gathered,
When that " other book " is opened, " book of life," so pure and
fair,

May my name be found, oh, Saviour, by Thy hand recorded there !

NOTE.—This incident, as will be remembered by many, as well as
some others recorded here, occurred at the time of the wreck of the
Central America, but I have taken the story-teller's privilege of ap-
propriating and ante-dating them, in order to associate them with
another scene of peril.

Chapter Fourteenth.

WOOD-LAWN.

I WAS welcomed to the arms of my loving friends,
as one who had been " dead and was alive again,"
who had been " lost and was found." It was worth
some suffering to have the assurance of being so
much beloved, but if I needed that assurance, it
was most dearly purchased.

Aunt Eunice, Flora and her husband, dear old
doctor Richards, the Leightons, those warm-hearted
friends, and, could I believe my eyes, Harry, my
own darling brother ! He had arrived but three
days before from Bremen, and his ship had passed
the hull of a steamer still burning, part of the name
of which was visible. So they were all mourning
together over my untimely fate, when I burst in
upon them.

And this was considered an occasion important
enough to bring Helen, and her husband, and baby,

among us, and even Arthur, from his distant home. Mr. Maitland and little Florence were domiciled with the Leightons for the present, so that a large and affectionate group met every day and often, at one house or the other.

All this was very comforting, but it was long before I recovered my cheerfulness. I felt as if many years had been added to my life by that night of fearful peril and suffering, and though ten years have passed since it happened, I am now often obliged to turn my mind resolutely from the thought of it, or I am sure to have a night of wakefulness and distress.

In the midst of my first greeting from many dear friends, I turned to Flora and said :

"Oh, Flora, Walter's child is lost ! How shall I tell him ?"

"Spare yourself all trouble on that account, my darling," said Flora, "poor Walter was buried a week ago. Anxiety for the fate of the steamer brought on a return of the fever and inflammation ; the symptoms which it had been hoped were arrested, again appeared, and he sank rapidly."

"He left a message for you, in case you should be restored to us."

"Tell Grace I have fixed my hope and trust where she would have wished me to ; and that I die resigned and peaceful. Tell her it is my last request, that she will watch over my little Nathalie."

"And Grace, he asked to have a little Testament which you gave him laid upon his breast, in his coffin, and it was done."

This account of Walter, added to the previous excitement, completely overwhelmed me. I cried, as I had not cried since I was a child. I was thankful that Walter was spared the grief of hearing his little Nathalie's fate ; but oh ! it was all so sad !

"Oh, Grace, I forgot to tell you one thing," said Flora, coming in some hours after, and when I had been long asleep, "you are an heiress ! Walter left a will, in which a handsome legacy is left to you and Harry ; and in case little Nathalie should die, his whole property was to be divided between you two."

This affected me little, one way or the other, except that I should no longer be a burden to Aunt Eunice. And yet, it seems ungrateful to say this, when she had always made it appear that my companionship gave her only the truest comfort and happiness.

After a month of quiet enjoyment had passed, in the constant society of these friends dearest to me, Mr. Leighton said to me one day :

"Grace, Maitland is a noble fellow !"

"I suppose so, Mr. Leighton ! Now go to Mr. Maitland and say, 'Maitland, Grace is a fine girl.'"

"No need to say that, Grace. Maitland himself

extemporizes enough on that subject, when we are together. But I wish you knew him as I know him. Oh, what a true, deep heart he has ! And I am certain you cannot have been with him in that time of danger, without feeling sure of the sincerity of his Christian character."

"That was apparent before the time of danger," said I.

"Grace, are you blind?" asked Mr. Leighton. "Can you help seeing, what is plain to every one else, that Mr. Maitland loves you?"

"Did he commission you to tell me so, Mr. Leighton?" I asked.

"No; but he asked me if I thought there was any hope for him," said he.

"Then he must find that out for himself," said I, and I ran out of the room.

I was in a tumult of excitement. I had not felt so when poor Walter asked me to marry him, by the bank of the mill-stream, that evening, so long ago. I had taken it all very quietly. I had answered Walter that I had never seen any one I liked so well. I could honestly say of Mr. Maitland, that I was sure I should never see any one I could love so much.

I shall not tell you how it was all settled, and what was said. Those things are too sacred, even for you, my dear reader, in whom I have confided so frankly. But I need not be ashamed to say I

became engaged to Mr. Maitland, seeing that I have been his wife for nearly ten happy years.

A very charming book from the French of Alphonse Karr, entitled "A Tour Around my Garden," discourses of happiness somewhat in this wise:

"When I endeavor to remember all the happiness of my life, I find there is scarcely one I had anticipated that I secured in the end. Most of those which recur to my memory have come unexpectedly. Every happiness I can recall, I neither pursued long nor sought for; they have shot up, and blossomed under my feet, like the daisies on my grass-plot."

So it seems to me it is with trouble. We anticipate it, and look for it in every direction but that from which it is really coming. Then in some quarter of the horizon, toward which we have not cast our eyes, the clouds gather which are to break upon our heads, and well nigh overwhelm us with their fury.

I had never dreamed of disaster or suffering like that I endured in crossing the ocean; and as little did I think that the great happiness of my life would grow out of that suffering.

And now, when one heroine is dead, and the fate of the other decided (if a book may be allowed two of these important characters), it is generally considered time to stop; and yet I flatter myself that my readers take some little interest in other charac-

ters introduced into this book, and would like to ask, if they could speak to me, what became of them.

"Did Harry and Arthur marry; and what became of old Doctor Richards; and you never told us the end of Aurelia's story; and you let Aunt Ella drop out of the scene long ago; and how did Aunt Kate get on; and did Aunt Lainy really marry old Hicks; and—"

Well, well, I can afford to be good-natured now, and answer as many questions as any Yankee among you all can ask.

Of course Harry married Alice Ward; what else was she introduced into the story for? And Arthur carried sweet Anna Herbert off to his Western home. We all went up to that wedding, though I was not then married; and Mr. Maitland, with his arm still in a sling, and little Florence, and myself, caused quite a sensation among the kind people of the village, because of the "dangers we had passed."

As for poor Aurelia—about six months after my return, Flora received a line in a scrap of dirty paper, begging her to come to a certain house, in a certain street, without delay, for Aurelia was there very ill.

Flora went immediately, and found herself in a place almost as wretched as that in which I found Gabrielle; but there are no such miserable dark alleys in our city as that through which I wound

my way in Paris. The place was forlorn enough, however, and poor Aurelia's pinched white face, told a tale of extreme privation and suffering.

An old woman sat by a fireplace, in which a few chips were smoking, holding in her arms a poor little skeleton, whose head looked like a very small skull.

"Oh, Cousin Flora," said Aurelia, "I have got to my last cent, and my last crust! Do you think my mother will take pity on me now? I have written to her over and over again, and she returns my letters unopened."

"Aurelia, I will go to your father at once," said Flora, and jumping into a carriage which was waiting for her, she drove directly to Mr. Stevens' bank, where she found him. He seemed much shocked when she told him of Aurelia's condition, for Aunt Hannah had not allowed him to know even that she was in the city.

He got into the carriage with Flora, and drove to the tenement house where his daughter lay. Flora said she did not suppose it possible that Mr. Stevens could show so much sensibility as he manifested at the sight of his daughter's sufferings. He seemed even more agitated than during the night of Evelina's death.

"Will you stay here with her, Flora, while I go for my wife?" said he.

Flora remained, and Mr. Stevens drove off in

great haste for Aunt Hannah, whom he hurried into the carriage without any ceremony. She evidently did not know where she was going, or for what purpose, as her voice could be heard making interrogatories and exclamations all the way up the stairs.

"Mercy on me! Mr. Stevens, what are you bringing me here for? Don't you know these places are filled with cholera? Is it Thomas's family you want me to see? I am sure you might help them, without dragging me down to this wretched hole. Oh, horrible! I had no idea there were such places in the city."

"It is your own poor little daughter I have brought you here to see, Mrs. Stevens!" said he, as he burst open the door; "there she is! and there is her poor little starved baby. Oh, this is *too much*!"

"Well, Aurelia, you know you brought it all upon yourself," said Aunt Hannah.

"Stop, madam! no reproaches here," said Mr. Stevens. "No matter where the fault is now; but perhaps it might rest somewhere else than on the poor child's head, if all the truth were known. At any rate, she goes home now, if we can get her there alive."

"Mr. Stevens! what do you mean? Have Joseph hanging round the house, and that brat growing up to call me *grandmother*?"

"Joseph is *dead*, mother! dead of the cholera! and my baby is dying! Oh, let me go home,

mother — let me go home to die," screamed poor Aurelia.

Aunt Hannah had nothing to say in the matter, for her husband was determined now. The poor little baby was at its last gasp, and it died before its mother was removed from the house. Aurelia lingered a week or two at her father's house, attended by Flora and myself, and then she died. So ended all Aunt Hannah's plotting and planning.

As for Aunt Kate, the old gentleman did die at last, and the wealth did come to his son; but the hopes of happiness it had held out to her proved a cheat; and if one might judge by the careworn and wrinkled look of her face, there was anything but peace at heart.

Her boys, who had been taught to judge of the value of money by its capacity of purchasing pleasure, rather than its power of doing good or promoting the happiness of others, made their grandfather's carefully-hoarded wealth fly like the dew before the rays of the sun. But the dews and mists gather and accumulate into masses of cloud, from which the storms descend, which carry destruction in their course. So clouds of trouble darkened the horizon of Aunt Kate.

George Henry, who she fondly hoped would marry a certain heiress of her acquaintance, ran away with an actress, many years older than himself. The others are continually in trouble, and I

heard a few days ago that one of them was in the Tombs.

Of Aunt Ella, I have pleasanter tidings to communicate. By the judicious kindness of the sister of Mr. Arnold, to whom she was sent, she was led to see the folly and wickedness of her former self-indulgent life, and by her aid and encouragement, to attempt a reformation.

Flora told me, not long ago, that Mr. Arnold called to see her one day, and she never saw so altered a person. His face beamed with happiness.

"I take real comfort in life now, Flora," said he. "You must come out and see your Aunt Ella, for you would not believe what I say unless you saw her. She is up early in the morning, singing at her work, and looking as bright, and fresh, and pretty, as she did when I married her. I really believe in the power of Christianity now," he added, "for it is nothing but religious principle which has enabled her to persevere in conquering her old habits."

Not long since I received some very extensive wedding cards, very elaborately ornamented and engraved, with these words :

Mrs Swineburn,

AT HOME,

Wednesday Evening, April —, 18—,

AT NINE O'CLOCK.

On two other cards were engraved the names of Miss Swineburn and Mr. Minch.

We attended the wedding, for the sake of old acquaintanceship. Everything was there that money could purchase, in order to make a display to the eye, or to gratify the palate, but such a heterogeneous mass of articles, without order, and without taste, I never saw thrown together before.

Mrs. Swineburn was very kind and attentive to me.

"Miss Grace, I mean Miss Maitland, I beg your pardon, but it doos seem so like old times to see you ; it's very hard, now, I tell you, to have one's only darter git married. Ef they was only goin' to stay here, now, and live along with us, you see it would be different ; but *he's* got a notion of goin' to Westconsin, and nothin' else well serve him.

"Now what's the use of having an elegant residence like this here, jest for us two old folks ? I'd a good sight rather have stayed down behind the shop ; I was *comfortabler*, my dear. But all I rest on is, that he'll get tired of Westconsin, and bring Maria Jane back. Take some of the *gravy* to them oysters, my dear ; won't you have some calves-foot jelle, or some sasse ? I declare ef that girl haint forgot the sasse plates."

Oh, some one asked "if Aunt Lainy actually did marry Old Hicks ?"

To be sure she did. And this reminds me of a

letter I received from her, the summer that the cholera was raging in the city, and all about us. I had received one before; written to express the kind old soul's thankfulness at my deliverance from the perils of the sea, and another, of congratulation upon my marriage. But I have not time to insert them. The one of which I now speak was in this wise:

[Harry got hold of it the other day, and insisted upon reading it aloud to the assembled group, of which I shall tell you presently, and I never heard such peals and shouts of laughter. But in order to appreciate Aunt Lainy's letters, one should have seen her in person.]

MY DEAR GRACE

"It is So Long since I have Heard from You, that I dont know But you Are all dead and Buried especially as I got Hold of a Piece of newspaper the other day, that come Round some Rhubub and Magneshy I got for Hicks but dont you Believe he wouldn't touch it being dreadful Sot against Medicine, saying that the Cholery was a Raging all Round you There, carrying off lots of folks of all Ages and Sexes into The Eternal Wold.

"Now what I Take my Pen in Hand principally for is to Tell You of a very Wonderful Medicine which is the Discovery of an Invention by a neighbor of Ours, rather an Ignorant sort of a Man too So that you would be Quite Surprised.

"It cures every Thing that any Body can Ail of, either Internal or on the Surface From the Liver Complaint to a broken Bone besides mends chiny takes out Grease Spots polishes Furniture and Brightens Brasses and all to Be sold for Fifty Cents a bottle is little Less than a Meracle.

"When I had perused this Bit of paper I was Telling you of a Spell Back, I went right off to Old Davy, and says I Davy the Cholery's carrying off folks thick as blackberries Down the river there is your cure all Good for Cholery? because perhaps I can git my Relations Down there to Sell a Lot of Bottles for you. He calls it The Cure all mender and polisher and Says he *there aint nothing Like it for Cholery.*

"Now If you Could Persuade your physicians to try it dr Richards is a good Kind Man Enough but He's dreadful sot in His Way when he takes a Notion, you see It would Be the Making of a poor Man, And He owes Hicks Five dollars This minute lent Him in Driblets.

"Hicks and I gits along well enough, only it does Distress me To see Him so Dreadful sot against medicine. He Wont Touch a Grain not Even the cure all, says There An't nothing the matter of him, and Its plain to See with Half an eye there is, he looks So Dreadful yaller.

"I hope your children is all Well. whatever Else you do Dont neglect them in the way of medi-

cine. I've been Trying to Persuade Hicks to come Down and make you all a visit, but He Seems to Feel kind of backward about Going forward among Folks, but May be He'll think better of it And Come. So no more at Present from

"Your Affectionate aunt,

"ROXALANY HICKS."

"I forgot to Say that Davy's medicine is very Good For making the Hair Grow on Bald Heads, and Giving a Fair Complexion, besides Tooth-ache and back-ache and Sore eyes, but *particklar for cholery*. Now it does seem to Me that for a Body to Let such a Chance as this Slip through their Fingers, is nothing But flying in the face of common sense, and Tempting providence. Davy says seeing you are Sisters grand-daughter to me, He'll let a Dozen bottles Go for Four dollars, bottles Returned, which Is the Same as Throwing of it Away. Please Send Word how many bottles you'll Have, and Don't forget to Send the First five dollars To *Hicks*."

Our home is on the banks of the beautiful Hudson, the green lawn sloping to the water, and the glorious Kaatskills ever in sight. It is called Wood-lawn, and it was my husband's home in his boyhood. The house, which was already a large

one, has been added to it, till it is capacious enough to accommodate all whom I love to see in it.

Let me tell you how it is filled just now. It is the pleasant month of June; the roses are blooming all over the verandah, and twining up even to the window, where I sit winding off my story. Merry voices come to my ear from the house, the lawn, and the verandah. Helen and her troop are here, and Flora and hers. Aunt Eunice—oh, I never told you that I succeeded in persuading dear Aunt Eunice to leave the city, and take up her abode with me; for I could not get along without knowing that I should see her at her knitting in the corner when I looked up from my work. Aunt Eunice, then, is here, of course, her face expressing the most quiet contentment.

Harry and Arthur, and their wives, are passing the summer with us, and we expect the Leightons for a month.

Old Doctor Richards has given up his practice, and bought a snug little box near us; but he finds it lonely. He says there is no place so cool as our verandah in the summer, and none so warm and bright as our fireside in the winter; for we seldom go to the city. Certain it is, that all seems brighter, if possible, when the dear old man joins us; and when he gets into a frolic with the children, as he generally does before he has been in the house five minutes, I am often still obliged to remind him, that he has not yet arrived at years of discretion.

And then he laughs, and says :

"Ah, Grace, my dear, if you had only married me, I might have been sobered down by this time."

I hear his voice this moment, in a hearty laugh, as he sits in the midst of the group of gentlemen on the verandah.

If any one cares to know what became of Phillis, they have only to step into my kitchen, where they will find her deep in the mysteries of boiling, baking, and frying ; for after I was settled in a house of my own, nothing would persuade her to remain with Aunt Kate for a day.

"Oh, now, dis yere's like home, child," she says. "And its such a comfort to know that master and missus's chilens goin' to eat what I cook. Dere is a blessin' in dat now, child."

"And den even if I can't get my ole bones up to Sackville, why, dere's a corner of de farm dere, an' a big tree grows dere, an' I won't be in nobody's way dere, honey ; and den you see I won't have to rise wid dat lot of folks in de city buryin' ground. Oh, it does my heart good, honey, it does."

The lawn is bright with the many-colored dresses of lovely children, and their pleasant voices, as they call to each other in their play, come sweetly in at my open window. For where on earth is a sweeter sound than the voices of *happy* children ?

Flora runs across the lawn now in her simple white dress, looking as sweet, and pure, and almost as

young, as she did when my story began. She picks up a chubby little fellow, who has rolled over in the grass, because his short legs will not carry him as fast as the rest.

And I hear my beautiful Helen singing her baby to sleep in the next room.

Oldest of the group of children, and leader in their plays, is my sweet, fair-haired Florence, the little girl who came to me upon the waters, and who has been a second time thrown upon my care. To me she will ever be as my first born, and dearly loved as any.

Lovely children ! May ye live holy and happy lives ! being in the world to do it good, but not of it, to be contaminated by it, or absorbed in its fleeting fashions or pleasures.

"Holy Father ! I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil !"

"Come, Gracie, dear ! we want you !" calls a loved and familiar voice. "Who under the sun are you writing that long letter to ?"

"Oh, I am finishing off a letter, begun long ago, to certain 'kind and indulgent' friends of mine ; and I only hope they will take as much pleasure in

reading what I have written, as I have taken in writing it for them."

And so, as I am called, and as my story is finished, I will bid them *good-by*.

THE END.