

A SELF-MADE WOMAN;

OR,

MARY IDYL'S

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

BY

EMMA MAY BUCKINGHAM.

"To meditate, to plan, resolve, perform,
Which in itself is good—as surely brings.
Reward of good, no matter what be done."

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PREFACE.

THE story of Mary Idyl is true in the main. Its aim is to encourage those of my sex who are struggling up towards a higher moral and intellectual life, to urge them to persevere until the end is attained.

We often hear the remark:—"He is a self-made man;" but the term is rarely applied to a woman. My heroine, Mary Idyl, was really self-taught. Notwithstanding poverty, illness, disappointments, and discouragements, at home and abroad, she succeeded in educating not only her head but also her *heart*.

She endeavored to eradicate faults of character, to cultivate her tastes;—and, by carefully observing the rules of Hygiene, she succeeded in rendering her almost dwarfed deformed body, symmetrical, if not beautiful.

Her loveliness, which was from *within*, shone out in her actions, words, and also in her facial expression, reminding one of an imprisoned light within a translucent vase.

If this story shall assist one of my sex in the work of self-instruction.—of taste and heart culture,—I shall not regret the weariness and effort which it has cost me.

I have also, another object in presenting this work to the public, namely, to benefit the large class of working-women who are bravely endeavoring to earn a livelihood for themselves and others.

There are hundreds among them whose personal appearance, and health and talents as well, are of a higher order than Mary Idyl's; yet, because they lack her energy and indomitable perseverance, they are still held down by the iron hand of penury, of oppression.

Like my heroine, they are capable of winning fame, wealth, love, and luxuriant ease, if they will only arouse themselves and follow her example.

It is true that all cannot become scholars and authors, but, in this really "Golden Age" for women, there are other avenues and openings which are equally respectable and lucrative.

I will now allow the impatient (?) reader to peruse my story, hoping that Mary Idyl's example and experience may stimulate many to struggle toward the goal which she reached after so much labor and suffering.

THE AUTHOR

HONESDALE, Pa., August 25, 1873.



MARY IDYL.

CHAPTER I.

STYGIAN POOL.

"YES, I will drown myself! They shall not know where I am buried!"

I sobbed, passionately, as I caught a low branch of alder, and endeavored to swing myself over the loathsome abyss called "Stygian Pool;" but the limb broke, and threw me suddenly backward.

Again I sprang forward, and for the first time looked steadily before me. My eyes rested upon a lake half overgrown with peat-bogs, mosses, cranberry vines, pitcher plants, flags, and rushes. Beneath this tangled growth the water was very deep. Around its margin, ferns, rhododendrons, and tall hemlocks grew in wild luxuriance. The surface of the water was covered with broad lily leaves and an

aqueous plant resembling a noxious green slime; and, scattered over all, like stars in the night, white water lilies arose like an exhalation from that stagnant mass of mire and filth, glorifying the forest with their perfect beauty.

In a moment my countenance was transfigured—the whole current of my thoughts, of my *life* even, was changed. I bent eagerly over the water, and, still clinging to the limb with one hand, gathered a cluster of the snowy flowers. It surprised me when I found that they had struggled up through that mud, clay, water, and decaying vegetation from a depth of more than ten feet.

“And from such an origin!” I said, musingly; then resolved to be like those innocent teachers; to overcome every obstacle, in future, that should rise up in my pathway.

Truly, those silent monitors had awakened the idea of beauty in my soul; had kindled anew the love of nature in my young heart. And, kneeling upon the damp moss, I asked God to forgive the mad anger which had prompted that blind wish for death; then slowly retraced my footsteps, and sought my den, the old attic.

“I can, at least, improve myself in writing by keeping a diary, and will commence this very day,” I soliloquized, as I opened an ancient account-book,

which I had found in a dilapidated sea-chest beneath the rafters.

At that moment, I heard a step upon the stairs, then the door grated upon its rusty hinges, and my mother's pale, anxious face appeared, as I exclaimed,—

“Oh, I am so glad it is you, mamma! I was afraid it was father, when I heard you coming.”

She drew me toward her, and said, after kissing me tenderly,—

“My child, you have made me a great deal of trouble to-day. I am weary of such altercations—it hurts me more than it possibly can you, when your father chides you. Try to feel, my daughter, that we are both acting for your good; and, for mother's sake, do not disobey him again.”

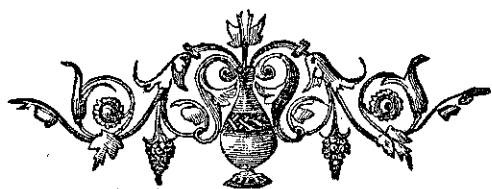
I clung to her convulsively, and sobbed brokenly,—

“I did not mean to do wrong, but it is so hard for me to lie thinking, thinking all night long, until my head seems so large that it fills the room and presses against the walls and ceiling. Then I see such hideous faces laughing at me in the darkness, that I cannot help getting out of bed and reading. What shall I do?”

“I will give you an anodyne, and sit by you until you go to sleep, but you must not build a fire again, or sit up and read after we have retired. Why, Mary,

there is danger of your being burned alive!" she answered, gravely.

"Dear mother, how good you are! For your sake I will try to be more patient," I said, as we went down stairs.



CHAPTER II.

DAISY-DELL.

REVERSES of fortune had driven Charles Idyl from his early home in Idylia, Connecticut, and made him a cold, hard-hearted man.

His father had almost beggared his family by speculating in Western lands; and, of all his former large possessions, only Daisy-dell farm was left to his only son. When dying, he said,—

"Charles, you will be obliged to leave the old homestead, of which the Idyls have been so proud for several generations; but, whatever may be your need, do not sell one acre of my Pennsylvania land for any consideration. It is worth its weight in gold almost; for it contains rich v—v—." Death came before he could finish the sentence. His son obeyed his last wishes, and removed to Pennsylvania.

Disheartened, poor, unknown, he entered his new field of labor. It was then an almost unbroken wilderness. Was it any wonder that he was discouraged? What could his father have discovered on

that apparently worthless tract of land that rendered it so valuable in his eyes? was a question which he often asked himself in vain.

It was with the greatest difficulty that he cultivated the rocky, sterile soil; yet he persevered, and, by dint of almost Herculean efforts, cleared and sowed a score of acres around the already dilapidated dwelling-house which had been built by some lumbermen many years before.

He finally brought his young wife to preside over his forest home. Her father had been the pastor of a small parish in New England; therefore, the only dower which she brought her husband was her affection and loveliness of face and character.

As I have intimated, his early disappointments had rendered him morose, irritable, skeptical, cold, and stern; yet, she loved him as such a womanly woman can love, and bore his faults with patient cheerfulness. She believed that, beneath that harsh exterior, a strong under-current of tenderness was flowing, and with this blind unquestioning faith feared him more than she did her Maker. Sorrow had come to them in their lonely home; for their first-born, Alice, the light of the household, slept beneath the pine-trees at Daisy-dell.

She had been a bright, healthy, lovable child, and her beauty and grace rendered her the favorite of

both parents, while but little love was the plain, patient Mary's meed.

If Alice had been a joy to her parents, Mary was the reverse. She was a sickly, piny child during the first ten years of her life. Existence had been a burden ever since she could remember. The scarlet-fever had left her almost a cripple. It had settled in one of her limbs, causing the chords to contract, thus giving her an awkward limp, while every movement was accompanied with severe pain.

Her brain was entirely too active for her frail body, therefore her friends were obliged to forbid hard study, yet every childish employment showed the strong bent of her mind after knowledge.

The child felt, in those days, that she had but one friend in whom she could confide, a cousin ten years her senior. Horace Alton had spent two or three vacations with the Idyls; and, in some manner, the little, silent invalid had excited his sympathy from their first acquaintance. He seemed to understand her thoroughly; to take an interest in her tastes, likes, pursuits, and aspirations. He assisted her in her studies—she pored over Alice's books surreptitiously—taught her how to write letters and keep a diary, worked out her hardest sums, and showed her how to draw and color maps, during his last visit. On the day of his departure, he found her reading in

the old garret, and presented her with a "Compendium of English Literature" and "Ivanhoe," and told her that he was glad to find the germ of a scholar among the cob-webs and rubbish of that ancient room.

His kindness acted like a powerful stimulant for a season; but, the novel, alas! betrayed her. Her father found her reading it beside the midnight fire on the night before the commencement of our story, and on the following morning he threw the book into the flames, and threatened to shut her up in her room and feed her on bread and water, if he caught another book in her hands that summer.

For an instant the indignant blood crimsoned her cheeks and broad forehead, while her eyes fairly burned on his face; then she grew pale as death, and turned slowly toward the door, murmuring,—

"Oh, that I might die!" Once in the quietude of her own room, she threw herself upon her bed, and wept passionately. Finally, choking moans and stifled sobs succeeded this violent outburst of feeling; then she lay calm and tearless, but the inward strife continued until that wild whirl of agony threatened to submerge reason itself.

At length she started up and went over to the little looking-glass, which hung near the window, and gazed sorrowfully into its tell-tale face. She was very small for her age, and her round shoulders

and thin, sallow face, her tangled mass of reddish-brown hair; her large, violet eyes, which seemed hungry for affection, with their red, swollen, fringeless lids; her blue lips, and crooked teeth, made the picture at which she looked anything but pleasing. She turned away, and, for the first time since her cousin went home, walked slowly into the fields. The sweet green meadows, with their wealth of daisies and clover blossoms, seemed to laugh at her anguish. She went on until she reached the woody swale called Violet Glen, and followed the noisy brook until it lost itself in Stygian Pool.

Surely some fiend had lured the child there to commit suicide; but we have seen, in the first page of her diary, how her good angel held her back from self-destruction. Truly,

"There is a Divinity which shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will."

"We may as well attempt to change the course of the Mississippi, as turn that child from any fancied purpose. Her indomitable will must be broken, or she will rule us all in future," said her father that evening. Mrs. Idyl's patient face grew a shade paler, but she did not reply.

CHAPTER III.

THE RED FARM-HOUSE.—DIARY CONTINUED.

WHEN, in coming years, memory shall carry me back to the home of my childhood, my Diary will assist me in retouching with life and color the faded paintings in the mind's picture-gallery.

Daisy-dell is a romantic name, truly, but it is particularly appropriate to my father's farm, which is completely covered with white daisies.

The farm-house is situated in a miniature valley, which a small stream, called "Silver Creek," has worn through the mountains. An orchard shuts out the view on the north and south, while, on the east and west, rising hills extend to the summits of "Mount Ida" and "Olympus." Beyond the cultivated fields on the south is a forest of gigantic hemlock and pine, and farther down, the stream springs laughingly over a perpendicular ledge of rocks, whose gray sides are covered with lichens of a hundred—yes, of a thousand years' growth. In the swamp adjacent, the deadly night-shade purples the air with

its poisonous blossoms. Here, also, may be found all the beautiful varieties of ferns and evergreen-creepers, as we press with difficulty through a tangled undergrowth of laurels, wild azaleas, dwarf pines, and oaks and hickory. The shrubbery grows smaller until we reach the "Barrens," on which we find acres of sweet fern and whortleberry bushes, interspersed with winter-greens.

The hills beyond our cultivated fields are not fit for farming. The soil is so thin that, in places, the conglomerate rock underlying it "crops out." Iron pyrites, smoky, and pink, and crystalline quartz and slate, covered with impressions of ferns, are there found in abundance.

But the old, red farm-house! the theatre where I first stepped upon the stage of existence, is not so romantic as its surroundings. Its architecture is neither Gothic, Doric, Ionic, or Grecian, or Corinthian. It is a long, low structure, with a great piazza in front whose slanting roof tries to shut out the sunlight.

Moss covers the roof, while the paint has in places given way to dark mold. There are clustering vines creeping all over the house, and the windows are curtained by morning-glories and trumpet-creepers. Within, our plainly furnished rooms are less attractive; their only redeeming traits being cleanliness and order.

I have a small flower garden in front of the farmhouse filled with old-fashioned flowers; but, it is a constant source of trouble to me, for father threatens, year after year, to convert it into a vegetable garden. The high picket-fence surrounding it is covered with honeysuckles and woodbines.

The garret is my chosen eyry. It is lighted by two gable windows. The rafters are hung with cobwebs and wasps' nests. Then such piles of old rubbish, namely—broken furniture, barrels of yellow newspapers and almanacs, carpet-rags, cast-off clothes, as are scattered around the room. There is a loom, and near it stand wheels, both for wool and flax; while here, beside me, is my great-grandmother's easy chair, and a curious iron-bound sea-chest.

One year ago, when I sought my garret studio in order to ransack an old sea-chest, which had belonged to one of my ancestors, I stepped upon the threshold of a new life.

My books had been taken away from me and locked up in my father's secretary, and my hunger for mental food, I can compare to nothing excepting an inebriate's burning thirst for alcohol. Indeed, I was growing desperate. Obedience to his wishes seemed no longer possible. One night I dreamed that this chest contained his old school books, and crept upstairs and commenced my search.

After examining the contents of several boxes of queer-smelling wood, which were filled with packages of faded letters, I came to another compartment. It was full of moldy, moth-eaten *books*! "Ay, truly: 'The gods help those who help themselves,'" I thought, as I emptied them upon the dusty floor. They belonged to my father—he had used them in his youthful days, I was certain, for they comprised the higher English branches, a Latin, French, and German course of study, besides a few standard works of prose and poetry.

I had heard my father tell Horace that the very sight of a school book made him shudder, because it reminded him of the sorrowful termination of his college life—he had been suddenly called home just before his father's death, and did not resume his studies—and I concluded that he had hidden his books himself. The temptation to profit by my discovery was irresistible.

During the past twelve months I studied faithfully. How joyfully I mastered each new lesson! Botany, under the light of science, has become a thousand fold more interesting. Every petal, stamen, sepal, fibre, spire of grass, leaf or blossom, or tuft of moss seems to me as wonderful as a new creation. Indeed, I almost dread to walk over this green earth for fear of crushing beneath my feet some living beauty.

Zoology, too, interests me greatly, but the world of animalculæ is the most marvelous of all God's works.

With what nameless delight do I contemplate the organization of the human frame, this "Harp of a thousand strings," with its muscles, tendons, joints, solids and fluids, all acting in harmonious concert.

Philosophy, also, solves many mysterious questions which formerly puzzled me; while astronomy has given birth to the idea of sublimity. With what a nameless delight do I now look up to the mighty sky and read its brilliant language!

Chemistry is also an interesting study. The phenomena presented by caloric, the metallic and non-metallic substances, salts, gases, fluids and solids, all enlarge my views of the vastness of the Creator's works.

Geology is, however, my favorite study. Every grain of sand or marl, each pebble, rock or mineral formation has assumed a new character. What mighty transformations this old earth has experienced! How clearly every minute fossil or particle of coal whispers of a pristine world!

An intense desire to go away to school has taken possession of my mind. I wish to study the classics, and take a higher course in mathematics. This wish grows upon me daily, but I can see no light in the distance, no outlet of escape; still my motto shall be, *Nil desperandum*.

CHAPTER IV.

GLADWOOD.

ON my thirteenth birth-day Horace Alton again made his appearance at Daisy-dell. True to his old promise, he assisted me in my studies, and made me give him a synopsis of all the books I had read and lessons I had learned, then examined my drawings and compositions critically.

"My parents," said he, "have commissioned me to obtain a governess for my little sister, who is just learning to read. I have found you competent to take charge of a school, and, of course, able to instruct her. Now, if I can obtain the consent of your mother and father, I mean to take you home with me, Mary. Would you like to go?"

"Certainly, cousin," I answered. After a great deal of opposition, Horace succeeded in carrying me home to Gladwood, where my uncle was superintending a colliery.

There was no school near enough for my little cousin to attend, and my aunt was very glad of my

services; although it was obvious that my plain attire, and awkward, bashful demeanor, rendered my presence disagreeable to her from the first, yet she tried to treat me kindly.

Horace was my best friend still. He continued to superintend my studies and gave me music lessons daily, besides assisting me in sketching and painting.

"You have more talent for painting than music; still, your voice is capable of improvement," said he.

"Then we will see what cultivation can do," I answered. I spent many happy hours with little Belle and Horace, seeking for flowers for my aunt's herbarium. Over the meadows for buttercups and daisies; through swamps for ferns, kalmias, boletuses, mosses; or in rocky chasms for the wild honeysuckle and "Spring Beauty;" down through the dense woodland in search of the "Indian Pipe," violets, "Solomon's Seal," and dogwood blossoms; along the creek for the splendid cardinal flower, or on the barren hills for the spotted lily and wild rose we wandered daily at her bidding.

Horace had just accepted the pastorate of a small country church near Gladwood, much to my aunt's disappointment, as well as my own, for we wanted him to take a thorough theological course at P. Seminary.

After I had been at my uncle's a year, he sold out

his interest in the coal mines and returned to Boston.

"But what shall we do with Mary, mother? Had we not better take her to the city and send her to — Grammar School until she graduates?" I heard Horace ask, one afternoon, as I sat near the open window on the piazza.

"Why, what a question! Just as if she has no home to go to. No, my son, Belle must go to school — and we shall have no further need of your *gauche protégée*. I, at least, have endured her quite as long as possible; and prefer, in future, to place her education in other hands than *yours*. She told me this morning that she intended to enter Hope Seminary at the commencement of the next term. Your father will pay her sufficient for her services here, to defray her expenses for a year. After that we can wash our hands of the entire affair;" said the proud, worldly-minded woman.

"But, mother, has she not given entire satisfaction?" he asked, in a pained voice.

"Yes. Belle has improved rapidly, and is extremely fond of her. Her morals are good enough, too, and what nature has denied her in personal attractions she has made up in *mind*" — and she turned again to her book of pressed flowers, while Horace came out upon the veranda, and read, at a glance, the mute agony which was written upon my face.

"I am so sorry!" said he, as he brushed the curls from my hot forehead.

I arose and left him without a word. In the seclusion of my room, I did not try to stay the storm of wounded pride and feeling which followed.

The ensuing day found me on my way to Daisy-dell in company with Horace, who was goodness and kindness personified. His tender thoughtfulness made me almost forget his mother's words. I resolved to become, in future, all he could wish me to be, to measure up to his high standard, to not only improve my mind, but manners and personal appearance. "He shall yet be proud of his cousin Mary Idyl!" I exclaimed, mentally.



CHAPTER V.

DISOWNED.

WHEN I made known my desire to enter Hope College, my father, at first, endeavored to convince me that my constitution was too frail to admit of a thorough course of study, and, finally, declared that I should give up the idea of again leaving home. A week later he asked me if I still intended to disregard his advice? I saw that a storm was rising, but resolved to brave its fury and answered:—

"I am sorry father,—but still feel that I cannot give up the idea of attending school for the next three years. You know that I have earned enough money to defray my expenses at least a third of that time." His brow darkened with a frown as he said:—

"Mary, you are determined to destroy yourself. You have been nothing but an expense and care to us all your life, and you want to make us more trouble by this mad freak of yours. This desire for knowledge is eating up your life!"

"Yes, it is as a consuming fire. If you will only help me to satiate these inward cravings for an education, I will faithfully labor until I repay every dollar," I exclaimed, pleadingly.

"This, then is your final decision?"

"Yes, sir. I dare not abandon my life-long hope, but do not blame me—do not cast me out of your heart for my necessary disobedience!" He sprang up and struck the table with his clenched hand, with such violence that it shattered a goblet that stood near, then went on, in tone of bitter reproach:

"If you thus choose to go your own way, do so; but I will disown you eternally. Henceforth you are no child of mine. No matter what may be your trials, never again expect a farthing from me, or dare to enter this house, while I live. If you desert us now, you will leave our love and protection always. Decide quickly. Obey me, or become a homeless outcast!"

"I have already chosen, sir. My resolution to become a scholar is unalterable." I answered quickly.

I could not keep back the truant tears, and added: "I cannot help it. An invisible power, stronger than my own will, seems to compel me to take this step. If you would only have faith in me—if you would at least forgive me!" and I held out my hand, but he threw it away, angrily exclaiming—

"You are no child of mine! Leave this house immediately! I do not wish to see you again; yet, do not come back begging to me when starvation comes, for I shall be deaf to your entreaties;" and he strode away across the fields, without deigning to say "good-by;" as I turned to my frightened mother, and asked:—

"Can you ever pardon me for disobeying his wishes—for making you this trouble?"

"Yes, Mary, a mother loves forever." My bitter feelings vanished in a moment, and I cried impulsively, as I threw my arms about her neck.

"Mother, I will remain, if *you* wish me to, although you know it is for your and brother Willie's sake that I want to qualify myself for a first-class teacher."

"I understand you, my daughter. I am perfectly willing to part with you for a season, for something whispers to my heart: 'God is leading your child into a path that she knows not of;' you may yet become my solace and support. I feel, also, much as his anger grieves me now, that your father will come to see that it was for the best that you broke away from home. You must not worry about me, when you are away, either, for I shall be well when I hear of your success;" was her beautiful reply. She then packed my neat, but scanty stock of clothes in

a trunk, which had formerly been hers, her tears falling meanwhile over her thin white cheeks.

With her kisses still warm upon my lips, I entered the stage-coach, and bade farewell to Daisy-dell for a season.

Horace had written a letter of introduction to the principal of Hope Seminary. It won for me a kind welcome from Dr. Morris and the rest of the faculty. I will here transcribe a leaf from my diary.

"Yes, I am here at last, but my hegira was accomplished by dint of great tribulation. Disowned! An outcast from my father's house! Have I indeed sold my birthright for an education?

"It almost maddens me to think that I have given my mother so much trouble, yet I could not drift against the tidal waves of *destiny*. When the mists, which now darken our mental vision, shall have lifted themselves, we will recognize the hand which has led me to forsake both home and parents. I believe that I shall, with God's help, overcome every difficulty that now obstructs my pathway." * * *

"Why child, you surely do not intend to use all of these books this term! There are only eight bells for recitation, during the day, and you have a dozen different works here. Three or four studies, at a time, are sufficient for any student. Why are you so ambitious?" Dr. Morris asked, as I laid my books on

his table. "Because, I wish to make the most of my time, as I shall be obliged to educate myself;" I answered.

After giving me a rigid examination in Philosophy, Botany, Astronomy, Chemistry, Physiology and Geology, he said, kindly:

"I find you well enough versed in the Sciences, but will permit you to take Latin, French, German, Rhetoric, Music, Drawing, and English Composition and Algebra. You can review the English branches during your vacation, and be examined in them with your class, at the close of the year, if you wish, but I cannot allow you to ruin your already frail constitution."

"Thank you," in a tone of relief, "I was afraid you were going to starve my mind, like they have always done at home," I replied, awkwardly. He held out his hand, saying, with a pleasant smile:

"Do not be alarmed, my child, you will find us all willing to assist you in every possible way. If anything troubles you, do not hesitate to call on me at any time."

His kindness encourages me to persevere, until the goal and ivy wreath are won. Henceforth, *Labor omnia vincit* shall be my motto.

CHAPTER VI.

CLIFFORD SCHOOL.

AFTER I had been at Hope Seminary a year, my money failed, and I was obliged to accept of a "common school" in a wild, back-wood locality. Dr. Morris, who had obtained the situation for me, said:—

"You will receive a liberal salary, but I am sorry to tell you that the teachers in that district usually board around among their pupils, probably a week or two at each house in the neighborhood. It is a custom that I dislike exceedingly, my young friend; but, comfort yourself with the thought that you will soon be able to teach in schools of a higher grade. I think the exercise—for you will have long walks—will be of great benefit to you."

After jouncing along in the old, rickety stage for many hours, we were finally landed on the veranda of "Clifford Hotel." Mine host invited me into the parlor and introduced me to an uncouth-looking Scotchman, named James Walford, the president of

Clifford school-board. He took his clay pipe from his mouth, and said, as he eyed me severely:

"How do you do, school ma'am? I've been a lookin' for ye all day; but sakes alive! you are too little to lick them ere big lads and lasses over yender. I live three miles from here, Miss; but if you can walk and carry your other baggage, I'll just take your trunk on my back, and we'll be there in a jiffy,"

I informed him that I could not walk so far and carry my shawl, satchel, books, and band-box; that I would remain where I was until a carriage could be procured.

"Wall, Miss Idyl, then I'll send John over this arternoon, if ye're too proud to walk. He'll be here afore night, I reckon," he replied; then, after smoking vigorously for five minutes longer, he slammed the door and left me. I was half suffocated with tobacco-smoke and laughter. Later in the day, the sound of voices, on the street, attracted my attention. Having nothing better to do than to listen, I was entertained by the following conversation.

"I say, Bill, she is consarned purty, and I mean to git Walford to interduce me!"

"You sha'n't neither, Jack, fur I'll set my cap fur her myself;" chimed in another gruff voice.

"P'shaw, boys, she's like them ere banty hens at

the fair, t'other day,—good fur nothing but to look at. She'd do fur a doll-wife, to be dressed up and put in some rich man's parlor; but fur such hard-work-in' farmers like us, no good."

"That's so, Dick. She'd only be a damage to poor fellers like us,—a clog and draw-back all our lives!" said another.

"Hurrah! boys, what a smart speech for Jim Cobden!" "Three cheers for him!" shouted a dozen voices.

"I say, boys, what are you debating about?" asked a deep, rich voice.

"Why, Star Leslie, we're discussing the merits of the new school-ma'am in the tavern yonder. She's purty, but a rale little dwarf. I say she ought to be taken to the World's Fair, as a match fur Tom Thumb; only she haint so nimble on foot, for she's kinder lame."

"Hush! John Black, dare to say another word about her, and I'll fight you on the spot! She is some fairy wood-nymph. I saw her in the stage, and one glance at her intelligent face convinced me that precious things are done up in small bundles. Please leave her to me, and I'll get up, by Jove, just such a flirtation with the fay, as I did with handsome Millic Peace last year!"

"Yes," answered the second speaker, "we all re-

member how you used to kiss her at apple-cuts. We allers said she was too nice to be kissed by your bearded mouth, too. The poor gal half broke her heart after you went off, Star Leslie."

"There! I stand convicted, William; but come, let us go and have a game at mark, boys! The one who wins shall have the school-ma'am; for, you know, I'm bound to keep the *Peace* still."

"All right, Star! Come on!" and their voices died away in the distance, just as the rumbling of wheels was heard, and mine host announced that Mr. Walford's carriage was waiting.

It was nightfall when we reached the farm-house, in which the President of the Board resided. It was situated in the centre of an open field, which was surrounded by a dense forest of beech and maple-trees. One large, square room answered for kitchen, dining-room, nursery, parlor. There were several children playing about, while their mother was trying to quiet a crying baby. Her face and manners were exceedingly repulsive. I shall never forget the harsh voice and unsympathizing words which greeted me as I entered, viz:

"So, ma'am, you've come at last, have you? We've waited and wanted school a long time; but young misses, now-a-days, are such a proud, high-falutin set, it's most impossible to git one to stay here

in the woods. Supper's ready now, and you'd as well make haste and set down, for it'll be cold in a minute. Kate, show the school-ma'am up-stairs; I s'pose she'll have to fix her hair, and primp a little."

We had to climb a ladder, then found ourselves in an unfinished room devoid of doors, curtains, chairs, or wardrobe. A flour barrel, covered with a rough board, served for a table and wash-stand. There was neither looking-glass nor water in the apartment, and Kate said:

"We all wash out-doors in the brook that runs by the house, but I s'pose ladies ar'n't used to that sort of thing, so I'll just run down and fetch some up in a basin."

She did so, saying, as she set it upon the barrel:

"Here's John's pocket-glass and comb. He says you must be very careful of them, and mother wants you to hurry."

I told her I was greatly obliged to her brother, but did not need the comb, and would soon join them at the supper-table.

Mrs. Walford's soiled dress and disheveled hair, rendered her appearance one of slatternly disorder. Her husband sat with both elbows resting upon the table, asking the "blessing." He was minus a coat or vest. The children were pinching each other, and screaming loud enough to drown his voice.

The bill of fare consisted of coffee, corn-cakes and molasses, potatoes, tea, fried bacon, and apple-pie. After we had eaten, my hostess said, looking sharply at me, meanwhile:

"Me and James, and the neighbors, is tired of keepin' the young ones to hum, and hope you'll like them; but it's an awful school to manage. The directors have turned out three teachers within a year, and you'll be right lucky if you stay here a term. Teachers is all a miserable set; and I tell you they ort to be as wise as sarpents and harmless as hawks, as the Scriptur says."

"No, Marg'ret, *doves*, you mean, instead of hawks—but do stop! ye're one of Job's comforters to-night. Let her try her luck; you'll give the poor lass the high-strikes, if you tell her what a bad destrict she's got into," said Mr. Walford, as he lighted that clay pipe which had given me such a headache at the hotel; its odor, and his wife's pleasant gossip were so agreeable, that I concluded to retire early, and asked for a light.

"Here's one," said Mrs. Walford. "I can only spare it till you get ready for bed, for it's all I have, and candles is eighteen cents a pound. We can't afford to burn 'em long. Kate'll go up and fetch it."

The school-house stood next to the roadside. There were no shade trees near it, and the sun

streamed through its curtainless windows until it almost blinded me.

There was an old field several rods distant, which the children used for a play-ground. Scattered here and there were clumps of maple and beech-trees, and the grass was flecked with golden dandelions and blue violets. We all loved this pleasant resort, and repaired thither, on sunny afternoons, with our books, and found it preferable to the hot, dusty school-room.

I did find the children rather difficult to govern, at first; but, after a few weeks, succeeded in maintaining order—was certain of their respect and confidence. From that time until the close of my term, harmony reigned between teacher and pupils in Clifford District, to the astonishment of the inhabitants.

I next boarded at Patrick O'Flanigan's. He was Secretary of the School Board, therefore I hoped to find things more like living in his house, but was sadly disappointed. Said he, on meeting me at the door:

"Come in, ye're intirely wilcome, it's that ye are. God bless yer purty face for comin' so soon! We thought ye'd feel above us poor folks; but the blessed Vargin help ye, ye a'n't no bigger than our wee bit of a Kitty Ann! Bridget'll do the best she can fur ye I'll warrant."

"That I will indade be afther doin'!" cried his wife, at the same time placing her babe in my arms, whilst she laid away my hat and shawl. She did not return for more than an hour, and I found it easier to manage my entire school than that fretful child.

"Kape it still, if ye can, till I git the tay ready," she said, as she passed through the room; "here's a bit of cake to kape him aisy."

The little tormenter besmeared my fresh purple muslin, my collar and white apron, besides trying to fill my ears, mouth, eyes and hair, full of Indian bread and molasses.

"Supper's a-ready, Misthress Idyl," said the worthy Secretary. "Sit ye doon, sit ye doon, an' help yersel to potatoes! Sure, an' they're so small that it takes a dozen to make a mouthful, howiver."

"Take a cup of tay, an' help yersel to the crame. I'm sorry we an't got no bread nor cake to trate ye wid," said his wife, apologetically.

"Niver mind, Biddy, this corn-cake's better'n ye'll git in the ould counthry," rejoined her husband, cheerfully.

The baby's reign was over on the following morning.

Thus, for two weeks I boarded around, staying only a night at each house, growing sicker each day of those dingy, unfinished dwellings. I used to lie and

count the stars through the open rafters—yet those crevices made prime ventilators. The inhabitants of Clifford were mostly the employees of a wealthy gentleman, who owned all the adjoining land for miles. His country residence was about a mile from Mr. Walford's, but I had not seen it. The entire town rang with Colonel Leslie's praise, and, of course, I felt impatient to meet the family; but as not a member of it had called on me, and his children were under the supervision of a governess, I did not expect to enjoy their society, or even to have the pleasure of an introduction.

"Oh, this boarding 'round and 'round! Had I power, I would strike the barbarous custom out of existence. How the sensitive heart shrinks at the idea of such an erratic life! No place in the whole town where you feel free to spend your Sabbaths. Home! the name sounds like a hollow echo to the itinerant teacher. Even the 'Wandering Jew,' Bedouin Arab, or gypsy, feels more at ease than this servant *pro bono publico*!" I soliloquized, as I returned to Mr. Walford's one evening. Weary, dejected, almost home-sick, I mounted the miserable ladder, and sat down upon my trunk to rest, but was soon startled out of my unpleasant reverie by my hostess' querulous tones. She spoke so loudly that I could not avoid hearing the following entertaining dialogue:

"Now, James, I say we can't afford to board the school-ma'am any more this season! She's been here a hull week a'ready, an' now she's here agin! Do tell her to go summer's else."

"I don't like to hurt her feelin's, Marg'ret, or I'd do so."

"Of course you don't, you weak-hearted man! but *my* feelin's a'n't nothin' to you. I declare, it's more'n I can stan', so it is!"

"Well, tell her yersel', then, Marg'ret."

"That I will, James, as sure as my name's Marg'ret Walford! She shan't stay here to keep me a work-in' like a slave, to wait on her ladyship any longer. A fine affair, isn't it, for you to give up your bed an' sleep on the hard floor—with the rheumatiz in your shoulder—to please her? It's a crying shame, James, so it is!"

"Wall, wall, wife, I'll leave the matter entirely to you. Come, Rover!" and he walked off toward the woods, followed by his dog. My eyes and cheeks were fairly blazing with shame and anger, as I hastened down to the virago, and said:

"I am sorry that I have made you so much trouble, madam, but will immediately seek another home. I will send for my baggage to-morrow."

"I'm sure ye are welcome to stay to-night," she answered, then went on:

"I didn't mean to drive you out so soon, but eavesdroppers never hear no good of themselves, no how."

I laughed, and rejoined:

"I suppose so; I did not at least. Good evening, Mrs. Walford."



CHAPTER VII

MYRTLE LODGE.

AS I hastened through the dim, old woodlands, in the gathering twilight, ignorant of my destination, the memory of a rumor which I had overheard on the play-ground that morning, that Colonel Leslie's children were without a governess, made my feet fly faster, and my heart beat more quickly, as I resolved to apply for the situation immediately.

"Perhaps I can render the young Leslies all the assistance they will need, mornings and evenings, and still fulfil my engagement with the Clifford School Board. It is worth trying for, at least," I thought, as I left the highway and entered the broad avenue which was bordered with lilacs and syringas.

The fruit trees, on both sides, were white with blossoms. The soft evening breezes wafted a shower of snowy petals around me. Over all, towered the tall chimneys and gables of the Leslie mansion. It was shaded with stately evergreens, and surrounded by velvety lawns and wide graveled walks.

If I had stopped one moment to consider the almost hopelessness of my situation, my courage would have failed me; but, suffice it to say, I was soon standing upon the front piazza waiting for an answer to the door-bell, when a tall, handsome young man, dressed in hunting costume, hurried up the steps and opened the door, with a bow and a smile, and ushered me into the parlor with the following kind greeting:

"Starbert Leslie takes pleasure in welcoming Miss Idyl to Myrtle Lodge. You look surprised—allow me to explain. I saw you at the recent Commencement of Hope College and Female Seminary, and was greatly interested in your essay on Mythology; for, as the astute Dr. Morris said, 'young ladies seldom write on so sensible a subject.' I should have done myself the pleasure of calling on you, had I not been absent most of the time since your advent. You must have had a serious attack of low spirits whilst boarding among those barbarians yonder. I told *pater* and *mater familias*, this morning, that they had better invite you to make your home with us—you see we are without a governess just now—and they said they would do so, providing you would assist my young brothers in their music and studies during their teacher's summer vacation; but, pardon my loquaciousness."

I was received as kindly by the whole family, and,

better still, Myrtle Lodge, with its handsome grounds, will be my home for the summer. The Leslies usually spend their winters in Philadelphia, where they move in the highest circles. The reception I have received is rather flattering, after all I have heard of their exclusiveness. "Of course, their house is elegantly furnished—its inmates are educated and refined. Surely, 'my lines have fallen in pleasant places.'"

It is true that I have taken enough labor and care upon myself for three robust women, for I shall be obliged to study half of each night after the term commences, in order to keep pace with my classmates; yet I *know* that I shall succeed. I must work hard; yes, strain every nerve to its utmost tension, bring every latent talent into full play, for months to come, if I accomplish all that I have planned.

Leila Leslie is a stylish brunette. She is two or three years older than myself; but there is something so winning and sensible in her face, that I feel sure of her friendship.

Colonel Leslie, who is past seventy, still walks erectly and looks many years younger. His memory is unimpaired; therefore the events of his rich and varied life, of his travels and scholarly attainments

combined with his knowledge of human nature, render him exceedingly agreeable—his conversation highly entertaining and instructive.

Mrs. Leslie is younger than her husband by twenty years. She is an invalid and rarely leaves her apartments. On hearing of my arrival, she sent for me. Mr. Starbert escorted me to her parlor, which is by far the pleasantest room in the house.

"You are very welcome—a perfect godsend, in truth—just at this time, my dear, for I have been wondering all day what to do with my three boys all summer. Starbert told me that he would call and see you. I am so glad that he persuaded you to come at once," she said, looking fondly at her son, who answered lightly:

"Yes, *ma mère*, I looked for her over the whole neighborhood"—I afterward learned that this was improvised for the occasion, to smooth my way—"and finally found her just outside the Lodge."

"Well, Miss Idyl, I hope you will consent to remain with us—that is, if you do not prefer '*boarding around*'"—she continued, laughingly.

My heart throbbed with such intense gladness and thankfulness that I could scarcely reply.

Leila finally left me in my pleasant chamber, and I sat a long time thinking over the events of the past three weeks. Of the contrast between Leila, with

her patrician air, her dark, sparkling beauty, her graceful form, which had been clad in costly garments all her young life—of Leila the recipient of every blessing which love and wealth can bestow, and Mary Idyl, old and care-worn, even at the age of fifteen.

3



CHAPTER VIII.

STARBERT LESLIE.—DIARY.

I HAVE been here six months. My term will expire in a fortnight, and, as they do not keep their school open in the winter here, I shall soon return to Hope.

The Leslies, since the first hour of my sojourn with them, have tried to brighten my weary lot and make me feel at home at the Lodge. It is very pleasant to associate with people who possess so much culture and refinement.

After lessons are over, I send the boys to the play-room, and go into the library, or else to Mrs. Leslie's parlor, and spend the remainder of the evening with the elder members of the family. We have music, both vocal and instrumental, blended with reading aloud, or lively discussions on history, the news, literature and the fine arts.

Mrs. Leslie rarely joins in the conversation. She is the central figure of the group, as she leans back upon her white pillows, or reclines in a crimson

chair, attired in her pretty French wrapper ; while her thin hands are folded so quietly, and her pale, but still handsome face, shaded by waves of silver-grey hair, is alight with an interested expression, as she gazes so fondly, even proudly, upon her husband and children.

Leila, like her mother, is sweet and womanly, and I find in her a pleasant companion, a reliable friend. Her sphere is in the home circle, rather than in the thorny paths of erudition. In other words, she is not literary, but I love her dearly.

Starbert is very like his father, but lacks the polish, which a quarter of a century spent in foreign lands has given to Colonel Leslie. He is a little *too kind*, for his polite attentions have annoyed me from the first. I might, however, have liked him better had it not been for a certain conversation which I overheard on the day of my arrival at Clifford Hotel. At times, when Leila is detained by company, or Mrs. Leslie is suffering more than usual, he is left to entertain me. He reads poetry with a grace and pathos which I have not heard equalled ; reproduces Shakespeare with such life-like beauty, that I sit for hours oblivious to everything save the events which "gentle Will" so graphically described ; but, whilst his readings will long be remembered as bright spots in his history, I am sorry that clouds of regret will blend with them also.

Again and again we have been together. I have listened with rapt attention whilst he read my favorite authors, yet his pleasing manners and professions of friendship have failed to dispel my prejudices, for I cannot help perceiving many glaring faults in his character.

For instance, he despises the honest laborer, believes in neither a Heaven nor Hades; says that a man who has enough independence to discard the "nursery tales," as he calls the great truths of the Bible, "and strike out into a new path for himself, instead of following the old beaten one, which has been traveled over eighteen centuries, is the wisest man."

There is a vein of subtile poison disseminated throughout all his reasonings, which renders them dangerous to a questioning mind; and I am sometimes afraid to listen to his sophistry. It is useless for me to endeavor to refute his learned arguments. He laughs at me, and calls me a "little Puritan," when I attempt to do so.

Ah, how like the "apples of the Dead Sea" is this talented, fascinating aristocrat! Beautiful indeed to a casual observer, but at heart arrogant, jealous, profane, cynical, skeptical. "The fine gold has become dim," but not too soon.

Last evening, whilst I sat sewing, Starbert suddenly laid down his book, seized my work, and said:

"Come, Dorcas, I do not work, neither did my father before me, nor shall you whilst an inmate of Myrtle Lodge. See here, little worker, if you do not put up your everlasting stitching and be sociable, I will never again call you the flower spirit; for Flora does not make one nervous by such incessant labor. I often think that you are one of the Fates, or else the spirit of poor cunning Penelope weaving that interminable web by day, only to unravel it again at night, in order to keep all lovers at bay as she did; but, by Jove! you shall finish yours. She never did so, you know. We have but one life to live, why not enjoy it as we pass along its tedious thoroughfares?"

"Granted, Mr. Leslie, but what else can one do *pour passer le temps*?" I asked.

"Why talk, of course. You are always so reserved, that I have never had an opportunity of telling you how much I like you—that you have won my highest regards—that I have been half beside myself for a month with doubts and hopes!" No, do not go, I *will* tell you how very dear you are to me; for, Mary, you have stolen my warmest affections."

"Now, Mr. Leslie, I verily believe you are the

worst joker extant. I do not"—he interrupted me with the following strong declaration:

"Ah, Miss Incredulity, little coral insect, by the gods, I am in earnest! I want to keep you always with me. Will you come into my heart as my wife?"

I told him that I was grateful to him for making my life at Myrtle Lodge so pleasant, that I had enjoyed his society, that I warmly reciprocated his friendship, and begged him to let the matter rest where it was, until we both knew our hearts better; but he said:

"I think I am capable of judging my own heart now. I truly meant every word that I said. I love you devotedly."

"Excuse me, my friend, for again saying that I am incredulous, also that I feel for you a sisterly regard; but really cannot *love* anything excepting my studies and profession. My heart is wedded to my books, and will remain thus until my education shall be completed," I answered, candidly, and turned to leave the parlor.

He detained me, and exclaimed, almost vehemently:

"You are cold, proud, immovable as an iceberg; but you shall listen. I cannot be thwarted in all my future hopes. My love shall not be thrown back as unworthy of your notice. Why do you thus fight

against the appeals of your better nature, and wilfully mar the hopes of a lifetime?"

"Because I do not love you, and I know that we cannot be happy, for you do not consider me your equal; then, again, I do not wish to fetter my thoughts with an engagement." His face became livid with anger, then his eyes suddenly darkened, and he said:

"No, you do not merit my censure. You never encouraged me to hope; but, do you know what I offer you?—what you are refusing? Is it nothing to be lifted from your subordinate position to an equality with one of the proudest families in the land? I know that there is not a vile drop of coquetry in your nature,—yet, is there nothing on earth that can move you?" I was compelled to answer:

"Nothing! My answer was final; still I am very grateful to you for the honor which you have conferred upon me, and will remain your friend as long as I live, no matter how bitterly you dislike me."

"A *friend*!" he muttered; "I will be your eternal enemy if you thus blight the fondest hopes, the purest affections of my manhood, destroy all that might have made life desirable. Yes, I'll be your bitter enemy; for love, like mine, must turn to hatred, or its intensity will consume the heart-strings. Go! But remember that if 'the love of the heart be blighted, it buddeth not again.'"

I was really terrified, as well as disgusted with the farcical scene, and longed to leave him. The thought of his hatred was unpleasant certainly. He finally paused in his rapid walk, and said, with forced calmness:

"Miss Idyl, forget this insane declaration. You are right *sans doute*. We *do* belong to different spheres, and I thank your cool brain for coming to so sensible a conclusion; thank you, too, for reproving me for my folly. *Adieu!* henceforth we meet as strangers. Starbert Leslie never forgives. Good night."

"Good night, Mr. Leslie. I shall still remain your friend, however," I answered, opening the door.

"Your friendship will not be reciprocated, Miss Idyl," he answered, as I ran up stairs.

I passed him this morning in the hall, but he neither deigned to notice my proffered hand nor friendly salutation.

We take breakfast in our own rooms; and, as I carry my lunch to school, I shall not see my admirer again until we meet at dinner.

Just as I was locking the door of my school-house this evening, a party of gay equestrians dashed past me. I recognized Starbert Leslie and a pretty blonde whom I had frequently met at the Lodge among them. Annie Smith has one of those tall, lithe figures so much admired by the masses, is as graceful

as a willow, too. Then her fair complexion, her pale blue eyes, pink cheeks, her glossy, yellow hair, as well as the sweet expression about her mouth, reminded me of a painting which I once saw, representing an angel; but, as Col. Leslie once remarked in my presence:

"Besides a general look of sweetness and innocence, there is about as much expression in her face as there is in a snow-drift or bowl of milk."

There is too much affectation in her composition to please me, but I must not criticize my *rival*.

She came home with the young Leslies and spent the evening. Starbert was all attention to his fair guest, but he scarcely noticed me; still, his coldness did not pain me in the least. I felt too thankful for my indifference toward him to feel any regrets.

Annie seemed to be very happy. She treated us with rippling laughter and pretty nothings in the shape of conversation and fashionable music. Finding it impossible to enjoy her "small talk," I accepted the Colonel's invitation to play a game of chess.

On leaving, Annie came and kissed me on both cheeks, then whispered:

"Oh, I have had such a splendid time! Starbert is perfectly splendid. But why did he seem to avoid you so pointedly? I have heard that you were the

best of friends,—you have not been quarreling, have you? Do tell me what is the matter?"

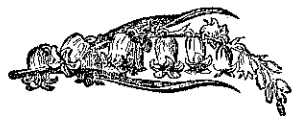
"Nothing, Annie; only your beauty has fascinated him and eclipsed me."

Her cheeks burned with a brighter pink, as she asked:

"Then you are not jealous, Mary?"

"Not in the least, Annie. We are only friends—scarcely that, either—but the horses are waiting, I see. Believe me, Annie, I am glad you have had such a pleasant day. May your entire life be as joyful."

I shall soon bid adieu to this happy home and its inmates. They have urged me to remain with them and spend the coming winter in the Quaker City, but I must return to the seminary next week.



CHAPTER IX.

ANNIE.—DIARY CONTINUED.

"La beauté sans vertu est une fleur sans parfum."

ON returning to Hope Seminary, I received a package of clothes and a letter from my precious mother, also a note from cousin Horace, (the first since I left Gladwood,) informing me that he still felt the deepest interest in my welfare and hoped the time was not far distant when I should reap the full fruition of my fondest hopes; further, that he should never lose sight of me, and would do all he possibly could to bring about a reconciliation between my stern father and myself.

My mother wrote that she daily prayed for my success, and begged me to accept the presents and wear them for her sake. That complete suit of winter goods assisted me greatly in "eking out" my scanty means during the following year. I continued the languages which I had formerly studied, commenced Greek and Spanish, also a higher course of mathematics, and went on with music and oil painting.

My health continued to improve, and the pain entirely left me, although I still walked lame. During the first session I had my teeth, which have always annoyed and disfigured me, straightened. The operation was a painful one, but the dentist was exceedingly kind and patient. I was obliged to wear a band of iron or steel across both my upper and lower front teeth in order to hold them tightly and compel them to remain even, or in their proper places, after the bandages were removed. For months I was scarcely able to eat sufficient to sustain nature, and had it not been for the "hash," which I had formerly disliked, I should have suffered for food. The operation proved a success, and made me look a hundred per cent. more endurable than formerly.

The close of the academical year brought me back to Clifford. The Leslie mansion and environs were as charming as ever. The family appeared delighted to meet me. Starbert was traveling in Europe, thus the only "drawback" to my happiness was removed. I gave the boys private lessons at home, and, as they insisted upon attending my school, I was usually escorted to and from Myrtle Lodge by my three young gallants, who professed the greatest respect and loyalty for their "little teacher."

Leila was often absent for weeks at a time, visiting her young friends, or else the house was full of gay

company, therefore I saw her less than on my first summer at her home, but I found her as amiable and companionable as during our former intercourse; I had more time to study, however. My favorite resort was in Mrs. Leslie's quiet parlor. The Colonel was still a deep student. He only ate one meal with his family; then, after an hour or two, retired to his study and read and wrote until the grey dawn.

One thing troubled me, however, the downfall of poor Annie Smith, who, report said, had been engaged to Starbert Leslie, but had constantly drooped and faded since his departure for Europe. That her father had closed his doors upon the poor girl, I had also heard. It was too true, Annie was an outcast from home and society.

I had known, from our first acquaintance, that she had neither firmness nor decision of character, and feared that she was too trustful. Without a doubt, she had listened to Starbert Leslie's false declarations of affection, and had fearlessly given both body and soul into his unholy keeping. Alas, with all the subtlety of an arch fiend, that tempter had demolished the citadel of her fair fame, then deserted her cruelly!

The heart-broken child was driven from home, but her uncle kindly offered her an asylum in his family, and endeavored to mitigate her sorrows, but blighted

affection and the world's cold neglect and scorn were fast undermining both her health and reason.

Like others, especially my own sex, I at first steeled my heart against her, for I felt that I could not excuse her weakness. I even refused to see the sufferer—until she had sent for me several times—declaring that I was simply doing my duty to myself and my sex.

"Ah, Mary Idyl, who made thee to differ?" asked Mrs. Leslie one evening, after hearing me refuse to go with a friend who had called for me at Annie's request.

"She has asked for you all day, and says she is dying, and I really think you ought to go;" continued Mrs. Leslie. The invalid lady did not dream that her beloved first-born was in fault, for she added, after a pause that was becoming painful:

"Go, dear child, it will do you no harm to visit poor Annie." I kissed her silently and went. The kind aunt, with whom Annie had taken refuge, met me and said:

"God bless you for coming! Poor Annie will not be with us long. Come in, and do not forget that our Saviour said, 'Neither do I condemn thee.'"

I still hesitated, when an unearthly wail, from an adjoining room, with these words:

"Oh, Mary! Will you never speak to me again?" caused me to hasten to the sufferer's bedside.

The icy barriers, which pride and fear of public opinion had thrown around my heart, melted instantly. Mentally asking God's forgiveness, I bent over her tenderly, and kissed her wan face, while my tears fell fast upon my cheeks, but I could not speak. I shall never forget that affecting interview, but I cannot describe it, even now, with calmness.

By the dim night lamp, I saw that she had changed fearfully, that the hectic fever burned fitfully on her white emaciated cheeks, and felt that death would soon remove her from us.

At her request, I laid aside my hat, and sat beside her. She soon relapsed into a fit of coughing; and for many minutes I feared she would never speak again; but she rallied finally, and as I put aside the damp hair from her faded brow, whispered:

"Please raise me up, I am so tired." I lifted her head upon my shoulder and finally soothed her into calmness. During the night she told me, with heart-breaking sobs and bitter tears, that her destroyer's name was Starbert Leslie—(I had guessed as much previously)—that she now knew that he never had loved her; "else why this cruel desertion?" she asked; then continued:

"He says that you slighted him last summer, and swears by the gods that he will win your affections, then trample upon your heart, in order to heal his

wounded self love. Alas, Mary, I still worship my destroyer! How implicitly I have trusted him, heaven only knows! He spurned my wild idolatry—my white heart became blackened—I fell,—

‘Fell like the snow-flakes from heaven to hell.’

And now he hates me. Oh, Mary, Mary! he *hates* me! When I learned that he was gone, I prayed wildly for death, but it would not come. I procured poison, but something dashed the phial from my nervous hand; tried to fling myself under the cars but an unseen power held me back. They drove me from home; and, in a frenzy of despair, I fled to the river, (below the old school-house, where I had often played when a little innocent child, joyous as the birds which sang among the laurel bushes,) and, with a hurried prayer for forgiveness, sprang into the placid stream. Oh!” and a shuddering thrill seemed to pass over the wretched girl, but she continued:

“As I sank back into the eddying water, the desire to live, for *another’s* sake, took possession of my mind, and made me pray as earnestly for life as I had pleaded for death an hour before.

“I arose to the surface and clung to the willows, which bend over the margin of the stream, and finally drew myself up the slippery bank, choosing life with its heavy burden of disgrace to the grave of a suicide and murderess. I was so benumbed with cold

that it was nearly dark when I reached my aunt’s house. My dripping clothes and shivering form told the story of my afternoon’s work, and they pitied me too much for reproaches; but this consuming fever is the result of my mad attempt to put an end to my life, and I shall die;” then her mind wandered, for she murmured:

““His words were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords. For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then would I have hidden myself from him; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company.””

I endeavored to quiet her, but she still moaned:

““But thou, O God, shalt bring’ him ‘down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. Let death seize upon him and let him go down quick into hell?’ Yes, I will curse him!” she screamed, loudly. When she became calmer, I slowly repeated the following beautiful words:

“As for me, I will call upon God, and he shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.”

As I finished, she sprang up in the bed, exclaiming:

"No, not that! Say, rather, 'My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me. Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest! Lo, I would wander afar off and remain in the wilderness; I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.'" Her face worked spasmodically, and she tossed wildly from side to side for a few minutes, then went on:

"I cannot pray! The darkness of the grave even now overwhelms me! The future is more fearful than the present. 'Save me, O God! for the waters overflow me!' Mary Idyl! are you here?"

"Yes, Annie, I will not leave you."

"Then bring my Bible. That is right; now put your hands on it and swear that you will never love *him*. When I am gone he will return, and oh tell me that you will not marry the destroyer of Annie Smith." I placed my trembling hands on the sacred volume; then, in the excitement of the moment, solemnly promised her that I would never countenance the base libertine. She passed a sleepless night, crying at intervals:

"Oh, when will it be morning? I want to see my mother. Mary, do go to her and beg her to pardon

her dying child," she exclaimed, as I left her the next morning. It was Saturday, and, as usual, I had a holiday.

I bent my steps toward Clifford House, and made known my errand. I urged them to go to their erring but repentant daughter immediately, and receive her once more into their hearts. Her father groaned and answered:

"My poor Annie! how I once idolized her! I would have given my life for her a year ago; but she has disgraced us all! Miss Idyl, the whole affair unmans me." His wife came slowly to his side, and in a low tone said:

"Husband, I nursed her in these arms; she was our first-born, and my heart still yearns for her. Alas! I shall go down to the grave 'sorrowing' for my poor Annie! It has been worse than a thousand deaths to suffer as I have done since she was driven from home. Shall we go now?"

"Yes, mother, but curses on the vile wretch who turned all our joy to bitterness," he answered. They carried her home that evening, and the next morning, when I called, on my way to church, she lay in her own room, looking more contented than when I saw her last. Her mother was reading part of the beautiful fifty-first Psalm:

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy

loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

"Against thee and thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Hide thy face from my sins and blot out mine iniquities.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

"Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

"Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

As I was leaving the room, she called me back and held out her hand smilingly. I bent over her and kissed her white cheek, while she whispered:

"Mary, I forgive Starbert Leslie; yes, forgive him, as I hope to be forgiven. Your vow—" I interrupted her with,—

"Is sacred. I shall never break it, Annie;" then

left, fearing to excite her and bring on another paroxysm of coughing.

I called again after services. She was sleeping calmly, looking so white and peaceful; and beside her, in a roll of linen and flannel, lay a little wailing babe. Her mother sat weeping near the bed, but did not look up as I entered. The room was too warm and close for respiration. I stepped softly across the room and opened the window. As I did so, the westering rays of the sun fell upon the face of a *corpse*!

Yes, Annie was *dead*! Her stiffening fingers still clasped both of her infant's tiny hands with a vice-like grasp; no wonder she wanted to take it with her, and clung to it whilst passing through the dark valley. Thank Heaven! A pitying Jesus heard her last orison, and, before the next morning dawned upon the earth, carried the little offspring of sin to its mother's arms. How glad I was! It would never suffer as its mother had. "It was well with the child."

O woman! thou art justly named frailty; but again, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay it!" The blood of thy victim, O libertine, cries unto heaven for justice. Remorse will prey upon thy heart-strings like the Promethean vulture.

Poor Annie! we laid her beneath the great elm

tree in the quiet church-yard; laid her down in the robes she had designed for her wedding. Alas! she was the bride of death;—left her with her sleeping babe in her arms, sinless as its own white apparel. What a hard covering that coffin lid made; yet they did not feel it;—heaped the fresh earth and sods upon the grave, and left them to their dreamless repose.

May they rest peacefully.



CHAPTER X.

THE GOAL IS REACHED.

ON the day of my departure from Clifford, Colonel Leslie asked if I intended to take a higher course of study after leaving Hope, "because," said he, "I am one of the trustees of O. College, and will assist you if it is your desire to enter that institution."

I told him that I was grateful to him for his proffered aid, but was determined to educate myself by my own exertions; also, that our Seminary had, in its gift every four years, a scholarship, as a reward for the best Latin Thesis, and it was my intention to compete for it.

"Bravo! my dear, independent Flora"—he usually called me Flora—"yet, if you should at any time need a friend, or pecuniary aid, do not hesitate for a moment to call on me. I shall always remain your friend. God bless and protect you, and grant that you may yet write your name upon immortal tablets—upon Fame's highest pinnacle. I prophesy a glo-

rious future for you, little girl, and am satisfied that you will richly deserve it." I did not reply; and after a pause he continued:

"Yet, Flora, ambitious elf, do not forget God in your haste to be wise."

"I shall try to remember your advice, sir."

"I think you will. Another thing I wish to say to you: After you leave school you shall come back to Myrtle Lodge and feel at home with us. When we return to Philadelphia you can make your *debut* with Leila, and have a good time in general. A year will soon pass, too, so do not be impatient. *Au revoir.*"

I had kept pace with the senior class during my absence, and was glad that incessant brain-labor would enable me to reach the long-desired goal in a few months; but intense application to my studies, as well as lack of recreation, soon undermined my health, and I was prostrated by a slow nervous fever. My physician and attendants positively forbade all mental exertion, but I foiled them by secreting my beloved books under my pillow. Thus I prepared my tasks daily. I was determined to be thoroughly educated. A superficial course of study I heartily despised.

After a few weeks, however, I rallied, and again resumed my usual routine of class exercise. Ambition alone kept me from sinking, for I was so weak

and ill during the remainder of the session that I daily feared a relapse of my fever. The principal and teachers remonstrated in vain.

"You are committing suicide," they said; but I had one answer for all their well-meant expostulations, viz:

"I must go forward! I will finish the academical course this year. It is useless for you to talk to me. I am grateful, but dare not slacken my pace; nothing but death shall turn me from my purpose."

The Fates seemed to conspire against me, however, for owing to the hard times and the extra expense of a physician, I was compelled to rent a small room in a neighboring garret and "board myself."

There, with only the companionship of my textbooks, and a few old tomes from the extensive library of the Seminary, I searched the time-honored records of erudition, starved, hoped, prayed for strength and endurance, and clung with unwavering pertinacity to my mottoes, "*Nil desperandum*" and "*Labor omnia vincit.*"

Sometimes, for days together, I had only bread and water to subsist on. The weather was intensely cold—I went there in January—yet I could not afford a fire. How much I suffered from hunger, cold, sleeplessness and pain I shall never dare to write. Tears which I cannot repress, even now, rise from my heart

at the bare recollection of those dreary, weary days ; but, with starvation staring me in the face, I said, mentally :

"I will die sooner than humble my pride enough to beg for my father's assistance, or for the aid of my friends at Myrtle Lodge."

If the faculty had known of my extreme necessity, they would probably have assisted me, but they never dreamed of such a state of affairs under the time-honored walls of Hope Seminary. There were other friends in the school who would have helped me, had I made known my straightened circumstances, but I would not make my wants public.

One evening as I sat in my dark, cheerless attic, turning the matter over in my mind, hopelessly wondering how I should obtain food and light, an old idea again took root in my tired brain.

I had several prize compositions which I would send to the editor of the *Philadelphia Weekly*, with a full statement of my situation. He surely would not refuse a trifling compensation for the poems on which I had spent so much time and thought. Days passed ; I was on the verge of starvation. One night I hastened down to the post-office, through a blinding snow storm, and found a letter from Philadelphia in my box.

"Oh, I am so glad!" I thought, as I tore off the

envelope. "It must be from the editor of the *Weekly*!" But I soon found, to my great disappointment, that it was for a lady of my own name, who resided in the city.

Of course I wrote an apology and forwarded it to her residence immediately.

The next day an answer came from the proprietor of the *Weekly*. It stated that he had more poetry on hand than he could publish in a year ; also, that he "did not pay for fugitive pieces." I sat down and wrote to my mother, but I had very little hope that my father would allow her to help me, even if she told him all—I knew she would not do that. But I could not place myself under obligations to Starbert Leslie's father, even then, although I was quite certain that help would be forthcoming.

Faint with hunger, I sought my chamber, where, with my shawl wrapped closely around me, I walked hastily back and forth, in order to keep myself warm while I studied my lessons for the next day. The wolf of despair came nearer showing his gaunt visage then, than ever before, but I clung desperately to my Latin motto and fought him resolutely for hours.

A rap on my door startled me, and on opening it I found a strange lady in the passage. She bowed and said:

"You are my namesake, Mary Idyl, I believe."

I answered in the affirmative and invited her to enter. She declined, politely, but shivered as she gazed in through the open door and saw the bare walls and floor and curtainless window.

"Is it possible that you sleep in this cheerless apartment?" she asked, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, I not only sleep here, but make this room my home when I am not at my recitations."

"But, child, you do not live here without a fire, do you? Why your hand is like ice!"

"I certainly do, though; for, like many of our students, I board myself—and—I cannot afford a stove and fuel."

It ended in Miss Idyl taking me home with her for a week. She has a delightful house, and one who has never lived on cold food and slept on a straw couch for months, can scarcely realize how much I enjoyed her sumptuous repasts, or how sweetly I reposed on my downy bed at "The Grove." It almost seemed like a dream. I was afraid to open my eyes when I awoke on the morning after my arrival, lest all of my pretty and tasteful surroundings should vanish, and leave me in my comfortless study in true Cinderella fashion.

Miss Idyl is my father's first cousin. She is about forty-five years old, the sole survivor of a large fam-

ily. Her features are sharp and irregular, and she is tall and angular. Her chief charm lies in the benevolent smile about her rather large mouth, which kindles her whole face into beauty.

When my lady bountiful finally allowed me to depart, she filled the carriage so full of baskets that I could barely find room for myself, and I did not know that the packages which crowded me so were for myself until they were left in my room.

Some fairy had surely been there, too, during my absence; for lo! a red-hot stove greeted my arrival. There was a bright piece of drugget upon the floor, and the square pine table was covered with a scarlet "spread;" while an easy rocking-chair stood near. The window, which had formerly let in so much cold, rejoiced in a new curtain. On the shelf beneath it she had placed an earthen jar containing a few slips of geranium and a tea rose in full bloom.

Then, when those baskets were brought in, what stores of bread, cakes, eggs, cheese, canned fruit, pickles, preserves, ham, apples, pies and groceries I found! Surely God had heard my wild prayer for help.

Whilst putting away my provisions, I espied a lamp as well as a can of burning fluid under the table.

"Thank fortune!" I ejaculated, "no more tallow-dips, and cheerless evenings for me!"

Later in the day Mike, the "post-boy," stumbled up-stairs and said:

"Here's a lether for ye's, Miss. The Howly Vargin grant ye good news. It come, Miss, in care of the good Dochter Morris, bless his clever soul."

The missive, which was from my mother, breathed the warmest love for me. It inclosed a message from my father—the first that I had received from him since I left Daisydell—and a twenty dollar bill, "to bring you home and purchase a white dress for the exhibition," he wrote. My mother added:

"Come home when the term closes, Mary. Your father has forgiven you. He had met with so many losses that he really did not feel able to educate you, and he could not bear to have you go out into the world as a teacher. I think, however, when he found that his threat to disown you, for your disobedience, only fanned the flame of your ambition, that his anger slowly gave place to admiration for your firmness of character and indomitable perseverance."

The school year finally closed with a gala exhibition. Looking back through the mists of the dead years, I can very clearly remember one leaf of that day's exercises, viz, the reading of a Latin Thesis by myself.

I can still see my thin colorless face, shaded by heavy curls of golden-brown hair, which fell half-way

to my feet, and my white dress, devoid of ornaments, except a single cluster of tea roses at my throat.

The President handed me my diploma, and told me that I had earned a scholarship embracing the entire course at O. College, and congratulated me on the successful termination of my academical career at Hope, which was, he prophesied, only a prelude to higher attainments in the future.



CHAPTER XI.

AN OPERATION.

AFTER the exercises of the day were over, my cousin again spirited me away to the "Grove" "to rest," she said, and after supper she made me tell her my plans for the future.

I did so, and among the rest mentioned my long-cherished desire to have my limb straightened. I knew that it could be done by having the cords slightly cut, then held straight by instruments of steel for a season.

The disease had left me, but the cords were still somewhat contracted, and I limped awkwardly. My homely gait had been a source of mortification for years, for my schoolmates had been kind enough to mimic me in my presence almost daily, and ask why walked I so ungracefully. After a pause, my cousin said:

"See here, little namesake, we have an excellent surgeon in this city. He is widely known as one of the most scientific men of the age. He has performed

several successful operations of late in our hospitals. I'll have him call to-morrow and see if your wish can be carried out with perfect safety. So don't think about it again to-night, but come to the piano and play something from Haydn, if you are not too tired."

I did as she bade me, or tried to, but could not sleep at all that night for my great joy. On the following day I was quite prepared to see Dr. King enter with his instruments of torture—an iron-shoe and bandages—and, suffice it to say, the painful operation was successfully performed.

I had not dreamed of the tedious weeks of suffering and of inactivity which must intervene before I should be able to walk without the aid of crutches; but my kind hostess would not allow me to fret about it. I learned to love my noble, whole-souled benefactress almost as dearly as I did my own mother.

Once, she said to me, on returning from a visit to an orphan school:

"Some maiden ladies allow their affections to center upon pets—cats and poodles, for instance—for, believe me, it is impossible to crush out the heart's love entirely. It will flow off into some channel, either worthy or unworthy."

Then, looking at me curiously, as if divining my thoughts, she laughingly continued:

"Yes, I marvel at myself sometimes, for like all

young girls, *I* once had my day-dreams. Well, the prince never came." Then, with another quizzical look out of her happy grey eyes, she added :

"No, little namesake, he did not appear; consequently I have neither 'been in love' nor 'engaged.' I simply accepted my fate, enjoyed my freedom, did my duty as well as I knew how, and have, thus far, had more leisure and real peace of mind than all the married ladies whom I know intimately. I have learned to believe, that to care for the sorrowful and afflicted and God's poor, is my destiny,—that God raised me up for this very purpose. I am glad, too, that He accounts me worthy of such a glorious mission, and has also given me a desire and ample means to carry out His will."

As she concluded a holy peace seemed to rest upon her countenance, and her eyes had in them such a far-off look, that despite her forty-five years, she only needed an aureola about her head in order to remind one of some saint of the mediæval ages. And I thought she must have caught a glimpse of the "Delectable Mountains," of which Bunyan wrote in his "Pilgrim's Progress."

As I still looked at her beaming face, this beautiful verse of the Apocalypse came across my mind :

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which

follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb,—for they are without fault before the throne of God."

"For her sake, I shall always love the much-abused but noble class of women called 'Old Maids,'" I thought, as she begged my pardon for having talked so long about herself, and kissed me good-night.

In July my father visited us, and concluded his treaty of peace by carrying me home to Daisy-dell; and, after an absence of nearly four years, my mother's kisses fell upon my forehead like a new baptism.

Ah, home is a good resting place after all! There are none who love us so devotedly as our friends who reside under the roof-tree. Why is it that the young fledgelings are so willing to leave the ark of childhood?



CHAPTER XII.

A WEDDING.

"How strange it will be, love, how strange when we two
 Shall be what all others become;
 You frigid and faithless, I cold and untrue,
 You thoughtless of me, and I careless of you;
 Ah, me! how strange it will be."

MY limb continued weak so long that August was half gone ere I was able to fulfil my promise to visit the Leslies. Leila wrote:

"After waiting vainly for you until the last of July, we were obliged to employ another governess *pro tempore*, for the boys were growing so unmanageable that I could no longer keep them in check.

"Mamma is at a water-cure establishment in New York, and father is often absent. Starbert still remains abroad, so you see I am very lonely. Do come immediately, my heart-friend, and make me a long visit; for I really need your dear companionship. Oh, I forgot to state in a former letter, that your cousin, Horace Alton, has become the pastor of our

church here in Clifford. He spends a good deal of time at the Lodge.

"I have mentioned your intended visit, and he is not only delighted, but impatient to see you. I shall send a carriage to meet you on Friday.

"Do not, if you value my love, disappoint

"Your LEILA."

On the same day I received a note from Horace, urging me to accept Leila's invitation.

"I have missed you sadly all these years, little cousin, and want to see you badly.

"Allow me to congratulate you on your successful career at Hope Seminary," he added.

During my journey to Clifford, I could not help picturing to myself his surprise on seeing my even teeth—I no longer wore a band of steel over them—and improved manner of locomotion. Alas! these day-dreams, how they vanish into emptiness!

His demeanor toward me was reserved, even cold, I thought. He seemed to have lost all interest in either my appearance or advancement in knowledge.

My playing elicited neither remark nor sign of approval. Before the evening was half over I felt that my presence annoyed him; therefore, excusing my-

self to the company, I ran up to the school-room to see my former pupils, who were busily preparing their lessons for the next day.

After conversing with their teacher, a Miss Marian Day, for a few minutes, I went up to my old room, but somehow the governess' face haunted me. Her beauty was of a type entirely new to me. The rich coloring of her dimpled face, and her large eyes shading into amber, as well as the long amber-colored hair, reminded me of one of Rubens' pictures.

She looked as if she thought all the world was as innocent as herself—as if everything with which she had come in contact had been pure.

I was strangely interested in the frank, winsome Marian from the first.

Later in the evening Leila came to me, and with her clinging arms around my neck, she told me that she was to be married to my Cousin Horace in a fortnight.

Ah! she little knew with what a struggle I congratulated her, nor what it cost me to officiate at her wedding as bridesmaid.

Well, it is rather trying to have a beloved one wrest your crown from your head and wear it in your sight,—but it was over at last, and the happy couple started off on their wedding tour.

Horace had for eight years seemed to belong espe-

cially to me. He had been brother, friend, counselor, teacher, and I was glad that he would never know how hard I had striven to make myself worthy of his esteem, to measure up to his standard.

He had been my *ideal* from childhood. A book that he had praised, or a song, or flower or color was precious to me. I had regarded him as a dear brother, and had tried to improve myself for his sake. His approval had been the main-spring of my ambition for years; had colored and brightened my mental labors. It was rather trying to have him turn to another, just as I had begun to feel myself on an equality with him.

True, I had never thought of his marrying me, for our friendship was purely Platonic, and he had neither flattered nor deceived me; but notwithstanding this reflection, it grieved me to lose my valued friend, my critical correspondent.

And still, after all, I had something to be thankful for. If my child-heart had not clung to him with such tenacity, if I had not prized his good opinion and longed for his approval, I might still have been an ignorant, crippled girl, wholly devoid of ambition.

Thus, from our first meeting I traced the sequence of events, and in all saw a Father's guiding hand. If I had not been striving so hard to please Horace, I

might have listened to Starbert Leslie's false declarations.

"Yes, I thanked God that I had loved Horace as a brother, then put him as entirely out of my thoughts as if he had never been a part of them—both sleeping and waking—and when the happy couple started on their journey, I bade adieu to the Leslies, and hastened back to Daisy-dell farm-house, feeling that Myrtle Lodge could be my home no longer.



CHAPTER XIII.

NIL DESPERANDUM.

I HAD, during my summer vacation, revised and copied all of my best attempts at prose and poetry, with the intention of having them published in book-form.

A country editor pronounced my work better than many of the miscellaneous collections of the day. At his suggestion, I forwarded the manuscript to a celebrated publisher in New York. He returned it immediately with the following brief note:

"We regret that we cannot undertake your new work. Books of that ilk do not sell."

"Well, another ship has gone down; has been wrecked on the rocks of Disappointment," I said, as I tore the pages into shreds, one by one, and threw them into the old-fashioned, open fire-place, and with an almost fiendish exultation saw them dissolve into gas and ashes.

I had received several offers of situations in district schools during the past summer, but had refused

them on account of my inability to walk; and, as I had nothing else to do, I sat down again and wrote a serial entitled "Phoenix."

It certainly was an improvement on my former attempt at authorship, and I began to feel hopeful again.

As I felt too nervous and impatient to await an answer by mail, I carried the MS. to New York and endeavored to find a publisher.

Like all young authors, I entered each publishing house with the joyful hope of soon becoming famous, but, alas! like many others, left with words of refusal ringing in my ears.

At length I found one who promised to read my story, and, at least, give me his candid criticisms. I left it with him and went back to my hotel to await his answer; but day after day of fruitless expectation intervened. I called at his office but was told that he was out of town. Those hours of suspense were terrible. Truly my heart grew sick with "hope deferred."

One evening at the supper-table I encountered the steady gaze of a well-known pair of eyes, and an hour later received a note from Starbert Leslie requesting an interview.

As I went into the parlor he came toward me with outstretched hands and the old thrilling smile, exclaiming:

"The gods be thanked for being so propitious as to give me another glimpse of the flower spirit!"

I bowed coldly, and, without noticing his proffered hand, asked him to be seated.

"Why, Flora, are you not glad to see your erratic Star once more?" he asked, while the light slowly faded from his face. I did not answer, and he added:

"By Jove! Mary Idyl, this is too bad! I will not receive such a cold reception! You really shall shake hands with me, for it has been an age since we parted? Yes, an eternity to me!"

I extended my hand in silence, and he asked:

"How have you enjoyed yourself all these years, Miss Mary?"

"I have been too busy to be very unhappy, Mr. Leslie; but when did you reach home?" I answered, evasively.

"In November. Philadelphia is tame compared with Paris, and I missed *you* too much to enjoy myself at the Lodge even for a day. By-the-by, what a goosey Leila was to settle down as the wife of an insipid, milk-and-water country clergyman."

I told him I supposed that he was tired of sight-seeing.

Au contraire, petite; I am again *en route* for Europe," he answered; then asked if I were still teaching.

I told him that I was not.

"I am glad of it; but—pardon my inquisitiveness—are you residing in this city? If not, may I ask why you are staying so long in this modern Babylon, Miss Idyl?"

"For my own pleasure, I suppose, Mr. Leslie. One must see New York, you know, at least once in a lifetime."

"Shall I tell you why you are here, Mary?" he asked, teasingly.

"Well, yes, if you know, Mr. Leslie."

"Your publisher's decision. Am I not correct?"

"Mr. Leslie"—and I arose with evident displeasure—"I am weary of being catechised."

"But, surely, you might trust a friend who takes a deep interest in your welfare—no, you must not go—be seated, and I will tell you something that you ought to know, Miss Idyl."

I resumed my seat with a decided frown.

"I was walking down Broadway yesterday and saw you enter a certain office. After you had left I went in and heard the clerks laughing and talking about your unhappy face, your impatience as well as perseverance. The head man of the firm, Mr. A., laughed too, then said, jocosely:

"I hav'n't the least notion of reading that manuscript, boys, and think that dodge about going out of town did very well; still we must not keep her on

expense any longer. Take this package, John, and carry it to her to-morrow. She is at the United States Hotel. It pains me to tell you this, Miss Mary, but, as a friend, I cannot refrain from—" I interrupted him with—"Mr. Leslie, you once declared that you would be my eternal enemy!"

"And Miss Idyl as positively affirmed that she would always remain my friend," he retorted, with a sardonic smile; then went on, "but little Flora, for mercy's sake, do not retaliate now. I did not mean what I said, I was piqued at your cold indifference. I loved you madly, but you cruelly repulsed my affection, and said you must finish your education before you could listen to any proposal. You have no longer any excuse for refusing a love which has been yours for years."

I sprang to my feet, and with flashing eyes and burning cheeks exclaimed:

"Flatterer! How dare you speak to me in this manner? I will not listen to such a false assertion!"

He still continued his harangue:

"Mary, I have sought to forget your unkindness by travel and dissipation, but in vain. I love you still."

I could not help saying:

"Well, Mr. Leslie, I would advise you to drink of the Lethe." He bit his lips and, after a pause, said:

"Mary, 'to err is human; to forgive, divine.' I will not give you up. You despise me, I know; but I will win your heart yet. If I have to move heaven and earth, I will conquer your insane dislike!"

"Mr. Leslie will accomplish the latter feat sooner, I fear. But I sincerely hope that he will not be more successful than Archimedes was."

"I shall only use the lever called love. I know that I am wild and reckless and irreligious; but you profess to be a Christian, Mary. You and you alone can save me; can teach me to become pure and good like yourself. Then think how beautiful life will be to us. We will go to the old world and wander among its renowned cities and works of art as long as you wish, then settle down wherever you please. My fortune shall be at your command; my whole life one endeavor to make you happy. I will never oppose you in anything except this eternal brain-labor, which is eating up your young life. Once more, will you consent to be my wife, my savior?"

"Once for all, Mr. Leslie, no! I will never be your wife."

He arose and walked across the room with rapid strides.

If I had not felt that he was *acting*, I should have been sorry for his defeat; as it was, I felt only contempt.

He finally paused, and I went up to him and said:

"Mr. Leslie, I have a story to tell you. Will you listen to it?"

He eyed me with an air of conscious innocence, then took a seat near me. I told him the story of poor Annie Smith, and concluded with the words:

"I promised her with my hands on the *Holy Bible* that I would not marry her murderer. God has registered my vow in Heaven."

I watched him narrowly during my recital, but his countenance had been too well schooled for any exhibition of feeling.

After a few moments of silence, he answered:

"Yes, it is all too true; yet if Annie had been as pure and strong as yourself, it would not have terminated so sadly; and I should not have become the licentious man you see before you. As I said before, you are the only woman who can save me."

"Say not so. The world is full of better females than myself. Christ, too, is ever ready to save unto the uttermost. My weak prayers shall be yours, but I will not break my vow to the dead. Good-bye, Mr. Leslie." And I held out my hand. He did not take any notice of it, but said, as he moved toward the door:

"Good-bye—I will not prolong this fruitless inter-

view." Then, with the old careless bow and smile, withdrew.

I went into my chamber and found a package and note upon the table. My manuscript had been returned. I tore open the note and read:

"Really, child, we have no time to examine your serial carefully; but it is our opinion that it will not sell.

"Very respectfully,

"A——."

I concluded to remain another day in the city and try to obtain a situation as copyist or teacher.

My efforts were entirely without success.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE TEMPTATION.

THAT evening I received a note from Mr. Leslie, couched in the following language:

"I have followed you around all day, and fully understand your unhappy situation. Your only hope for the future is in me.

"Only in my great love will you find rest, ease, home, happiness. The Fates are against you. Thwart them by going with me to-morrow."

Oh, how at that moment I wished he had never met Annie!

"Yes, I have signally failed in everything; but to relent now will be madness. By becoming his wife I can assist the dear ones at home, and they need help, for the farm produces less and less every year, and my brother must be educated, too,—the temptation is indeed very strong, but I will not yield."

An hour later he sent another missive, stating that he was still awaiting my decision; that this was my only chance of seeing the glories of the old world.

He was sure that I would go with him. My reply was as follows :

"MR. LESLIE,—I will die of starvation sooner than perjure my vow! I will never be your wife. Neither will I see you again before you sail, so help me God!"

Having dispatched my answer by a servant, I locked my door and endeavored to sleep, but was startled by a sad, sepulchral voice, and lost Annie stood before me in her grave clothes, whispering :

"Oh, I am so glad you do not love him—that you are true to poor Annie!"

Then she laid her icy hand upon my breast—I can feel its cold touch yet—and exclaimed :

"I am going to examine your heart, Mary;" then, after a pause, she added :

"No, you do not care for him; you are true to lost Annie."

Her dead hand seemed to paralyze me. I could not move a muscle. After a pause which seemed an age, she murmured :

"I could not rest in my grave for fear you would yield, but I now know that your strong will is going to conquer, to resist the wiles of the tempter."

Then she pressed her clay-cold lips to my own and left me. I finally threw off the dreadful incubus and

opened my eyes, when only the white moon-light met my frightened gaze.

I sprang out of bed and turned on the gas. As I did so, I noticed a letter at my feet. It had evidently been flung over the transom. It read :

"MY OWN IDOL,—We can be married on ship-board. The *Ætna* sails at 7 A.M. I know you will come, my darling. Hasten, and in the joys of new scenes we will forget the sorrows and follies of the past.

"I await your coming ;—oh, so impatiently! You will not disappoint

"Your ever-loving

"STAR. LESLIE."

It was written on the blank leaf of my answer to his first letter. With a pencil I immediately wrote beneath it :

"If Mr. Star. Leslie troubles me again, either by word or note, I will send for a policeman.

"MARY IDYL."

I tossed it back through the transom, feeling confident that he was still near my door, and again the identical sheet of paper fell into my room ; then my persecutor's heavy footsteps sounded along the cor-

ridors and down the stairs. I would have known his step among a thousand.

His parting words were:

"Star. Leslie will be revenged if it takes him ten years to accomplish his purpose."

It was still very early in the morning. After preparing for my journey, I leaned my head on my pillow and was soon in dreamland again.

Suddenly a woman stood beside me, weeping wildly and begging me to tell her where she might find Mr. Leslie. This time the vision did not vanish. A young girl was standing near me in the dim light of the tardy morning.

"Who are you?" I asked, noting her rare loveliness and the wealth of reddish brown hair which enveloped her form like a vail of sunshine.

"Marian—Starbert Leslie's wife," she answered, as she clung to me pleadingly. I was too much astonished to reply, and she sobbingly exclaimed:

"Oh! tell me where I may find my husband!"

"Your *husband*?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, we were married three days ago in this city. I was on my way home to Boston, to spend my vacation; but I met Starbert in the cars and he persuaded me into a clandestine marriage.

"You see his proud, old father would never have consented to his union with a poor governess. I

have not seen him since yesterday morning, but the porter saw him talking with you in the parlor, and says he brought you a letter from him last evening. Tell me quickly where he has gone or I shall go mad! For the love of Heaven do not keep me in suspense any longer!"

I took hold of her cold hands and put back the disheveled hair from her pure, low forehead, and recognized Marian Day, the pretty governess whom I had met at Myrtle Lodge during my last visit.

She told me that the chambermaid had opened my door for her with a skeleton key.

"We were going to start for Europe this morning, and I fear he will go without me. Have you seen him, Miss Idyl?"

I told her, truthfully, that I had seen him, but did not then know where he was. We soon summoned the porter, who said that he had carried the gentleman's trunks on board the *Ætna* an hour earlier, that the vessel had already left the harbor.

"Oh," said she, "if he goes without me I shall lose my reason!" Then her eyes fell upon my letters—I had left them carelessly upon my table—and before I could stop her, she had read both his temptation and my refusals. As the whole truth dawned upon her mind, she uttered a hysterical scream and sank fainting upon the carpet. We laid her upon

my bed, and it was noon before she realized the extent of her husband's duplicity.

There are some things worse than death—that was one of them.

That evening I accompanied her to the Boston steamboat. Before we parted she urged me not to let the news of her marriage and his early desertion become public.

"I have bribed the few servants at the hotel, who knew that I was seeking for him, to remain silent, as well for your sake as for my own, Mary Idyl. Keep it from my friends and the Leslies, if possible, I beseech you!

"I shall return to Colonel Leslie's in a fortnight, and remain there until Starbert returns—unless they hear of my marriage and discharge me. Yes, I am sure you will keep my secret.

"I believe he will come back to me—some time—until then I will suffer in silence. I shall be true to him as well as to myself, notwithstanding his cruelty. No blame can possibly be attached to you. If you hear from him before I do, I am sure you will let me know where he is. My only hope is that you will yet bring him back to me. I shall not even dare to ask the Leslies where he is."

My thankfulness for my own escape removed much

of the bitterness which my failure would otherwise have caused.

"Well, Mary, were you successful?" my father asked, on my return.

"No; I could not find a publisher."

"Just as I expected. I told you so before you started. The Fates have been against us Idyls for years. I fear that we shall never regain our ancient prestige."

My mother followed me to my room and said, as she handed me a letter:

"My child, do not let the ice of disappointment gather too thickly over your spirits if this does not meet your expectations. I see that it is from the South, and think it is a reply to your application for a position as governess, some weeks ago." Surely God had not forsaken me. It contained a favorable answer.

"I cannot allow my little girl to go out into the world again to battle for a livelihood," said my mother, when we had finished reading the letter. My father also demurred, but the path of duty and of right was clearly defined.

In some cases it is the height of filial duty to disobey one's parents. It certainly was mine in that instance; for it was necessary that I should earn something either by my pen or by teaching.

My father's health had failed so of late, that it had rendered him incapable of laboring on the farm. Then the crops had been an entire failure on the preceding year.

The farm-house was literally rotting down, and only white daisies seemed to flourish on the plantation. How they nodded and tossed their bright heads from spring until autumn, as if to say :

"Behold our perseverance. You have endeavored for thirty years to root us out of our legal home. Ah, ha! we have finally conquered and regained our original possessions."

"Yes, my life-work is before me. God give me endurance and success for the sake of my parents and only brother. I must not give up the struggle until Willie's education is finished!"—I wrote in my diary that evening, adding :

"Ah, I will not repine again. Two such friends as God and mother! I will arouse my fainting energies. There is no disappointment which cannot be endured.

"Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to *labor* and to *wait*."

CHAPTER XV.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

AS my way South lay through — city, I could not deny myself the pleasure of calling on my cousin, Mary Idyl. After spending a day delightfully with her, we started for the dépôt; but, just as we reached it, the horses became frightened, made a sudden spring, and dashed my trunk upon the pavement, breaking it into fragments, and scattering its contents around in the most ludicrous manner imaginable.

We had just gathered the books and clothes together when a loud whistle announced the approach of the train. I was in an awkward dilemma truly, for I had promised to be at Mayflower on a certain day; but my good cousin came to the rescue, and offered to express my baggage to me by the next train, so I stepped into a railway carriage without further ado, and left her to re-pack my scanty wardrobe.

I left the cars at Cairo, and took a stateroom in an

elegant river palace called the *Sphinx*. There was another steamboat in sight, and a spirited race soon commenced. Many of the passengers enjoyed it with a lively zest, and finally became so madly excited that they urged the firemen to pour oil and spirits of turpentine upon the fire in order to increase the steam.

The other steamboat was left far in the rear,—the *Sphinx* had won—when suddenly, their cheers gave place to that fearful cry:

“The boat is on fire!”

They put her about, and made a desperate effort to reach the shore, but after a few plunges the wheels stopped. The heat and smoke soon became unendurable. It was evident that we could not remain on board until the other boat, which was scarcely in sight, could reach us. Two life-boats were let down, but the panic-stricken crew filled them so full that they were instantly swamped.

Perceiving that there was no hope of escape in that way, I went back to the saloon to look for a life-preserver. I succeeded in finding one, and turned to go back, but the flames had followed me so closely that escape seemed impossible. As I fled through the cabin, I saw a gentleman reclining upon a sofa. He was fast asleep, and, of course, I awoke him. He comprehended our dangerous situation in a moment, then he seized me in his arms,

and, after wrapping a heavy fur cloak around me, rushed through the red tongues of flame which were hissing around and above us, as if impatient for their prey. We finally gained the “after deck.” It was deserted by all except a woman and two small children.

The white despair of her face touched my heart, and I drew back and pointed to her, saying, as I handed him my life-preserver:

“Save *them* if possible! See! there is a steamboat coming toward us. I will cling to this rope until you can send some one for me.”

He saw that remonstrances were useless, and did as I bade him. The flames came roaring on. They severed the rope from the deck, and I fell into the abyss below.

“God be praised! she lives! Ascertain her name and destination, and write to me as soon as she is able to speak. Here is a card containing my address.”

The voice died away, and again my mind wandered in the fearful mazes of delirium. Again I was living over the events of the past few hours; fleeing from the fire demon,—suffocating, dying! struggling to free myself from the grasp of a drowning man—anon, held down by the icy hands of a corpse, in the cruel, the insatiate Mississippi.

Yes, I lived; but the power of speech seemed to have deserted me. Fever and delirium followed, and for days I hovered upon the shores of the borderland, lingered upon the misty banks of the narrow strait which separates this terrestrial continent from the celestial,—gazing into the dim unknown, wavering between time and eternity;—then slowly turned back to life's cares, toil, and untried trials and disappointments.

As soon as consciousness returned, they told me that a gentleman had rescued me from the very jaws of death. They had mislaid his address, therefore I could not thank him for saving my life.

I shall never forget those good Samaritans who cared for me so tenderly, and gave, not only their time, but money, to others who had lost their baggage in the ill-fated *Sphinx*.

I finally arrived at Mayflower in safety. My patrons, the Melbournes, gave me a kind welcome, and excused my delay on the plea of illness during my journey. My rooms were tastefully, as well as richly, furnished; my salary was a liberal one; and as my duties were light—I had but two pupils, a sweet little girl aged six years, and a boy two years her senior—I felt that I should be happy in my beautiful Southern home.

My trunk had reached Mayflower several days

before my advent. Was it not fortunate that those horses were so restive on the eve of my departure from Hope? Otherwise it must have been irretrievably lost. Truly, "Thy ways, O Lord, are past finding out, inscrutable."

On opening my trunk I found two handsome muslin wrappers, a walking suit, a dress pattern of the most exquisite blue silk, and the nattiest, sweetest, little bonnet of white lace and pink moss rose-buds, with gloves to match. A tiny note, in my cousin's hand-writing, explained all. It said:

"My namesake must really accept and wear this trifling present from me. Remember, dear, that in the *beau monde*, one is judged by one's dress and manners, that first impressions are usually as lasting as life. Do not be angry—but I found your clothes a little *passè*. Have your blue silk made up by some fashionable *mantua-maker*, and you will look nicely. Inclosed please find some frills of real lace for your neck and wrists. I want my little girl to always dress in good taste."

Her advice was needed, for I had never had time to think enough about dress.

The next day I made the following entry in my diary:

"Mayflower, with its beautiful grounds, seems to me like some enchanted fairy-land. What a contrast there is between its sunshine and bloom and my bleak Northern home, where snow still lies along the hill-sides in defiant drifts. Here, spring has donned her verdant robes and decked herself with the choicest flowers.

"The mansion is an imposing structure. A spacious veranda, supported by Corinthian pillars of white marble, surrounds it. The grounds are handsomely laid out, and pleasantly shaded with magnolias, bananas, orange groves, the mysterious aloe and pomegranates with their shining green leaves.

"There is a fountain in the garden. An arabesque statue of Hebe stands in its centre. Surely this is the fabled fountain of eternal youth. Further on, there is a small Swiss chalet, environed with Norwegian pines, larches, spruce and funereal-looking yews, while beyond, a grove of young hemlocks encircles a ferny grotto. The graveled walks lose themselves in the park, which is full of fine old live-oaks, with their long beard-like mosses, as well as pine-trees a century old.

"There is a tiny sheet of water at the lower end of the park, called 'Silver Lake.' It is all fringed with laurels and rhododendrons. Its surface is dotted with the broad green leaves of the American lotus,

or 'pond lily.' There is a small boat moored on its margin, named *Neptune*. The negroes' quarters are beyond. The Melbourne plantation is an extensive one, and is one of the most valuable estates in the country. It is owned by Mrs. Melbourne and her brother, a Mr. Willington, whom I have not seen. He is in Washington at present.

"Mr. Melbourne is a gentleman of a fine commanding presence, but I do not quite like his patronizing manner while speaking to me. It might have been fancy, but the smile about his thin lips seemed to say: 'You see, miss, that we are vastly your superiors; but if you do your duty you shall be well *paid*.'

"I like Mrs. Melbourne, and feel assured that in her I shall find a true friend. She is rather above the medium size, and is slightly inclined to *embonpoint*, but her piquant face and charming manners render her exceedingly interesting.

"'I do not wish you to become too familiar with the children,—it is always best that they should be kept at a distance. They will lose all respect for a governess if she is their constant companion,' she said, yesterday, whilst speaking of Lily and Joy, my pupils.

"'I shall expect you to take as much care of their manners and morals as of their education,' she added.'

CHAPTER XVI.

SUNDAY AT MAYFLOWER.

"And now the chapel's silver bell you hear,
That summons you to all the pride of prayer,
Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a jig to Heaven."—POPE.

ON Sunday morning Mr. Melbourne said, as we left the breakfast table:

"We attend church in the city. The carriage will be at the door at 10 o'clock precisely."

As we were driving along, Mrs. Melbourne said:

"St. Paul's is the largest church in the city, and has the wealthiest congregation here. I hope you will feel at home there, at least mornings, for we want you to sit with the children. My brother, however, prefers Christ Church. If you should, Nero will drive you there evenings."

The church was very elegant, but I admired the flowers upon the communion table and the subdued light which streamed in through the colored glass windows, better than I did the imposing services and operatic style of music, and I wondered how that

silent congregation could enjoy the singing of their hired choir.

It seemed to me that the people who attended that fashionable church worshipped God less than mammon. I did not enjoy the sermon so dogmatically laid down by that pompous reverend doctor, whose smoothly rounded periods fell upon the heart like drops of water upon an oiled surface, then glided off without leaving any impression.

"Our minister is extremely popular, and his people are the very *elite* of this vicinity, but brother thinks there is too much formality, vanity, and display among us."—I wondered if she always quoted her brother.—"If you would like to go to Christ's Church this evening, I will accompany you. Brother Lloyd thinks it is the prettiest little chapel in America;" she added.

We went, and I was amply repaid for going. It is a simple Gothic structure. Its pulpit of white marble was adorned with white flowers. The walls are relieved by texts in *basso rilievo*, encircled by wreaths of lilies. There is a velvet curtain behind the pulpit of royal purple. It is looped back from the centre, where a beautiful fresco painting is visible. It represents a rift in the clouds, from which a halo of light streams out radiantly, and beneath it, for a foreground, a white dove is poised above an open Bible.

Although Christ's Church rejoiced in one of the best organs in the city, the singing was purely congregational. Whilst listening to the closing chant, I could not help saying to myself:

"Give me congregational singing! Oh for more Plymouth Churches!" The Rev. Edward Malcolm is a scholar as well as a Christian. His eloquence and perfect gesticulations, as well as words, were 'like a cup of cold water in a thirsty land.' Yes, I do prefer Christ's Church to St. Paul's."

I have copied the above description from my diary.

Later in the evening I found my way to the nursery. Joy, who is a rosy-cheeked, black-eyed little fellow, lay asleep upon a couch, with his head pillowed upon a great Newfoundland dog, but Lily was bending over an open Bible. I spoke to her several times before she heard me, so deeply was she absorbed in the pages before her. Then, with a dreamy far-off look in her eyes, she said, wearily:

"Miss Idyl, I like the Bible better than any other book I know of, only I can't *understand* it half. I wish you would tell me what it does mean."

I took the book and closed it, then smoothed back her golden hair from her hot forehead and told her a story. At its close, an expression of disappointment crept into her large blue eyes, and she said:

"I don't like 'Mother Goose' and 'Red-Riding

Hood' stories at all. How I do wish I could read and understand everything."

At that moment Ruth, the nursery maid, entered and told Lily that it was bed-time; then, turning to me, she said:

"She hab read dis hull day, Miss, and tells Daisy an' me how to talk like white folks, an' read, too."

"Do I tell you to say *hab* for have, and *dis* for this, and *hull* for whole, Ruth?"

"No, chile, but it am hard to put a white head on a brack gal's shoulders, or white brains inside dis woolly pate, Miss Lily."

"Now, Ruth, do try to think;" then turning to me, she asked:

"Miss Idyl, do you think you can ever love me as well as you do brother Joy?"

"Why do you ask me such a question, Lily?"

"Because Cecil, our other teacher, liked him best; so do papa and mamma," she replied.

How vividly her answer recalled my own sad yearning for love at her age; but, knowing that it was wrong for her to foster such morbid fancies, I told her that everybody would love her if she were good and lovable, and tried to do right; then bade her "good night."

CHAPTER XVII.

MAYFLOWER.

"No, beaming with light as thy young features are,
 There's a light round thy heart which is lovelier far :
 It is not that cheek—'tis the *soul* dawning clear,
 Through its innocent flush, makes thy beauty so dear."

—MOORE.

ON the following morning I entered the children's study with a cheerfulness which had long been a stranger to me, and found them already there with books and other school-apparatus. My pupils were all attention, and seemed so eager to improve that I felt, intuitively, that my task would be an easy one.

Lily was farther advanced in her studies than I had at first supposed, besides being diligent and ambitious to a fault; and it often gave me serious misgivings to see the delicate-looking child bending so assiduously over her lessons; but, again, when I remembered my own insatiate thirst for an education in my early years, I resolved to satisfy these cravings in my young pupil.

The roguish Joy was also a tractable scholar. He

was capable of grasping a new idea more quickly, perhaps, than his sister, as well as of reasoning better, but he lacked her gift of imagination, her fine enthusiasm. I will copy a paragraph from my diary :

"Whilst teaching Lily, I feel as if I were engaged in carving a rare piece of statuary, some embodiment of poetry—of beauty; a Psyche, for instance, ay, feel as if each stroke of the chisel—in other words, every new lesson—brings out some hidden loveliness. I do not think of myself at all, or take any credit for it, however. 'The little girl is certainly very pretty and has a fine mental organization,' said a visitor to me, yesterday.

'Yes, Lily is sweet and intelligent, but it is the soul's radiance that I recognize and love in my young pupil,' I answered, proudly."

Mrs. Melbourne was a perfect slave to the requirements of society and fashion. I seldom saw her, excepting at the table or during an occasional airing. I was indeed *in loco parentis* the greater part of the time, yet my position did not seem at all a responsible one, for their mother's apparent neglect only endeared the children to me more.

One day, after study hours, she sent for me and showed me the portraits of my pupils.

"They have just been sent home, and are intended for a birth-day present for my brother, whom I ex-

pect almost daily. I want you to go with me to the picture gallery and help me select a good niche for them, if you have time, Miss Idyl," she explained.

Of course I expressed my willingness to go, and followed her down-stairs through the roomy hall. At our right were the parlors and music room, with their costly furniture, statuary and hangings, while on our left were the library and portrait gallery. The conservatory was at the further end of the hall. The library was darkly shaded with heavy curtains of crimson damask, lined with buff; the rich Persian carpet was also of crimson and gold, sprinkled here and there with wild vines and tufts of wood mosses. There were four great mahogany book-cases, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, and over each row of shelves depended a heavy fall of curtains, like those which draped the windows. They were looped back with golden cords, and thus formed four recesses, in which were a reception chair and small marble-topped table. I noticed a cabinet organ and an elegant writing table near one of the windows.

Mrs. Melbourne drew aside the rich arras which separated the library from the cabinet of curiosities, and remarked:

"These are my brother's apartments. He has gathered these geological specimens, stuffed birds,

collections of insects, plants, fossils and rare petrifactions during his travels."

I was delighted with the cabinet. Its carpet, a rich Brussels fabric, represented the waves of the ocean, with sea-shells scattered here and there, while the lining of the arras corresponded with it. This room, as well as the picture gallery, was lighted by a large sky-light above, through which the sunshine streamed in prismatic loveliness, giving to every object in the room the changeful hues of the kaleidoscope. After a cursory view of the paintings, we selected a recess for the children's portraits, and returned to the library.

"My brother never allows us to leave these rooms unlocked, for fear the servants or children will disarrange his shells or valuable minerals; but you are welcome to choose any book or books you please and carry them to your room. I will lend you the key to the library whenever you wish to come in here and read, too, Miss Idyl," said my mistress. I thanked her; then selected as many choice works as I could well carry, and went up to my room to devour their contents. I had leisure before and after study-hours for reading, besides improving myself in music and painting, notwithstanding I spent many hours in out-door amusements with my pupils.

Joy often insisted upon making me ride on horse-

back with him; while Uncle Nero, the head gardener, taught me how to handle the slender oars of the *Neptune*, until I could row across Silver Lake about as rapidly as he could. Indeed, almost every one about the place seemed to try to make my life easy and pleasant, and everything passed off so smoothly, that I began to marvel at my good fortune.

Mrs. Melbourne's time was almost entirely occupied with visiting, or receiving calls and other duties of that ilk; therefore, as I have before stated, I had very little of her society; but I was never lonely, for I did not hesitate to occupy the cool recesses of the noble library during my idle hours. In it I found that a want, which I had felt all my life, was met; found on its ample book-shelves my truest sources of amusement—my safest friends.



CHAPTER XVIII.

LLOYD WILLINGTON.

IT was Saturday morning, and, as usual, I had a holiday; so, after a pleasant ramble with the children, I donned a white muslin and looped back my heavy curls with a pond lily, then gathered up an armful of books, which I had borrowed from the library, and ran down stairs, thinking, as I went:

"What a rare treat I shall have among those musty old tomes until dinner time;" but as I passed the music-room Mrs. Melbourne called out:

"Miss Idyl, will you be kind enough to come in and play the accompaniment of Lily's new song? I want her to sing it, but she does not get it quite right. Have you time?"

"Certainly, Mrs. Melbourne. I was going to return these books and get a fresh supply. When your brother comes, I will make a full confession of my indebtedness, as well as ask his pardon for intruding into his *sanctum* so often," I answered, advancing hastily into the room. She laughed gaily, and said:

"As for that, you can ask his pardon now, and, I think, obtain it, too. Miss Idyl, allow me to introduce my brother, Mr. Willington. Brother, this is the children's new governess."

"I am happy to meet you, Miss Idyl. You are entirely welcome to the treasures of my library," said a deep, rich voice, as a tall form came toward me. The room was so darkly shaded with heavy curtains that I did not notice him at first, but one glance at his noble face made me drop my books and grasp the back of a chair for support; for in those dark eyes, in that white forehead, in that black hair, I recognized the man *to whom I owed my life*. My cheeks, which a moment before had burned like fire, became white as marble; and, although I tried to speak, I could not command my voice. A black mist seemed to blot out everything before me for a few seconds.

"Good heavens, brother, she is fainting! Why, what is the matter with you both? Do you see a ghost?" cried Mrs. Melbourne, looking from one to the other hopelessly. Her words recalled him to the present. He started like one in a dream, seized both of my trembling hands, exclaiming:

"Gods! I am either dreaming or this young lady was the means of saving my life on the burning *Sphinx*. Lily, run and get her a glass of water—

quick;" then the spasm left my throat, and I found voice to say:

"Mrs. Melbourne, Mr. Willington and myself were both on the fated *Sphinx*. He saved *me* from a watery grave."

He led me to a seat, then turned to his sister, who looked bewildered, and said:

"Emma, on my last visit to Mayflower I did not, I now remember, mention my narrow escape, fearing that it would worry you. I had been traveling for several days and was weary. Sleep chained my senses in his Lethean embrace. The steamboat was on fire. Scores of terrified passengers had flung themselves into the water to avoid a death more terrible than drowning. This young girl saw my danger and awakened me. Had I slept five minutes longer, I must have perished, for the smoke was undoubtedly suffocating me. Bent on the salvation of a mother and two helpless infants, she refused my proffered aid until I had placed them on board the other steamboat which had just arrived. When I returned for her, she was gone. As we rowed sadly away, I discovered a mass of shining curls adhering to a piece of drift-wood, and, after several ineffectual attempts, succeeded in raising this young lady."—My white face warned him not to mention the terrible thing which had dragged me down in its death-

agony.—“I was obliged to leave her before animation was restored, and, as the people with whom I left her did not write, as I bade them, supposed until this morning that she was dead. Of course it rather surprised us both to meet so suddenly.” I picked up his books with an unsteady hand, saying, as I did so:

“You perceive, madam, that I am his debtor for a trifle more than the loan of these books.”

“Yes, but why did you not mention this to me sooner?”

“Because, Mrs. Melbourne, I hate to talk about myself.”

“Well, it sounds like a novel or a play. I am sure you both deserve a great deal of credit. For my part, I shall always feel very grateful to my little Northern Snow-drop for saving the life of my only brother.”

“I hope that you will both oblige me by not referring to it again, for Mr. Willington has more than cancelled the debt,” I answered, awkwardly; then went to the piano. When Lily had sung her new songs to her uncle, he invited me into his library, and, after seating me in one of the dreamy alcoves, said:

“You have not yet favored me with your name?”

“Its definition is ‘Bitterness of the Sea,’ sir.”

“Ah, then your name is Mary. It has, however, another meaning, ‘Exalted.’ I like the dear, old-fashioned name. It was my mother’s; it also belonged to the mother of our Saviour. To me it is always new, musical, beautiful; fragrant with holy memories,” he said, thoughtfully, as his eyes rested upon my face.

After enduring his scrutiny as long as it was agreeable, I remarked:

“Judging from your countenance, I must be an unpleasant subject, Mr. Willington.”

“Poor child! I still see you lying pale and cold in the embrace of the dead. But for these ringlets,”—laying his hand reverently upon my hair,—“you would have perished;” then added, “You must have come back to life to fulfil some wonderful destiny, Mary Idyl.”

“Well, if I have, I have not felt very thankful for my life, I fear. I was almost weary of living on that day, Mr. Willington.”

“But had you no friends to live for?—to weep for you?”

“Yes, parents and one brother; yet I am a source of unceasing anxiety to them, simply because the Fates oblige me to wander from the roof-tree.”

“And why are the Fates so unkind?”

"It is necessary for me to support myself and assist in the education of my little brother."

"A delightfully straightforward reply, Miss Mary; I thank you for dealing so honestly with me; but how does life at Mayflower please you?"

"Why, I have found it very pleasant here; have found also that hope is still alive. Its dying embers have kindled up into a new ambition since I came South, for all my efforts have ended in disappointment heretofore. So futile, indeed, were all my undertakings, that I used to think a relentless Nemesis was following me on account of an unknown dereliction of duty—or crime committed by myself in some anterior existence."

"But, pardon my inquisitiveness, is it really necessary for you to teach? You look too frail for so laborious an occupation."

"Yes, or Willie must remain in ignorance."

"Again pardon me, but who educated you? A good fairy? or god-mother, eh?"

"I assisted myself almost entirely—acquired the basis of an education by my own exertions, but"—and my face flushed painfully—"it could not be helped; neither did I mean to praise myself, sir; you asked, or"—I hesitated. He smiled kindly, and concluded the half finished sentence—"you would not have told me."

"True; therefore I know you will not mention it."

"Certainly not; but I wonder how one so young could have accomplished so much."

"I fear you over-rate my abilities, my accomplishments. I studied day and night, sick and well; taught school and went, alternately, until I finished the scientific course at Hope Seminary."

"Well, what was that but a success? You must have had a hard struggle though; I do not wonder that you felt weary of battling with life's breakers; and, at youth's very threshold, thought it would rest you to lie down in the bottom of the river. Remember, *petite*, there are better days in store for you. The hardest part of your life is over."

"I sometimes think so, but have ceased to anticipate anything for myself; my hopes all center in Willie."

"Why, to hear you talk, one would think you were a hundred years old!" he exclaimed, with a quizzical gaze.

"No, I shall not be nineteen until August, *Monsieur*."

"Thank you, for your confidence, *Mademoiselle*, and do try to laugh off all morbid feelings and thoughts of the past and believe in a happy present, regardless of the future. To one of your temperament, to hope is to exist, if I read your countenance correctly. So remember *perseverentia vincit omnia*."

"That, sir, with another clause annexed, has been my motto from childhood," I rejoined, replacing the books which I had been reading; then selected Spenser's "Faerie Queen," and turned to leave the apartment. He gently detained me, saying:

"Here, *Mademoiselle*, is a key to these rooms, which you can visit whenever you choose."

I thanked him and hastened away; but, on reaching the hall, saw that the key was clasped on a delicate chain of gold. Thinking that he had given me the wrong one, I went back to rectify the mistake, but he said:

"It is only a golden thread, Miss Idyl, and is of no use in the world except to guard that key against loss. Keep it, and, when tired of reading, count the links, imagining as you do so that every one is a type of my obligations to you."

"Of mine to *you*, you mean; but why not use it for a rosary?" I asked, playfully.

"It will do for one, of course, but I hope you are orthodox?"

"Certainly I am, Mr. Willington."

"Well, make a rosary or a talisman of it, if you choose; but if the first, allow me to be your—'Father Confessor.'"

"Agreed!" and I again excused myself.

One evening they sent for me to entertain them

with music, but I had the ungraciousness to decline. The heat was very oppressive in my room, and I sat down in the deep embrasure of my window to enjoy the moonlight which bathed the landscape. It was rather unkind of me to remain in my apartments when they seemed so desirous of having my society; but I wanted to be alone, that I might indulge in a dream too delightful to be realized. The vision faded ere it was finished, like those evanescent pictures of forms and faces which we see in the live embers, or with our eyes closed.

I stifled the voice of conscience by the following thoughts: "They do not really care for my presence; it is only a mark of condescension on their part to invite me."

Suddenly a step broke the stillness of my room, but thinking it was one of the servants, I still gazed out upon the star-crowned night until a well-known voice asked:

"Mary Idyl, are you in that window, or is it your wraith?"

"It is the former, of course."

"What are you about? I'll wager my watch that you are either crying or dreaming," he continued, advancing toward me.

"I am only thinking."

"Well, I'll guarantee that you have thought until

your head aches. I hope you are not weaving a tissue of romantic fancies here in the moonlight, are you?"

"No, I am not romantic, Mr. Willington."

"Well, I must spirit away the occupant of this eyry and leave her in the parlor awhile, as I dare not trust her here any longer."

"Why not?"

"Because you still seem to me like a spirit. I cannot help thinking that you died after I left you at M——, for you looked so white, so deathlike. I believe you have wings hidden somewhere—" I interrupted him with:

"Do you believe that angels have wings? That we shall be able to fly when we don the drapery of immortality, Mr. Willington?"

"That is a strange question, Mary Idyl. What do *you* think?"

"I do not believe it; it is simply figurative."

"Then you doubt the Bible, do you not? for it affirms that the angels have wings, fly through the heavens, etc."

"I must endeavor to refute your tenet on your own ground. In the first place, it takes away the god-like, leaving the idea of an animal; destroys the beautiful symmetry of the human form which, we are informed by inspired writers, 'was made in the

image and likeness of God;' (of course He has no wings if such was the case;) then the blessed Christ had none—(neither before nor after He arose from the dead)—at least the four Evangelists positively affirm that He had the same body after the Crucifixion that He possessed previously. If He had flown, instead of walked, they would have mentioned it. Mary would surely have noticed the change also; but she supposed Him to be the gardener, you know. His disciples would have perceived them when He ascended into heaven; and, as Christ arose from the dead, so shall we arise also. Therefore, in my humble opinion, we shall not be encumbered with wings when we rise to a new existence. The idea symbolizes the power of the immortal *will* which shall enable us to move through space with the velocity of thought, independent of the philosophical use of such appendages."

"Well, little logician, I yield to your unanswerable argument. You have adduced sufficient proof to substantiate your belief and convert your auditor."

By this time I was at the head of the stairs. An exclamation of surprise attracted my attention, and, on looking back, I saw him holding my new painting under the hall lamp. I had only received its frame that morning; no one except Lily had seen my "Mayflower."

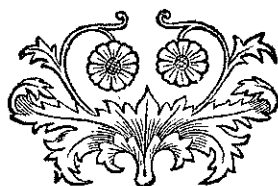
"What a life-like representation of Mayflower! What celebrated artist has been here during my absence? Can you tell me, *petite*?"

"I have not heard the family mention any artist, Mr. Willington," I answered, evasively.

He eyed me closely for a moment, then exclaimed:

"Ah, I understand; Mary Idyl is the genius, I know!"

I could not deny it, but allowed him to pass me, then ran back to my little parlor, and locked the door. I neither wished to hear their praises nor criticisms.



CHAPTER XIX.

CHARONESS.

IT was again Saturday. One of those days when Nature, in that almost tropical climate, seems truly to surpass herself with her own exquisite loveliness. Innumerable Cirri lay dreaming in fleecy, feathery drifts on the waveless billows of the upper deep, and the air was redolent with floral perfume. Not a zephyr seemed to stir the breathing leaves and blossoms—not a ripple agitated the lily-flecked surface of the lakelet.

Having nothing better to do, I took the children down to Silver Lake and gave them a "boat-ride," as they called it, in the pretty *Neptune*.

"Oh! give us one more boat-ride, do!" urged Joy.

"No, no, Joy, Miss Idyl is tired," said the thoughtful Lily, as I sent the *Neptune* high and dry upon the sloping shore.

"Bravo!" laughed Mrs. Melbourne, emerging from the shadows of the evergreens near. "I never saw Nero do better," she added.

I looked up, nervously, and saw a group of elegantly-dressed ladies and gentlemen, among whom I recognized a Dr. Fields, who was one of their most frequent callers. He was one of society's favorites, but I disliked his sinister face and familiar mode of address; knew that he only regarded me as a subordinate; could not help contrasting him with Mr. Willington, who treated the governess with as much respectful deference as if she had been "to the manor born." As our eyes met, he said, coaxingly:

"Come Miss Charon, as your venerable sire has allowed you to visit old Terra, where you have been favored with a better boat than the old leaky one he has piloted since past eternity, be so kind as to paddle us over this modern Styx before you go, please;" and he looked at his daintily-gloved hands, as I threw the oars to him and moved away without deigning any rejoinder. He took a silver coin from his pocket, saying:

"Stop a moment, my pretty Charoness"—then stepping hastily ahead of me, continued—"Here is your fee, my *obolus*! Come, I am impatient!" and he dropped the coin at my feet.

"Have you had a Christian burial, doctor?"

"No; but the daughter will not be as rigid as her inexorable old father, nor as surly, I ween,—will she?" and the ladies joined him in an audible titter.

"Then, sir, the daughter of said boatman must decline the pleasure of escorting Dr. Fields to the infernal regions. She is not Protean enough to swerve an iota from the long-established rule of her father," I answered, as I tossed the coin into the boat and hastened down the path. The ladies clapped their hands.

"I did not suppose that the Duenna possessed so much *hauteur*—so much obstinacy. With what a fine scorn she regarded my ungallant request. Why, she actually put on the airs of a queen as she marched away. Mrs. Melbourne, your governess is a study—a little, spicy, fresh bit of nature."

"Yes, my brother thinks she is charming. Indeed, I think she is a jewel, and the children half idolize her, too. I hope you have not offended the poor child, doctor, in urging her—for she is a lady—to give you a sail *bon gré mal gré*."

"Yes, for your sake, madam, I hope not. I did not think the girl had so much spirit. Yet, do not let it distress you. The little dwarf has too much tact to visit her displeasure on you; but where did you come across her?"

I could not help hearing her reply:

"It is a long story. Of course I advertised—she started—was on the fated *Sphinx*. My brother saved her from drowning, I believe, but he did not even

know her name or destination until he came home. You can judge of the surprise of both. Of course the girl feels grateful, and does all she can to relieve me of the care of the children, and I would not part with her for any consideration."

It was well that the guileless chatter of my young companions made me, in part, forget the unpleasant *rencontre*.

Blessed little children! They asked me a hundred questions; flashed in and out among the old trees with crimson cheeks, sparkling eyes and laughing faces—bringing me flowers, and drinking in my words with the perfect faith, the sweet trustfulness, which only childhood knows.

Who, I ask, whilst gazing into their deep, truthful eyes, has not felt his callous heart, over which the rust and grime of sin has for years been gathering, soften? To me there is no music on earth as sweet as their young voices. There are none who can bring us a truer love. The clinging tendrils of their affections twine around our thirsty hearts like creeping ivy over grey old ruins;—like the mistletoe to the dead leafless trees. Truly, "*In Heaven their angels*" (guardian angels?) "*do always behold the face of the Father.*"

Several days after the above occurrence, I bade the children gather their text-books and carry them

down to the pretty Swiss *châlet* in the Park, where we found a little more air circulating than in their close study at the Hall. After they had recited their lessons, they both begged me to tell them a story.

"A real fairy story!" said Joy.

"No, a *Bible* story!" urged Lily.

"Well, I will tell you one of each kind, if you will be quiet," I answered.

"Oh, how good you are! Uncle Lloyd says we must love you very dearly, and remember all you tell us," said Lily, kissing me impulsively.

"Just as if we didn't love her already!" chimed in Joy.

After telling them that they must not repeat anything that their uncle or any one else said, I narrated their favorite fables, until Nero came to take them to drive.

"Misses says Miss Idyl can go wid um, too, if she wants to," said the kind old negro. I thanked him, and told him I would go another time; and they drove off laughing and chatting merrily, as I slowly turned toward the little pond. Having pushed the *Neptune* from its moorings, I put out into the deepest water, and, after gathering a few white lilies, crossed over to the opposite side and rested awhile under the cool shadows of the great live oaks which grew near the margin. The long beard-like mosses and

clinging mistletoes, which hung from their branches, interested me greatly. They were unlike anything I had ever seen at the North. At length a beautiful wild vine, resembling the white morning-glory, which covered the wall of my little flower-garden at home, attracted my attention. Its loving tendrils had twined themselves around a dead palmetto, as if kissing its withered branches back to life. In my joy at seeing a familiar plant, I caught hold of the brittle limb, with its shroud-like covering of snowy blossoms, but it broke, and precipitated me into the water.

The waves closed over me in an instant, but I soon arose to my feet and caught hold of the dory and floated with it until I reached another overhanging branch, by which I swung myself into the boat—I never could tell exactly how—and, after revenging myself on the creeping, climbing beauty, by tearing off as much of the vine as I wished, took *Neptune* to the nearest landing and hastened home as fast as my dripping garments would permit.

As I entered the grounds, the sound of following footsteps accelerated my pace. Around the mansion and into the kitchen I ran hastily, and stood for a minute shivering in front of the range.

Old Dido, the cook, who was just lifting a pie from the oven, looked at me with an exclamation of dismay, as she dropped the dish upon the floor.

"Why, Lor' a massy, chile! what in dis bressed worl' is de matter wid yer?"

"Nothing, Aunt Dido—only—I fell into the pond," I answered, laughing gaily, to dispel her fears.

"Why, honey, ye're wetter'n a drowned rat; an' ye trem'le jest like Mass'r Lord's mag'et needle!"

"Can I go up stairs the back way, Auntie? I dare not drag these wet clothes up the front stairway, you know." I was afraid of meeting some one, however.

"Yes, honey, but hurry up; or ye'll git yer death-a-cold. Jes' run up dese back stairs, honey, an' say nothin' to nobody! Daisy, Daisy! heah! dis way, quick! fur dar comes Mass'r Willin'ton! Guess he'll laff some to see yer in dis fix—lookin' for all de worl' like a drowned rat! ha, ha!"

It was, as Joy would have said, *ticklesome*! I followed Daisy up the narrow passage, passed through the butler's closet, and finally reached my dressing-room.

"Hurry, Miss, an' I'll help ye take off dese ere wet close, fur de dinner-bell 'll ring in a minnit or two. Lor' but it war funny, Miss Idy! Fur, jest as ye left de kitchun, Marse Willin'ton come in from huntin' an' flung down two partridges. Tell ye he looked mightily tickled at suffing—ye, I guess! Oh! dare goes de bell! Lor! but you cheeks am red's a piny, Miss Idyl!"

"Never mind my cheeks, Daisy!" I answered, sharply; "hand me that French muslin. I mean the white one with pink moss rose-buds—that is right. Now, try to gather my hair up into a knot like Mrs. Melbourne's, for it is too wet for curls just at present—there, that will do. Now, twist this vine with the white flowers around my hair—so. Thanks, that's right. Here's a nice buff ribbon for your head, Daisy;" and, with one hasty glance into the tall glass opposite, I ran down to the dining-room, mentally vexed with my crimson cheeks and new style of hair-dressing, as well as with myself for my mishap. They were all seated at the table, and, of course, all eyes were turned upon me; and as I took my accustomed place between Joy and Lily, Mr. Willington smiled mischievously and exclaimed:

"Shades of Venice! Now I know that you are a water nymph!" Then, turning to his sister, he explained:

"Emma, you may well look surprised, for I just saw Miss Idyl emerge from the depths." She looked pleased and nodded for him to proceed, and he continued without appearing to notice my embarrassment:

"I was on the opposite side of the pond watching for ducks, when, suddenly, I saw her spring from the dory and disappear for a moment; then, like a flash,

she was back again in the boat, laughing and wringing the water from her hair like an ocean mermaid. The only thing that puzzles me is this—I wonder whether she is a water nymph or a siren?"

Dr. Fields made a movement as if his neck-tie were suffocating him; gave his white hands a flourish, making his great seal ring emit a stream of ruby-light; and, with an acrimonious smile, answered:

"She is neither. She is the daughter of old Charon."

"Hear, hear! The doctor is wiser than all the ancient Grecian and Roman mythologists; for none of them have given us to understand that the surly old boatman of the Styx was blessed with a daughter," I could not help saying.

"True! Miss Idyl is correct. The doctor ought to receive a gold medal from the 'Royal Academy of Natural Science' for his classical discovery," Mr. Willington laughingly added; then told me to continue. Again I went on:

"The learned gentleman avers that I am the daughter of Charon. He must have paid a visit to Pluto and Prosperine; or, perhaps, wandered a hundred years over the gloomy shores of the loathsome Styx and Acheron, praying Charon, as he did me the other day, to convey him over, as I can prove by some of you."

"That last cut was daintily administered," observed the doctor, in a low tone, to his amused hostess.

"Yes, doctor, she coolly refused your prayer, on the plea that you had not had a proper burial," I remember, was the laughing rejoinder.

"And she did perfectly right, old fellow, for if you go home again, I fear you will never be permitted to return—like Hercules and Orpheus of old—to the light of this upper world. Therefore I hope you will not think the young lady unkind, for we are not quite ready to dispense with your society." The laugh which followed visibly disconcerted him; but he filled his glass and proposed the following toast:

"The daughter of Charon. May she live as long on old Terra as her father has reigned on the borders of the Styx."

All, excepting Mr. Willington, drank to my health. I noticed that he never tasted wine. This was almost the first time that I had joined in the conversation at table, and my unusual brilliancy of repartee astonished even myself. Mrs. Melbourne and her gay guests had usually monopolized my share of small talk, while the silent, diminutive governess had scarcely been heard.

As we left the dining-hall, my mistress whispered:

"You did perfectly right, my dear. I was delighted to see you parry all their lively sallies with such

ready, witty answers. Heretofore you have not done yourself justice. Brother was pleased, too, as well as my husband. You really must make an effort to fling off your natural reserve and make people acknowledge your real worth."

In all the years to come I shall thank her for her needed advice; for one requires a great deal of practice in order to talk well; and conversation is a rare and beautiful gift.



CHAPTER XX.

CHAT IN THE LIBRARY.

"What a world of wit is packed up here together! There is no truer word than that of Solomon: 'There is no end of making many books;' this sight verifies it. What a happiness it is, that, without all offence of necromancy, I may here call up any of the ancient worthies of learning, whether human or divine, and confer with them of all my doubts."—BISHOP HALL.

THE late summer afternoon was glorious; through the lengthened shadows and golden fret-work of the leaves the Southern sun was smiling. Its mellow light gilded the garden walks and veranda with Oriental loveliness.

I had been reading Dante's *Paradiso* under the pleasant shade of the magnolias, undisturbed by any sound save the droning hum of the bees and humming-birds, but was almost stifled by the intense perfume which the drooping, wilting flowers exhaled upon the sultry air. There are seasons when their very sweetness makes us faint; when the intensity of sound also overpowers us. I had experienced the latter sensation in the earlier part of the day, when our canaries were holding a family concert in the

vine-clad piazza, before the heat had silenced their flute-like carols.

The Melbournes had been spending the day in the city, which was only two miles distant, and Mr. Willington had been absent for a fortnight; therefore, I felt free to enter the library, which, of late, I had avoided.

I went up to the row of shelves which held my favorite authors, saying softly to myself: "How deliciously cool and quiet it is here! What sweet communion I shall hold with these beloved old tomes. Why, I am richer than Midas! Dear old Dante! Immortal Virgil, Horace, Schiller and Goethe! Allow me to greet you, my good old school friends! Ah! if I could only sit here and review you all!" I added, as I passed my hands caressingly, lovingly over them. At that moment came the consciousness that some one was *looking* at me—that there was a *presence* near. A kind of clairvoyant perception, which almost frightened me, took possession of my mind, as I sat in that shady alcove with the silence of the tomb flowing around me. I presume that all people receive similar psychological impressions. There is something strange, even unaccountable, in the subtle power of mind over the senses which I cannot explain, but have felt palpably. I have tried the magnetic influence of the eye upon some individ-

ual in a crowd, until he has turned quickly around and given me a scrutinizing glance.

I was sure that I was not alone, and tried to go out of the room, but an undefined fear held me there until I thought of poor Andromeda. I, too, was chained to a rock like her. He must have heard the heavy throbings of my heart, so intense was the stillness, for he called my name, and laid his hand upon my head. I can feel the power of that mesmeric touch yet. Mr. Willington had heard me address the shades of the old masters—my foolish soliloquy. Why would not the floor open and let me vanish? He saw my embarrassment, and said, soothingly:

"Look up, Mary Idyl. I knew your step the moment you entered; knew you by the perfume of those lilies. But come, will you not tell me how you like my books? Not these, for I already know."

"You have a valuable collection, sir."

"Yes, I am aware of that, for it has been the work of years to select the most instructive works extant."

I turned toward the door, but he urged me to remain, and read to him or talk, it was immaterial which,—even my "recent address to those classical mutes" was "preferable to solitude. My head aches, and the house is lonely as a vault," he added. I could not resist the temptation of remaining; but

while I was selecting a book, I thought of a curculio which had fluttered around my lamp on the preceding night, until its wings of gauzy fire were consumed.

"Did I frighten you, *petite*?" he asked.

"Yes, a little; I did not know that you had returned."

"No, and if you had known that I was here, you would not have ventured—eh?"

"You are right *sans doute*, Mr. Willington."

Then with a sigh, which puzzled me, he resumed:

"I am only too happy to have your company, little girl."

"Shall I get some of Aunt Dahlia's celebrated lotion for your head, *Monsieur*?" I asked, interrupting him.

"No, I thank you, *Idylle*; your voice will exorcise the pain," he said quickly; then asked:

"Do you know the meaning of your family name?"

"Yes; Webster says 'an Idyl is a pastoral poem,'" I answered.

"Good! Its definition is highly appropriate to you."

I quickly laid Schiller on the table, and arose, saying:

"If Mr. Willington's head can only be relieved by flattering"—he gently reseated me; then said, in an altered tone:

"Nay, nay, Mary Idyl, you shall not leave me! Indeed, I am not base enough to flatter my friends. *Truth is not false praise*; remember this always. What kind of reading do you prefer?"

"I cannot tell. I enjoy all readable books," was my ambiguous reply. He smiled, and asked me to explain myself.

"Well, in the first place I like history, scientific essays, travels, biographies, and all works of this ilk; the substantials—mental beef-steaks, roast meats and vegetables; while poetry and romance serve for desert. The former furnishes aliment for the hungry mind, while the latter rests it after severe brain-labor. It also delights the imagination and cultivates the finer feelings, the æsthetic part of our nature."

"Capital! You have rendered your answer entirely lucid. Few young ladies of nineteen would have replied in such a practical manner—but, please go on, I beg your pardon for this interruption."

I felt that he was laughing at me, but continued:

"Again, I am just as deeply interested in the history of the dead nations, as in the most thrilling novel. I dearly love poetry, but am equally delighted with natural history. The works of Hugh Miller, Audubon, Humboldt and Agassiz give me untold pleasure. Then in perusing the biographies of those celebrated women—Mary Queen of Scots, Catherine

of Aragon, Madam Guyon, De Staël, Josephine, Ann Judson or Martha Washington, I seem to live over all their joys and sorrows,—to forget self entirely."

"Then, Miss Mary, I suppose that you enter into all the imaginary troubles of heroes and heroines, walk straight into novels with heart and soul—cry over their trials, fall in love with their lovers—in short, make yourself as miserable for the time as those mythical characters. Am I not correct?"

"No, I never weep over the sorrows of fictitious creations; yet, I must confess that I do occasionally—when weary in mind and body, for instance,—enjoy a well-written story," I acknowledged, in a hesitating manner.

"So do I," laughing; "but which of the poets do you admire most?"

"I see something to delight me in all—much that is truthful, beautiful, sublime."

"You give Lord Byron the pre-eminence, I presume; and, like all romantic young ladies, worship his divine creations?"

"Mr. Willington, I do not; although you will allow that some of his poems have never been surpassed. Others, however, admit of severe criticism."

"It is not possible that you have read Don Juan and Childe Harold?"

"It is possible, sir. When Byron's complete works

were put into my hands by a clerical friend, he did not think it worth while to advise me to skip certain portions of them."

"If he had, you would have read those which he told you to reject, first of all, *petite*."

"Yes, true to human nature; still, I cannot understand why *gentlemen* may read the same with impunity. But what do you think of Lord Byron as a man?"

"I think he was a star of primal magnitude in the literary world, yet, as Milton says:

"Talents, angel bright, if wanting worth,
Are shining instruments in false ambition's power,
To finish faults illustrious, and give infamy to man."

"Still, I think that we should not judge him for what he was, but for what he *might have been*. With such an unnatural mother, I only wonder that he was not more depraved. She darkened his early youth with bitter upbraidings and taunts. Then his love for Mary Chaworth was blighted by the cruel hand of destiny, and his grief found vent in rhythmic measure," I answered.

"But which do you consider his best poem?"

"His 'Dream of Darkness.' It is the grandest composition in the English language."

"I fully coincide with you there, Miss Mary. For sublimity of conception, for originality, and far-reach-

ing thought, it is unsurpassed. What have you there?"

"Milton's 'Paradise Lost.' Our best epic poem, is it not?"

"Yes, that is the universal opinion; but are you not surprised that the great genius should have preferred 'Paradise Regained?'"

"Rather, sir; yet the subject of the latter is so grand, that the brightest seraph who blazes before the throne of God would have lost sight of poetic diction and beauty of language, whilst contemplating the glorious scheme of redemption!"

In this manner we discussed the merits of Thomson, Cowper, Young, Burns, and Spenser.

Mr. Willington read Hood's "Song of the Shirt—Stitch, stitch, stitch," then eulogized Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" in the warmest terms.

"I had almost said," he continued, "that it is my favorite poem, there is in it so much real merit and beauty. How lucidly it sets forth human nature. Goldsmith also wrote for the elevation of mankind. He loved and extolled truth and virtue in all his writings. Unlike most fictitious works, his 'Vicar of Wakefield' will bear reading hundreds of times by the same individual. He also verified this saying: 'With the talents of an angel, a man may be a fool;' yet I love his *shade*, notwithstanding his foibles."

Sir Walter Scott came next on the *tapis*, and I acknowledged that I had not read the Waverley Novels, excepting "Ivanhoe" and "Guy Mannering;" but found in both, as well as in his poetical works, green oases, sunny slopes, and shaded nooks (full of blue-bells), where the mind loved to linger; but "Marmion" delighted me exceedingly.

"Are you acquainted with Erin's bard, 'whose harp thrilled the world with symphonious sounds?'"

"You mean Tom Moore. Yes; the memory of his sweet 'Melodies,' which I read years ago, thrill my soul with a nameless beauty. A hidden charm breathes in every word. His imagery is perfect. One sees the trembling shadows, leafy boughs, birds, dewy flowers, and laughing sunbeams; hears the fresh matin songs of the forest warbler, and music of the purling streams. Such delicious passages! Yes, I love to read Moore. 'Lalla Rookh' will always remain a star of supernal brightness in the literary firmament!" I exclaimed, with so much enthusiasm, that he smiled at my earnestness, and said, thoughtfully:

"Poor Tom Moore! his soul, in his second childhood, was enshrouded in gloomy night! He did not even recognize his own songs before 'Death came to set him free.' I presume you have read Shelly, Montgomery, Keats, and the prince of histrionic muse?"

"Gentle Will of Stratford on the Avon?" Certainly, but regret that more is not known of his home-life. He was, in my opinion, the deepest student of human nature that ever wrote. How I do wish that America could have claimed him!"

"Do not be selfish, Mary—but what have you there?"

"Keat's 'Endemion;' truly his works are—"

"A thing of beauty, 'a joy forever.' Have you the 'Culprit Fay?'"

"Yes; just under your hand—there. The world will long regret Keats and Pollock, who were cut down by the relentless Mors in youth's bright morning," he continued, with a sigh.

"Surely, Mr. Willington, there must be a fairer world, another deathless existence, where minds like theirs are transplanted to expand and blossom eternally, to answer the purpose for which they were created, else why were they removed so suddenly from earth? Had they continued their brilliant career for half a century, the reading world would have been illuminated."

He did not reply, and I said:

"Felicia Hemans is probably the most talented poetess the ages have known, is she not?"

"I think so, Mary, but in this we differ from many recent critics, who affirm that Elizabeth Browning

has surpassed her. Pray read 'The Breaking Waves Dashed High,' and—

" 'Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither, at the north wind's breath.'

Her mind," he added, "was a glorious gem studded with diamonds."

"It is strange the gifted authoress could not have made her home attractive enough to please Captain Hemans, and keep him at home. She must have been an uncongenial companion. Her household duties must have been very irksome to the lovely poetess."

"No, sir; I believe her liege lord was very inferior to her in talents and soul—that he was jealous of her fame and superiority. She was a Christian—an exemplary wife and mother. Her effusions breathe the language of a very sweet and noble spirit," I ventured to say whilst selecting those portions which he had requested me to read. It was *Heaven* to minister to the pleasure of my companion, and I fearlessly played with the lightnings which Eros, the all-conquering god, scattered around the universe when he crushed the thunderbolts of Zeus. I read, finally, as I never had read before. He then handed me Poe's "Raven," remarking:

"Although it is an eerie, dreary thing, it is one of America's choicest productions. Ah, please, *petite!*

it is early yet," for I was looking at the tiny buhl clock on the mantel rather anxiously; then resumed: "I know, by that restless eye, that your pinions are poised for flight; that you are pining for the free air of the moonlit veranda, weary of this gloomy room and its exacting owner; yet please proceed. You do not dream what a pleasure you have been to me this evening, little girl. Ah, if I had known you sooner!"

He stopped abruptly, and lighted another jet of gas. I read the "Raven," entering into the spirit of it, as I always do when anything interesting is before my eyes, forgetful of self, of my listener; oblivious to everything save the living, breathing pictures which burned themselves on my mental vision.

Words of praise fell like the murmur of a distant cascade upon my ears, but I was thinking of the "lost Lenore," and only heard his concluding words:

"Mary Idyl, I never appreciated that weird thing before; you give it life and color." I arose hastily, saying, gravely:

"Mr. Willington, I fear your head is more painful; shall I not send for a physician?" and I moved toward the door, but caught a smothered smile lurking about the corners of his mouth as he gently detained me, and urged me to be seated.

"Your voice has cured my headache—charmed

the pain quite away. You love to read audibly, I perceive?"

"I do; especially when I have such a critical listener—one who appreciates my efforts to amuse and entertain him."

"Good! The tables are turned. But what is your opinion of Edgar Allen Poe?" he asked, after a pause.

"Sometimes I admire him; again I fling his works aside sorrowfully, when I think of his wrecked life, of the remorse which 'burned into his bosom's core,' and induced him to vent his agony in the 'Raven.' Again, I pity him, for the Fates were vindictive. Poverty cursed him. The world did not understand him—critics followed in his wake like fierce bloodhounds, while those who really enjoyed his productions allowed him to starve for bread and sympathy. When I read his prose articles, which contain as much poetry as the others, I often think he was insane, they are so ghostly."

"He was intoxicated more probably. I perceive, young lady, that you always look on the bright side of the picture; that you find something to admire in the blackest composition of humanity. Am I not correct?"

"Yes; the most degraded monster of the *genus homo* has his angel-side. The erudite Beecher has beautifully said:

"'Moss will grow upon gravestones; the ivy will cling to the mouldering pile; the mistletoe springs from the dying branch; and, God be praised! something green, something fair to the sight and grateful to the heart, will yet twine around and grow out of the seams and cracks of the desolate temple of the human heart.'"

"Well said, Miss Mary; but what can you say in favor of Aaron Burr?"

"I can say that he was the most accomplished gentleman in America in his day. Had he obeyed the impulses of his better nature, his career, so brilliant at first, might have ended gloriously. His rare personal attractions and conversational powers were really of a superior order, to say nothing of his irresistible manners. You may laugh, if you please, but I remember another bright page in his history, viz.: his care in educating his daughter Theodosia."

"Well, good, so far; but what of Benedict Arnold?"

"Why, he was one of the most fearless soldiers in the Revolutionary War. A more courageous man never lived, yet ambition ruined him. At first, I believe that he would have willingly given his life for his country; yet, when inferior officers were promoted to a higher rank, when he saw them wearing the very laurels which he had bravely won, I do not

wonder that his patriotism died—that his proud spirit was crushed—that the god-like in his nature departed, and that Satan entered into him, as he did into Judas of old. Indeed, whilst thinking how impetuous he was, of his provocations too, I can but wonder that his heart, unsupported by God's grace, and smarting under the injustice of those who professed to be his friends, led him so far astray. I only marvel that he did not attempt to betray his country sooner. Understand me: I do not wish to palliate a crime which was only second to that which Judas committed (for it is impossible to justify him;) but I do think, that instead of being a traitor of the blackest dye—an indelible blot in our national history—that his name might have illumined its pages with living radiance, had simple justice been meted out to him!"

He shrugged his shoulders, and exclaimed:

"I am astonished at your sympathy for an arch traitor!—your lenient opinion of high treason! But, come, tell me what you think of Thomas Paine. I saw you studying his 'Age of Reason' the other day, and wanted to take it out of your hands and burn it."

"I recognize in Thomas Paine—whose works I read simply because I was earnestly warned against them—the author of the 'Rights of Man,' the greatest reasoner of the age; if not the primal mover and

father of that stirring instrument which ushered in a new era—the 'Declaration of Independence.' He certainly possessed a powerful mind, and his great speculative powers carried him beyond himself, in short, made a monomaniac of Thomas Payne; charred, blackened, yes, gave his name to infamy—'led him to believe a lie, that he might be damned.' God only knows the harm he did—that his writings will still do—but I hope he repented ere death overtook him. He too was deeply wronged while in France"—

"I beg pardon for interrupting you—but, really, you have not only sympathized with a traitor, but an infidel. I am afraid you will yet admire the ambition of *le diable*, who, as Milton says, 'Rather than not be equal with God, chose not to be at all.'"

I was a trifle disconcerted at his rejoinder, but did not answer.

"You must read the 'Waverley Novels' next," he said, "also 'Jane Eyre,'" handing the latter to me; "but do not envy authors and authoresses, more than their productions; for as a class, although you find some trait to admire in each; (and it is beautiful and womanly in yourself to do so;) as a class, I say, they are to be pitied more than envied. Else, why have most of our great writers, separated from their consorts, been so unhappy in their domestic affairs?"

"Because they married their inferiors, and that life-long mistake made them drain the cup of misery to its very dregs," I answered warmly.

His eyes suddenly darkened, his heavy brows contracted with some unwelcome thought or memory, but he did not speak, until I had laid my hand upon the door-knob, then said:—

"I thank you for your kindness. I shall long think of this pleasant evening. Believe me, I really coincide with you in your philanthropic opinions; and rejoice that you fully understand the science of reading.

"Remember always, that the *ultima thule* of erudition, the highest lore of the schools is, or should be, the education of the heart, the amelioration of our fallen natures." He held out his hand and bade me "good night;" then repeated the following lines by Burns:

"It's no' in making muckle mair,
It's no' in books, it's no' in lea,
To make us truly blest.

We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest;
Nae treasures nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The heart ay's the part, aye,
That makes us right or wrong."

I went up to my room like the moon in a mist. A

new and nameless joy thrilled my pulses. A dream of bliss held possession of heart and brain. For the first time in my life I felt that I had met my master—one whose will was stronger than my own—my ideal. And I remember how firmly I shut my teeth together as I bent over a little vase on my parlor table, for it contained a single passion flower. Its mute language: "Let the love of God precede all other love," recalled my dazed senses, and I again remembered the poor curculio and resolved that its fate should not be mine; then repeated the following beautiful stanza:

"Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams from the past which she cannot destroy,
That come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled,
Like a vase in which roses have once been distilled;
You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."



CHAPTER XXI.

A MUSEUM.

"Oh, had we some bright, little isle of our own,
In the blue summer ocean, far off and alone."—MOORE.

SEVERAL days after the above conversation I sat in a secluded corner of the veranda indulging in morbid reflections, wondering why others could be so happy and myself so miserable, for Mrs. Melbourne had either forgotten to invite me to her dinner party; or, more probably, expected me to attend with the rest of the family, without a special invitation: a thing which my selfish pride prevented me from doing. Had I gone, I should have felt as entirely alone in that gay crowd, as if in the thirsty desert of Cobi, for those magnates of society would have felt nothing in common with the indigent governess. Weary and dejected I leaned my head upon my hand, and tried to look into the future. In imagination, I had just sent dear little Willie to College, when a window was opened near me, and before I could retreat, Mr. Willington said, in a tone half censorious:

"*Mirabile dictu!* You out here, indulging in reveries, regardless of the Adonises, Venuses, calculating *paterfamilias*, and *recherché* mammas? Careless alike of dining in state, of champagne, of fruits, of confectioneries, of creams and ices? Mary Idylette! I am perfectly astonished!" I did not look up or speak, and he added: "Not dressed for the evening, either?" scanning my pink muslin, which I had worn all day, and my wind-tossed hair; then continued: "Why, when I think of the fashionable costumes below, I am more than astonished at my young *Bas Bleu*, at Miss Idyl's eccentric habits."

"Then leave me, *Monsieur le critique*; I came out here to enjoy my own company; then as for dress, well a *gouvernante*, you know, is more at home in a simple muslin than in silks and tarlatan;" I answered.

He held out his hand with the following medley of apology and compliment:

"Forgive me for teasing you, child, I was not in earnest. To my eyes, your attire and wealth of curls are more beautiful than *moire antique*, Honiton, feathers and diamonds!"

His words brought me to my feet in a moment. Flattery I never could endure, and I turned away with a vast assumption of dignity. My progress was intercepted, however, by my companion, who smiled kindly, saying:

"Those cheek roses are vastly more becoming than your excessive pallor and listlessness were a moment ago; yet, you may as well surrender at once, for you are my prisoner for the next hour!"

"Who gave you so much authority, sir? Where are your indentures?" I asked loftily.

"The hungry waves, when they placed your lifeless form in my arms. Do you know that some of your very breath is mine—that I breathed into your icy lips, and communicated my own warmth to your frozen body—my own vitality into your lungs? Yes, little river-waif, you partly belong to me. As your guardian, I shall see that you are well cared for at Mayflower. Not seeing you in the parlors, I suspected that you were the victim of my sister's thoughtlessness; therefore excused myself from the young ladies and manœuvring *materfamilias*, and sought you out; have you pardoned me?"

I held out my hand and tried to thank him for his kind words, but he playfully laid his hand over my mouth and drew me into his *cabinet de curiosities*; then closed the window, saying:

"With your permission, in order to avoid other society." Secure in my own innocence, in his honor and integrity, I answered in a dazed sort of manner:

"Certainly, Mr. Willington."

"Here are the only records of my travels, except

the vivid pictures and rich stores gathered, by hearing and observation, in foreign lands, which I have classified and laid away in the deep vaults of memory for further uses," he said, looking around the room.

There were stones from the Giant's Causeway and Fingal's Cave; geological specimens from England, Ireland, Scotland, France and Germany, as well as Norway and Sweden; sunburnt bricks from Nineveh; deposits from Rome; lava from various volcanoes; curiosities from the subterranean city of Pompeii, and a goblet carved out of the cedar of Lebanon; sulphur, asphaltum, salts and bituminous coal from the Dead Sea, with a phial of its mineral waters, sad relics of the once proud "Cities of the Plain;" petrifications from Mosul, Turkey; a stone out of Napoleon's tomb at St. Helena; one from St. Paul's Church; chalcedony from Beyroot, and fossils from many parts of Asia and Africa, besides Japanese and Chinese idols; a stone which had been broken from the great pyramid, ostrich's eggs, Egyptian mummies, and boxes of loam from many celebrated valleys, both in the old and new world.

"In this case, you will find several idols which I found in a temple in India; and here is a piece of the great rock of Gibraltar. This bit of marble came from Nimrod's Palace, and here are stones from the

Acropolis at Athens. These, in this corner, belong to America. I found these stalactites and stalagmites in the Mammoth Cave. You must examine these Indian relics at your leisure, but come and see these pewter plates and cups, which were brought over in the Mayflower.

Many of these stones came from California, Mexico, and the Sandwich Islands. Here are some fine petrifications, too. See! These rattlesnakes, as well as these frogs, are perfect; so are these beautiful impressions of palms and ferns. I found these sea-shells in a lime-quarry, two hundred miles from the ocean; they were imbedded in solid calcarious rock. These impressions of fish, and those real bird tracks came from the valley of the Connecticut; but stop! I had almost forgotten to show you this Indian skeleton, which, you see, is perfect. These are the bones of a mastodon; they were presented to me by a friend who exhumed them, a few years ago, on his farm." He showed me some boxes of shells, but I was most pleased with the beautiful wampum. Several varieties of coral covered another shelf, while "star fish," sea mosses, polyps, and other marine treasures graced the central table.

He showed me a casket of precious stones, and said:

"This diamond came from Brazil. I purchased it

of a native, who did not seem to value it very highly. I intend to have it set in this California gold, for my wife, who is to be."

"I see you have placed it beside its brother charcoal with fine effect," I remarked.

"Yes, one is only crystalized carbon, the other is in its natural state. Do you understand the lesson they are intended to teach?"

"I think they show that the blackest heart may become purified from worldly dross and sin, made white as the driven snow. What have you in these tiny bottles?"

"Coral insects, and the minute teredo of the Tropics."

"Indeed! yet how difficult it must be to collect these animalcula."

"It is nothing, compared to *their* perseverance and industry. Mary, think how long the former must have toiled to construct the coral reefs of Florida, the rocks at Niagara Falls, the Islands of the Pacific, while the teredo will perforate the strongest oaken timbers in our ocean palaces, and render them *inutile* in a brief period."

We were looking at some immense bird's tracks, and I asked if he thought that birds as large as their footprints indicated really existed?

"Certainly, Miss Mary. I dearly love to muse over

a pristine world and its primeval inhabitants," he answered.

"Perhaps," I continued, "they were imprinted in soft clay, originally, and by the action of water, or heat, may have expanded to thrice their natural area, like the impressions upon wax, which, when subjected to heat, will become enlarged, you know," I observed.

"That is a new idea, quite original too; but I like to believe that such birds existed in the early stages of creation. They would only be in keeping with the mastodons, saurians, and giant ferns of that period. These extinct races awaken new trains of thought. They also sharpen the imagination and make us more deeply interested in the science of Geology. I believe that our earth was created thousands of centuries before the Mosaic account of creation; that the particles of matter of which it was composed are as old as eternity. You can, at your leisure, look at these folios of pressed sea-mosses, plants, and flowers from California, Europe, the prairies, and Africa, but the latter are devoid of fragrance, although very showy and large. This portfolio contains insects of almost every class, from the butterfly to the glow-worm. The Cuban curculio is the most gorgeous, when alive."

"Now, Mr. Willington, you are cruel!" I ventured to say.

"No, Miss Idyl, I deny the charge which you have preferred against me. I only preceded father Time in his work of death, for these frail creatures have only an ephemeral existence."

"You stand acquitted. Please tell me what this queer-looking box contains; not Egyptian mummies, I hope?"

"No, I have a boa-constrictor, and several other serpents in it. Shall I show them to you?"

"Certainly, I always had a passion for snakes."

He looked surprised, and said he had expected to see me faint, at the mere mention of such venomous reptiles.

"On the contrary, I admire them exceedingly; think them a much-abused class of animals."

"You are an enigma that I cannot solve; the strangest girl I ever saw; but if you have admired these reptiles sufficiently, I will show you my picture gallery."

"Oh, Mr. Willington! What a pity it is that you did not keep them alive; you know they will live seven years without food. How I should like to come in here and feed them; and if you were unkind, would let them out, occasionally, in order to give you some wholesome exercise."

He put his hand on my head; said my bump of philoprogenitiveness was fully developed; that he

was afraid I would "become a lover of cats and poodles."

"Then I shall keep a box of live rattlesnakes."

"Do not speak of them! I shall actually look under my bed every night, and dream of vipers for a month to come; but I forget: water-waifs and wraiths are invulnerable. You are the first one, since mother Eve, who has felt the least affection for the descendants of the tempter of the race."

"Oh, sir, He offered a great inducement to Eve when He said:

"'For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' No wonder that she partook of it, when 'she saw that it was a tree to make one wise.' Ah, the very idea of being like a *god* would be enough to tempt anything less strong than the Almighty! With my insatiable thirst for knowledge, I do not marvel that she fell! Adam, in my opinion, was the most to blame, for making excuses, for he censured his Maker in this wise: 'The woman which thou hast given me.'"

"Pardon my interruption, I must palliate his conduct a little; Eve's charms were irresistible. He sinned through his tender regard for her. He could not allow her to bear all of the blame—his pity was

as great as his love for his beautiful temptress. Do you not agree with me?"

"Most emphatically, no! I believe that his *selfishness* led him into sin; not his affection for his wife," I answered. He laughed merrily, and, to cover my embarrassment, I held up a piece of pudding-stone, saying:

"Here is something which you cannot explain, unless you have almost the prescience of a god."

"What is it, Miss Mary?"

"I have often wondered from what lone boulder, away up in some inland state, this bit of sandstone was broken? Off of what forest ledge this granite was torn? Where these bits of pink, white, smoky, crystalline and translucent quartz parted from their inorganic sisters? This flint, how many centuries ago did it grace an Indian's tinder-box, or point his arrow? On what tide-kissed beach was this pebble washed round and smooth by the restless surf; and when did this white sand mingle with the shells on some ocean floor? Out of what grainfield did this 'old, red sandstone' hasten? And from how great a depth did this crystallized limestone come? Or these amygdaloids, how old are they all? How long were they in forming? Again, what affinity had they all? In other words—what strange power attracted them toward each other, and

caused them to mingle in this wonderful conglomeration?"

"Here you have gone far beyond my depth. It is a subject that will puzzle the geologist until the end of time, notwithstanding all modern theories. But now for the Picture Gallery, before it is too dark, *Idylle*;" and he drew aside the rich arras—and with an imperative gesture, signed for me to enter.

Some of the portraits were more than a century old, but the landscapes were of more recent date. The former comprised his ancestors, besides several American statesmen, foreign noblemen, queens, authors, artists and other celebrities.

"This is my mother's likeness; she was beautiful as Poe's Lenore—I wish you had known my mother!"

"*Mais*, whose is this, Mr. Willington?"

"That is Angel Melbourne's portrait, Charles Melbourne's only sister; she is at a boarding-school in New York, but we expect her home before many months; you will enjoy her pleasant society, I know, for she is only a year older than yourself;" he answered, pausing before the picture of a proud southern beauty, with a rich olive complexion, brilliant black eyes, and, O, such a wealth of raven hair, in braids, puffs and ringlets! She threw Leila, Marian, —everybody in the shade!

"Well, what do you think of my beautiful Juno?" he asked.

"She is fearfully fascinating, but I must study the face another time. Ah, here is my lost Mayflower!"

"Which you fretted about silently, because you were too proud to ask after its fate. I shall retain it until I find out the name of the talented artist who executed it," said Mr. Willington.

At that moment the sound of hurrying footsteps and merry laughter in the library reached our ears, then we heard Mrs. Melbourne calling her brother. I bade him "good evening," then ran out into the hall, and finally gained my room without being observed by any one. I had enjoyed my visit to Mr. Willington's apartments greatly.

His kind consideration for my feelings, his atonement for his sister's neglect, as well as his efforts to entertain me, had sweetened the bitter waters of Marah, and warmed my heart through and through.

I took up a volume of Ruskin, thinking to myself:

"I thank God for Platonic friendship—this sweet communion of soul with soul! Like the pure love of the angels is this intellectual intercourse." There was a tray of fruits and confectioneries upon my table, with a tiny note from my mistress, viz:

"Come down to the drawing-room—I have looked everywhere for you. E. MELBOURNE."

After all, I had only been forgotten for a season—she had not meant to overlook the governess.



CHAPTER XXI.

CONTINUED.

"The friends thou hast and their adoption *tried*,
Grapple them to thy heart with hooks of steel."

ON the following morning, when the good Dahlia brought me my breakfast, I noticed that she looked troubled, and asked if she were sick?

"No, Honey, but yer see I'm kinder sorry 'cause Marse Lord am goin' to leab us dis mornin.' He allus am sech a bressed boy! I toted him 'roun' in dese ole arms when a baby, Miss Idy, an' hab lubbed him ebber sence, Miss Idy."

"Well, Auntie, I suppose his business calls him away."

"Mebby so, chile, but he am comin' agin in de fall, I hearn him tell Misses Melbun."

At that moment we heard his voice in the library. He was singing one of Haydn's creations.

"I 'clare I neber hearn sech 'licious music; he beats Dandy all out holler!" she cried exultingly; then resumed, "jes wait till Chrismus, when Miss

Angel Melbun comes an' dey sing together! He's done, bin 'gaged to her dis long time, honey, an' I gess dey'll be married in de Spring."

"She is very handsome, good Dahlia."

"Bress yer, chile, han'sum aint zackly de word fur Miss Melbun. Den she's so proud, an' highfalutin'-like, sech a real lady! Why, a fly'd slip upon her brack hair! She am *rich* too, an' young an' mighty buteful, an' young Mass'r lubs a heap ob money, Hy'cinth says; but Miss Idy,"—in a whisper,—“han'sum is what han'sum does. She'll make us cullud folks stan' roun' some, you bet; as Dandy says”—

"Here Aunt, you can remove the tray, and please tell the children to bring their books to my sitting-room this morning as my head aches badly."

"Lor, a massy! its my foolish tongue! Why yere face am as white as dis napkin, an' yer hab no tasted dis nice om'let, nuther," she exclaimed.

It still lacked an hour of school-time, and during that interval I leaned my throbbing forehead upon the cool marble table, too miserable to analyze my feelings.

What spell had turned that summer morning to wintry night? Why did the ice of discouragement gather so quickly around my heart, as I sat there shivering in the pleasant sunshine?

As the study bell sounded, I raised my face, which

was as colorless as my Marseilles wrapper, and saw, in the open door, the tall form of Lloyd Willington. With a quick, scrutinizing look into my eyes, he held out his hand, saying, as he pointed to a purple passion flower which drooped from my girdle:

"Allow me to carry that flower away with me, as a talisman of my little water waif." I handed it to him silently.

"We recognize in each other a kindred spirit, Miss Mary. Ours is a friendship which shall bridge over the chasms of time, of distance, of absence, of circumstances and situations. No matter what our social relations shall be in the future, our souls will still hold communion in thought, in feeling; is it not so?"

"Yes. I accept your friendship gratefully, knowing that I am not unworthy of it. I thank God that we ever met—for our intercourse has made me more worthy of my womanhood. Good by, Mr. Willington."

"Good by! May God bless and ever keep you within the hollow of His hand!" and he was gone.

After his departure, I missed him sadly for a day or two, and wandered about the house and grounds like one who had become blind suddenly, yet went groping around in the sunshine in search of something which he had lost; then rallied my spirits and went back again to the old life cheerfully.

Of course I banished him from my thoughts during my waking hours; but in my dreams his image was often present, and I awoke from those visionary conversations feeling sure that his spirit had been present, strengthening mine with holy thoughts and noble aspirations.

Again, my old passion for composition returned; but painting and sketching, as well as my visits to the library, were almost discontinued. The fervid heat drove the Melbournes—with the exception of Lily—to the White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, where Miss Angel Melbourne, it was said, was the reigning belle of the season; and I took my "White Lily," as the colored people called the dear child, on a visit to "Lincoln Place," a hundred miles north of Mayflower.

I have hitherto neglected to mention the Lincolns, but the reader will remember that Mr. Willington was instrumental in saving a lady and her two small children from drowning during the burning of the *Sphinx*. The Lincolns were very grateful to us both, and, at their urgent request, Mrs. Melbourne had finally consented to part with me for a month or two, provided I would take charge of Lily.

I found my new friends were people of culture and refinement, and consequently enjoyed my vacation exceedingly.

They could never say enough in favor of Mr. Willington, who had been Mr. Lincoln's friend at Yale College, where they were both graduated.

It seems that Mr. Willington had recognized the lady while he was rescuing her; also, that she had left for her home before I regained the power of speech. As soon as Mr. Melbourne found that I was the individual who had loaned her the life-preserver, etc., he wrote to her and told her that he had found me. She answered immediately and wrote almost daily, during his visit to Mayflower and after his departure, urging me to visit her, as I have before stated.

I parted with the Lincolns with many regrets, but with a hope of meeting them again.

"We must lose you for a season, Miss Mary," said my kind host, but we shall never forget how much we owe you. You must come again very soon. Remember that our home is always yours."

Lily had enjoyed her visit too, but we were glad to get back to Mayflower. On the first night after our return, I took my weary little charge in my arms and carried her up to my own bed. Ruth remonstrated, but I would not listen to her, for something in the child's excessive pallor that evening had given birth to a sad premonition, and I inwardly prayed that Lily might be spared to realize all that her beautiful childhood promised.

We frequently visited the "Quarters." The colored people were always delighted to see Lily. How their ebon faces would brighten when she read to them, or told some Bible story to their children.

"Uncle Lloyd says that I may buy a Christmas gift for every one at the 'Quarters' who can read, and I am going to get Bibles, Miss Idyl," she said, as she folded his last letter to her, and stole an arm around my neck, affectionately.

The negroes on Mayflower plantation were all well treated. The overseer was a kind old Hibernian. Said he to me, one day, when I met him:

"Faith, Miss Idyl, I niver use the lash. Its mesilf that Mr. Willin'ton would shelala, sure, miss, if I did sthrike one of his colored folks. They were all borned on this place, and he'll niver let one of them be sold neither, as sure as my name is Patrick Maloney." Nevertheless I was not in favor of the "divine institution," slavery.

The Christmas holidays were creeping on apace, but still the Melbournes lingered at the North, while a delightful quiet reigned at Mayflower Hall, which I daily expected to have broken by an influx of visitors.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHRISTMAS.

"If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work."

I WENT down into the kitchen one evening to get something for Lily's cough—she had had a cold for weeks—and found Aunt Dahlia ironing the snowy linen. Dido was stirring marmalade at the range, but she handed me a chair, and said:

"Heah, honey, ole Aunt Dido knows well nuff what you come fur. Ise jest saved out a pickled peach, an' some orange, an' 'served citron. I'll fetch yer a cup of cream an' some poun' cake to eat wid um, if you'll jest wait a minute;" and she soon placed a silver waiter in my hands containing the above-named edibles. I thanked her, and asked when she expected her mistress?

"Dunno, ezackly; 'spose dey 'spects me to get de Christmus dinner all 'lone," she answered.

I told her that I would assist her, if they did not return in season. She rolled her eyes until nothing except the whites were visible, and exclaimed:

"You chile! Lor', you help dis ole darkey? Lor', how funny! What yer 'spose dey'll say, honey? Why, dey'll tink you no *qual'ty* no-how, if dey see you heah? Only cullud folks work in dis kitchen!" and she sat down with her arms akimbo, and, after regarding me for a moment, laughed inordinately; then started up, saying:

"But 'pears to me I hear a waggin' comin' up de av'nue. Yah! sure nuff, dey're all heah, fur I hear Dandy's voice, and my blessed Daisy's, too!" And she went into the hall to welcome them, whilst I ran to my room.

In another moment Daisy came flying up the stairs with Joy, who was calling:

"Lily! sister Lily! We've all come home! Mama, papa, Uncle Lloyd and Aunt Angel! Wake up, quick! They want you!"

Ruth took the darling to her mother; but they did not send for me. The poor governess was forgotten in their glad reunion. But how I did dread to meet the haughty Miss Melbourne! How insignificant I should appear when contrasted with her fine form and sparkling beauty.

How I dreaded the gaiety of the holidays, and really, for the first time since I left home, I wished myself back in Daisydell. I took a long walk the next morning, and did not return till after breakfast,

until I had crushed out all rebellious feelings and fought down my discontent.

My mistress sent for me an hour later. She thanked me for caring for Lily during my vacation, and asked if I wanted a fortnight's rest? but I replied:

"Certainly not, madam; I have been inactive too long already; I would much prefer teaching."

"I do not wish the children to study during the holidays, Miss Idyl. They must have one week at least for amusement, my dear girl. As the house will be crowded with visitors, I shall expect you to assist in entertaining them with music and conversation. You will, of course, oblige me, and willingly join in all our gaieties.

"I shall not allow you to remain alone in your room while we are all enjoying ourselves so much. You have isolated yourself from our sympathy and society, heretofore, and it has pained me to have you do so. I shall insist upon your joining us in future. Brother Lloyd says the same, too."

Knowing well from whom this command came, I submitted to it with as good a grace as possible. On my way to the dining-hall I met Mr. Willington and his beautiful *fiancée*, to whom he introduced me. She acknowledged the introduction with a haughty bow, then took her seat at the table with an easy grace, which pleased me. During the entire meal she ap-

peared to be totally oblivious of my presence. She wore a crimson satin, which was flounced to the waist with expensive lace; and her bracelets, pin, ear-rings and necklace, which were of virgin gold, represented twisted serpents with diamond eyes. Her abundant wealth of black hair was dressed as I had seen it in her portrait. Her glowing, piquant face, and glorious dark eyes fascinated me. Added to her tall, elegant form and exquisite taste in dress, was her musical laugh and animated style of conversation, and a wonderful talent for music.

Altogether, Angel Melbourne was the most dazzling, bewildering beauty whom I had ever beheld. True, her smiles reminded me of icicles flashing in the wintry sunshine, devoid of warmth and feeling, or the reflection of moonlight upon the waves, merely the sparkle of light and color upon the surface, yet I did not wonder that the Hon. Lloyd Willington was charmed with her.

She played and sang several pieces of Italian music, after dinner, in true operatic style; but instrumental performances were best suited to her brilliant and graceful touch. Every movement of hers was fraught with that conscious superiority which characterizes the children of opulence. I did not wonder at first that her lover appeared so proud of her, or that he was so happy in her society, or that he should

have chosen her for his companion through life, although I saw that she was greatly his inferior in intellectuality. I watched her narrowly, yet did not once during the evening see her splendid eyes darken with emotion or soften with tenderness, or her cheeks glow with a richer tint, as he bent so fondly over her with his soul-lit eyes on her face, his low, manly tones in her ears, and I wondered how she could keep her countenance under such perfect control—how she could accept his homage with such utter nonchalance. She would, it is true, assume a listening attitude and smile up brightly into his face, but I saw no evidences on her part of affection.

Gods! how carelessly she wore the priceless boon of his love!

The Christmas festivities drew on apace. I busied myself with the rest in decorating the house, until it resembled some fine old baronial hall of other days. It was one entire wildering maze of evergreens and flowers, festooned in every imaginable shape. I scarcely knew the place, it seemed so like an enchanted fairy-land to me in its holiday decorations.

There was a long table in the wide roomy hall for the colored people. It was spread with a delicious and substantial dinner, and they were all feasted sumptuously. They subsequently repaired to the out-kitchen and had a grand ball among themselves, while

their white brothers and sisters enjoyed themselves with music, dancing, charades, *tableaux* and refreshments until a late hour. After those who were not staying at Mayflower had departed, the folding-doors of the back parlor were thrown open, revealing a beautiful Christmas-tree, with its wealth of ornaments and presents. Mr. Willington was commissioned to distribute the gifts, and, whilst he was doing so, I slipped away to my room. It was brilliantly illuminated. I looked around in bewilderment, and saw a large oil-painting hanging on the wall. It was a life-like representation of that final scene on the burning *Sphinx*; and I stood for many minutes gazing upon it, as if transfixed to the spot, drinking in its truthful delineations with all the enthusiasm of my nature.

Again I stood upon the burning deck, and again Mr. Willington was springing into the water with two unconscious infants in his arms, whilst their terrified mother clung to him in all the agony of despair. Again the hungry flames circled around me, while the water looked black and frowning below. My eyes were blinded with tears when I turned around to meet Mr. Willington, who was saying:

"Please take time to examine these trifles, which I found on the tree for you."

I took them mechanically, and asked:

"Did you paint this picture for me?"

"Well, yes, *Idylle*, in exchange for your Mayflower. I am glad that you recognize it—that you appreciate my poor effort."

I had no words with which to thank him for his kindness, but he afterwards informed me that my looks expressed volumes. Amongst my numerous presents I found the children's photographs and several costly books, which I had wanted for years. Christmas had come and gone, but its festivities had left my brain in a wild whirl of excitement. Words are inadequate to express how much I prized that picture of our first meeting, but I needed no such reminder. "No; I will hang it in the Portrait Gallery to-morrow," I said to myself, as I extinguished my light and sought my pillow. But I could not sleep, and for the second time found myself calculating how long I should be obliged to remain at Mayflower, before I should have earned enough to educate Willie. Yes, I thought, Daisydell's peace and quiet will be better for poor Mary Idyl than Mayflower's stimulating atmosphere. Still, I was thankful for all of my blessings, was glad that I had become acquainted with Mr. Willington, for his perfect manhood made me in love with mankind. He asked me the next day what I thought of his Angel, and I answered:

"Why, I think that she is peerless as a queen—superbly attractive. I feel like a pigmy beside her." He looked at me closely, and said he was glad that I admired her, and hoped we would become the best of friends. He then urged me to make an effort to fling off my reserve, and make myself as agreeable to his friends as possible. "I want people to understand you, to acknowledge your true worth. You really are giving some of our visitors the impression that you are treated—yes—like a subordinate in our family, Miss Mary. We wish to treat you kindly, but you will not allow us to scatter roses in your pathway. Will you promise me to lay aside the mantle of *la gouvernante* for another week, and learn not only how to look happy, but to be happy? Another wish of mine is, that you will study society well. It will not do to entirely neglect this branch of education. I am ambitious for my little sister. I want her to shine like a star in our circle; to compel some of 'our set' to feel the superiority of mind and heart over wealth and fashion. Remember, too, that in order to appear at home in company, one must see a great deal of it. Books and accomplishments will not give you easy and graceful manners. One can never learn to play, or dance, or talk, or swim, or skate, or shine in society, by theory alone, without careful practice. Remember this always," he said.

"Mr. Willington, *knowing* that a surgeon must necessarily probe an old wound in order to heal it more quickly, does not lessen the pain. You do right to remind me of my awkwardness—of my *brusque* manners. You do not imagine how bitterly the knowledge of my defects has rankled in my heart all my life; or how glad I have been to shrink from notice within the shadows of some forgotten corner!" I answered, passionately, then related the history of my ungraceful walk, of my early sufferings. On concluding, I saw that compassion had rendered his face beautiful as a seraph's; and my own eyes were filled with tears, for I had not yet learned self-control.

"When one has unintentionally injured a friend, how poor are words, how unavailing are apologies! I did not mean to hurt your feelings. I sincerely beg your pardon, Miss Mary."

"It is granted," and I held out my hand with an attempt at a smile, adding:

"Your lesson shall prove an invaluable one; I shall study it faithfully. Good-morning." He shook hands with me, and said he should hold me to my promise. I fulfilled it to the letter. If not at heart the gayest of the gay, I appeared so at least. On New Year's day, at dinner, I wore my handsome blue silk, which Mrs. Melbourne had had made by her own mantua-maker.

She had trimmed the sleeves and neck with some fleecy white lace, which she said became me wonderfully. The dress must have improved my appearance, judging from the compliments which I received from a certain quarter.

During the family's absence in the Autumn, I had spent considerable time in perfecting myself in the pretty art of copying flowers and fruits in wax. Before they returned, I had finished a cross of snowy blossoms and leaves, which resembled white marble. On its pedestal, surrounded by a wreath of passion flowers, I carved the following motto: "Let the love of God precede all other love." Besides this, I had made an artificial lakelet out of a looking-glass, and covered its margin with green and coral mosses, then dotted its surface with glossy leaves and white pond lilies. A moss rose-bush in full bloom, and several tiny bouquets of roses, heliotropes, violets, and jasmynes, with a basket of fruit and a vase of autumn leaves, completed the list of my treasures.

After the *soirée*, which was largely attended on New Year's evening, I stole unmolested into Mr. Willington's parlor (knowing he was down in the music-room, with the rest of the family, listening to Angel's playing), and placed the cross on his *étagères*, then carried the moss rose into Mrs. Melbourne's boudoir, the miniature lake to Lily's room, and

decorated Miss Melbourne's *tasseaux* with the small vases of flowers. The fruit was for the cabinet or dining-room, I did not care which; but the Autumn leaves I could not help retaining. I had scarcely reached my cosy little parlor, when I heard them ascend the stairs, then the closing of doors, but it was not long ere they besieged me in my den:—

"Ah, we have caught you at last! You need not look so unconscious; the flowers are perfectly beautiful! Brother and Angel both think so," said my mistress.

"Did you buy them in town?" Miss Melbourne asked, with a lack of delicacy for which I was quite unprepared.

"No, I made them when I had nothing better to do."

"Impossible! The idea of *your* making them is preposterous! Is it not, Emma? She could not have"—

"But she did though," said Lily, rushing into my arms in her pretty dark-blue dressing-gown; "I *saw* my darling Idol make them, Aunt Angel."

I wound my arms around the dear child, and kissed her sweet lips, silently.

There was an awkward pause, broken at length by their thanks; then Mr. Willington said: "Come Emma, and Angel *mine*; we are disturbing Miss

Idyl unnecessarily." And as he held the door open for them to pass, I saw that he was deeply hurt at Miss Angel's thoughtlessness. My door was still ajar, therefore we could not help hearing Miss Melbourne say:

"I really do not believe that that stupid governess made them! Do you, Lloyd?"

"Why not, Angel? She paints correctly from nature; which is more difficult than the lovely creations in question," he answered in a grieved tone.

"Yes, Angel, she made a charming picture of Mayflower, last Spring. You will surely have to own that she is a genius, when you see it;" chimed in Mrs. Melbourne.

"Of course I shall; if admiration for your *idol* is contagious," she admitted, with a mocking laugh; then continued:

"I never saw such a demure little thing as Lily is. She is getting to be a perfect book-worm. Sister Emma, that child is losing all spirit, and will never be capable of gracing the circles in which her mother moves like a brilliant star, if she is left much longer with that *gauche* Saint Mary."

"I have few fears on that score, my dear Angel; and, though I doubt whether my child will eclipse her Aunt in personal attractions, I pray that she may be more liberal," was the rejoinder.

"I stand corrected, Emma dear, but truly you ought to place your child under a French *gouvernante*, for the little girl gives promise of uncommon beauty, which a French woman will teach her how to prize, besides infusing into her manners an air of vivacity and *naïveté*."

Lily's request to sleep with me recalled me to the present; but, while she slept so sweetly in my arms, the possibility of being superseded by another, and parted from the sweet child, gave me a sleepless night. I thought the matter over, and saw that Miss Melbourne had some reason for her unkind remarks; for Lily was very studious, and seemed to prefer my society to that of the merry children who visited at Mayflower Hall; in truth, seemed old and wise, beyond her years. She would nestle in my arms lovingly, with her sweet lips pressed to my cheek, whilst I read or improvised stories for her amusement, for hours, while the other children were playing and romping on the green beneath my windows.

She thought more deeply, and evinced more tact and delicacy of feeling, than any child I had ever known. I wish I could copy her original sayings, her quaint questions, yet time will not allow me to do so here. To strangers, to her parents even, she was very reserved and distant. They considered Joy more interesting than his sister; in truth, the

fun-loving little fellow was a general favorite. I often wished that people could understand Lily's guileless nature. Sometimes she made me think of lost Alice, so vividly recalled her, that I fancied her the spirit of my dead darling. I was glad when the holidays were over; for Angel Melbourne went to New Orleans on the following week, to visit a school friend; and Mr. Willington returned to Washington soon after her departure. He was a member of Congress, they told me. The winter passed slowly away with its company, yet loneliness; its duties and heart-aches, and my first year at the sunny South was over.



CHAPTER XXIII.

MIDA.

"Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied;
We thought her dying while she slept,
And sleeping when she died."—HOOD.

MRS. DE LACY was one of Mrs. Melbourne's most intimate friends. Her plantation joined that of Mayflower. Her husband had been dead several years, but she seemed to enjoy her freedom. It was said by some that she managed her slaves admirably, by others the reverse. As she was wealthy and influential, people closed their eyes to her faults and enjoyed her delightful entertainments. I once heard Mr. Melbourne remark:

"Mrs. De Lacy's overseer is a human shark! He should be mobbed and driven out of the State. It is said that he not only uses the rod himself, but compels the colored people to whip each other—even their own parents—cruelly. They tell me that his infernal whipping-post is bloody half of the time. Its a damning shame!"

"Yes, indeed it is, brother; but it is always the

case with these detestable Yankees! Their dispositions are fiendish in the extreme," said his sister, with a meaning look at me; but I am afraid that my perfect unconcern made her feel that her home-thrust had not been appreciated. I had, since my sojourn with the Melbournes, been so silent on the subject of slavery, that they might have believed me a lover of the "divine institution;" yet, at heart, I was bitterly opposed to it, in every respect. It is true, however, that the uniform kindness of my employers toward their colored people had somewhat undermined my prejudices and made me look a little more leniently upon our national sin, yet I should never have become a convert.

Mrs. De Lacy's children were away at school, and as she was sometimes a little lonely, she came or sent for me to drive away her *ennui*.

She summoned me, one afternoon in May, and, when I was ushered into her perfumed boudoir, greeted me with:

"I am feeling very low-spirited, my dear *Idyllette*"—my new name had been given by her—"on account of a loss which I have just met. My dressing-maid,—the beautiful quadroon that I purchased in New Orleans, you remember, has run away. Only think of her ingratitude. I paid *fifteen hundred dollars* for her only last month, and she has done nothing but

grieve for her mother ever since. I tell you, she is a superb creature, though. Her eyes, and teeth, and hair, are perfectly splendid! I treated her well; but you know what airs these educated negroes take on. You can never quite humanize them.

"Randolph is still looking for Mida. I regret that I ever laid my eyes on her, for she has already made me more trouble than she is worth." At that moment, a message was handed her, from her overseer, stating that he had found the unfortunate servant at a "camp meeting," ten miles away. Heedless of her prayers and tears he had dragged her from the altar and made her walk beside his horse every step of the way home, I learned subsequently.

"And now, Madam, what shall we do with Mida? Unless we handle her severely, she will be off again, in less than a fortnight; then all of your niggers will follow her. An insurrection, Madam, will be the result. Shall I send her to the whipping-post?"

The lady turned to me, and asked, with white lips:

"What shall I do? Do tell me what I ought to do?"

"I should reprimand her; but she is too delicate-looking to be sent to the 'whipping-post,'" I ventured to say.

Randolph regarded me with a lowering scowl, and exclaimed:

"You will be murdered in your bed, if you do not make an example of her, Madam!"

"Ah, mistress, do not let him whip me! I never was whipped in my life! It will kill me, I know! Only forgive me this once and trust me again, and see if I ever disobey you, or try to run away again!" she pleaded, but that Christian woman pushed her away from her, and heedless of the poor girl's convulsive agony, of her blood-shot eyes, of her white despair, suffered her to be led, or rather dragged to the torture. Then, she turned to me and moaned:

"I am a weak, unprotected woman! I dare not be tender-hearted. I must not allow my servants to disobey me with impunity!"

It was well for me that she did not see me bite my lips until the blood oozed from them; or, that she could not read the thoughts which surged through my heart and brain as she walked up and down the parlor in nervous agitation.

At length, we heard footsteps on the piazza and in the hall, and were quite prepared to hear that Mida had been in a death-like swoon ever since the first stroke of the lash upon her shoulders—that they had carried her up to her room and feared that she was dying.

"And Oh! Missis, for the love of de good Lord, do

come up and help us! We can't fotch her to," urged the kind-hearted Leone.

"I cannot see her!—cannot go to her! Oh, Mary Idyl! pity me—do not look at me so stonily;—so like an avenger—a Nemesis! God, forgive me! I have killed Mida—I *know* I have. Do you go to her quickly;" and Mrs. De Lacy was carried to her chamber in violent hysterics.

I went to the bed-side of the lacerated, bleeding victim, and found her surrounded by the terrified servants. They told me, with awe-stricken faces, that they had just "come in to look at de poor crushed thing—jest to see if she war dead." I choked back my own tears; then dressed the sufferer's back and shoulders, from which the blood still oozed, staining the white wrapper which old Leone had tenderly folded around her. She awoke about midnight and sobbed, brokenly:

"Ah, mother! I am *so* glad you have come! I wanted to die in your dear arms. Do not be sorry that I am going away where I shall never be whipped any more. I have beaten my life out in my prison cage—against the iron bars of slavery. Long suffering Jesus, how long?—*how long* will this curse exist? Kiss me again, mother—your kisses will cool off this burning fever"—she thought I was her mother, evidently; and I could not undeceive her—"but I can-

not see you—my tears have blinded my eyes.” Then she wound her hot arms around me, and again her mind wandered. The weary hours of that terrible night drifted slowly away, and with the darkness the soul of freed Mida departed. I smoothed her dark hair and composed her no longer tired limbs. The following beautiful words, by Hood, came to mind:

“For, when the morn came, dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her gentle eyelids closed; she had
Another morn than ours.”

I could not sympathize with old Leone, who wept wildly for the young stranger; neither did I dare tell the faithful creature that I was thankful that her fellow-servant was *free*; that no galling chains would ever fetter her again.

“No, she will nebbber be whipped no more! De bressed Lord am good. Wish we cullard folks all as free as poor Mida!” she moaned, as she covered her face with her apron and rocked backward and forward upon the floor.

I went down to Mrs. De Lacy’s chamber and found her in a refreshing slumber. They told me that she was subject to such attacks; also, that she had suffered terribly all night—that sleep was all she needed; and the doctor had left word that no one was to disturb or speak to her all day; therefore, as I could not,

by remaining, be of any use to her, I returned to Mayflower that morning.

“Why will God suffer such wrong to be perpetrated?” I cried, as I buried my face in my pillow. The rain-drops, which were softly plashing against my window, were my only answer. They seemed to say: “Not long, Mary Idyl, not long.”

I subsequently learned that Mr. Willington and Miss Melbourne had arrived during my absence; that their wedding was to take place in a fortnight. The next day there were several guests from the city at dinner. Toward the close of the meal, Mr. Melbourne said:

“I was told this morning that Mrs. De Lacy’s overseer mangled a servant so cruelly on Saturday that she died before morning. Miss Idyl, how was it? I understand that you were present. I should like to know the truth.”

I did not answer immediately, but felt that my downcast eyes and flushed cheeks were a sufficient reply. Mr. Willington saw my emotion and came to the rescue.

“I see by your tell-tale face, Miss Idyl, that it is too true. I am surprised that Mrs. De Lacy should be blind to her own interests—her own sense of right. I did not imagine that so much cruelty could lurk in the female heart. Her unchristian act is without a parallel in this vicinity.”

"Now, brother, I do not agree with you," said his sister. The conduct of the lady in question merits my warmest approbation!"

"Mine, too. She is an unprotected woman, and has a right to do as she thinks proper with her *chattels*. These niggers"—turning pleasantly to me—"are an inhuman, soulless race—little better than the brute creation. If we are too lenient with them, they will not hesitate to rise up in a bloody insurrection. Our lives and property are in danger. Mrs. De Lacy paid *fifteen hundred dollars* for that ungrateful quadroon, Florette has just told me. I should have done the same, had I such a creature to deal with. Such ingratitude from a descendant of Ham is too much for endurance!" said the bride-elect, warmly. A look of surprise and pain overspread her lover's classical features, and a crimson flush mounted his white forehead, but he forced a smile to his lips and asked:

"And what will my peerless Juno do if she fails to subdue the colored race? Will she deluge the earth, turn Phœbus's fiery steeds backwards, send Luna wandering 'rayless and pathless' through space?—or doom her chattels to the abode of Orcus? Or will she turn them into Centaurs and place them among the constellations?"

"The latter. I'll place them with the stars for the

benefit of negro-worshippers," she rejoined, with an angry glance in my direction.

"That would delight the abolitionists too much, *ma belle sœur*," laughed her brother; then insisted upon hearing my version of the sad affair. I related it simply and truly, and tried to soften Mrs. De Lacy's conduct as much as possible; yet it was plainly a futile attempt on my part. During my recital, the "beautiful Juno" sat with a serpentine glitter in her dark eyes, with a perceptible sneer upon her coral lips. It was obvious to me that with all her accomplishments and mental acquirements, as well as fine mannerism, Miss Angel had neglected that most important branch of education—viz., the cultivation of the heart; that, besides being vain and haughty, fashion was her god—her shrine. An ambitious, heartless, selfish, spoiled child of affluence; yet, in her lover's eyes, I knew that she appeared as faultless as she was beautiful. Very few men could have withstood her wonderful charms. She was a natural coquette—had been one from infancy; and I saw that it annoyed her to think that her days of belleship were over—that her love of admiration was not yet satiated. From the first, she had scarcely addressed me without saying something to wound my feelings; then her patronizing airs were hard to bear; therefore, I rejoiced in the thought that her visit would be of

short duration; while I secretly wondered that Mr. Willington should have chosen one whose tastes were so diametrically opposed to his own. Her non-appreciation of his favorite studies and scientific experiments did trouble him occasionally, I noticed, but then he thought:

"How beautiful she is! How she does queen it over society. What an elegant woman she will become! And how she will grace my handsome establishment in Washington. Then, in all probability, the paragon will in a few years settle down to my chosen pursuits, and thus answer my dream of perfect wifehood."

Only once, during that trying fortnight, did I allow my selfishness and envy to get the better of my feelings. I had been taking a "canter" through the grounds on the back of my favorite Hero, and, when homeward bound, came face to face with Miss Melbourne and Mr. Willington. For a moment I felt a conscious, if not pardonable, pride in the thought that I was sitting as well as the haughty heiress; also, that my dark, well-fitting habit and white drooping plumes were as becoming to me as her more costly costume was to her; but her rather doubtful compliment, viz.:

"Miss Idyl, you would make an excellent wife for Rarey, the horse-tamer," and critical gaze, brought

the indignant color to my cheeks and an angry fire to my eyes, which were new to my friends. As I rode homeward, I did not try to quell the rebellious feelings which welled up from my overcharged heart, for I felt, at that moment, that the love of a God concentrated could not compensate me for the lack of human companionship—of sympathy.

Alas, Heaven seemed too far off in those days to Mary Idyl! I bowed my head on Hero's glossy mane and shed the most bitter tears that had been wrung from me since my arrival at Mayflower, after I turned the sharp bend in the road which hid me from those two highly favored people.



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE EXODUS.

"I found her on the floor
In all the storm of grief; yet beautiful!
Pouring out tears at such a lavish rate
That, were the *world* on fire, they might have drowned
The wrath of Heaven, and quenched the mighty ruin!"

TWO days before the one appointed for Miss Melbourne's wedding, her maid came to me and brought the following message:

"*Mademoiselle* Melbourne will see *Mademoiselle* Idyl in her dressing-room a minute, please."

I laid aside my book and obeyed the summons. Miss Angel was attired in her elegant bridal robes. Her room was strewn with trunks, boxes, jewel-cases, and the most costly apparel. She smiled graciously as I entered, then said:

"I cannot trust either my own or Florette's taste in a case of such momentous importance as this; so, do pray, tell me if my wedding-dress fits me—if it is becoming. My stupid mantua-maker would not allow me to try it on half enough."

White satin, with flounces of point-lace, festooned

with orange blossoms, fell around her fine form like a fleecy cloud of snow, while a veil of the richest Honiton enveloped her in its soft folds. A wreath of braided pearls and orange blossoms encircled her queenly head and glossy hair; while bracelets of pearls and diamonds, and a neckless of the same, completed her lovely attire. The strong light of the chandelier—for the room was darkened—threw a dazzling shimmer over all, bewildering me with her exquisite taste and patrician beauty.

"Well, will I do?" she asked, smiling down into my face.

"Certainly, Miss Melbourne, this shining cloud transfigures you. If you do not believe me, just turn toward the door, and read the confirmation of my words in somebody's happy face."

She looked around, but her color neither deepened nor diminished as her eyes rested upon her lover's. He bent down and kissed her polished forehead, and whispered, fondly, proudly:

"Florette told me come in, or I should not have ventured, *ma belle ange*. Yes, you are perfect, Angelmine," then he dropped her hand, and asked if I were playing the younger sister.

"No. I am only *en spectateur*, Mr. Willington."

After again apologizing for his intrusion, he left us, and Florette disrobed her young lady; then dis-

played her mistress' handsome *trousseau*, which, she declared, would take her "all night to pack up." I assisted in folding some of the rich silks, but every fold of those lustrous fabrics seemed to wrap an icy shroud around my heart.

During the packing process, a small locket fell from the creamy folds of a white Indian shawl. I handed it to Miss Melbourne, but she threw it back to me with these words:

"Keep it, *petite*, it will remind you of this life of abject servitude." I thanked her, and, supposing that it was her own miniature, carelessly put it into my pocket without looking at it—I subsequently found that it was her lover's—then told her that the past year had been the easiest, if not the happiest one, of all my past life. With a look of sincere commiseration she observed:

"Alas! my unhappy, ill-starred friend, how I do pity you, or any one else, who has the care of children! I think the old horrors of the Inquisition were small, compared with being crazed by those horrid, troublesome little pests down-stairs."

Not caring to debate the question with her, I said, "Good-night," then went slowly back to my apartment, and resumed my pleasant task of translating "Undine" into English.

As Mr. Willington did not make his appearance at

breakfast on the following morning, they dispatched a servant to his room to ascertain if he had overslept himself, or gone out, and we were soon startled by this announcement:

"He berry sick, missus, berry! Told me to foch Dr. Mansfield right away, missus."

A strange hush followed; then Mrs. Melbourne endeavored to allay Angel's fears, by remarking:

"Lloyd is subject to severe attacks of sick headache; I presume it is nothing more serious; so do not look so woe-be-gone, Angel."

"Of course, he will soon be over it, Emma, but his unfortunate indisposition will prohibit our farewell ride around beautiful Mayflower this morning," said the bride-elect, poutingly; then resumed: "It may be years before we return, you know, as the President has more than hinted that Lloyd is to have the refusal of an appointment to some desirable foreign court, as minister plenipotentiary, before long."

Dr. Fields, who had just arrived from New Orleans, offered to accompany her in her morning ride, so did Mrs. Melbourne, and I saw them enter the barouche an hour later. They were laughing and talking gaily as they drove down the shady avenue, and I wondered at their extreme selfishness.

That night a strange presentiment of coming trouble

entirely banished sleep from my eyes ; therefore, after wooing the poppy-god fruitlessly for hours, I arose and dressed myself ; then went out into the hall, with the intention of promenading the silent corridor until I had wearied myself sufficiently to enjoy the embraces of Morpheus ; but the sound of approaching footsteps attracted my attention. I looked around nervously, and saw Dr. Mansfield coming toward me, looking worried and disconsolate. The sight of his haggard face caused an icy chilliness to creep over me, a sickening dread to fill my heart, and I had to lean against the balustrade to keep from falling. He held out his hand kindly, with—

“Why, young lady, are you on patrol? I did not know that Mayflower had to be thus guarded at night. It is two o’clock, Miss—high time that you, as well as myself, were in dreamland. What is the reason that you are not asleep, Miss Idyl?”

“I suppose that it is because I have offended the poppy-god, doctor ; but how is your patient?”

He shook his head, looked at me searchingly, then came near and answered, in a low tone :

“He is very ill with—I may as well tell you—the yellow fever. The attack was very sudden ; he is already delirious. I shall apprise the family of their danger in the morning. There are already a dozen cases of it in the city, and their only chance of safety

will be immediate flight. I will send an experienced nurse to Mr. Willington to-morrow.”

“Do you mean that we shall all go, and leave him to die alone, or with only a stranger to take care of him, sir?”

“There is no alternative, young lady.”

“Doctor, I will not leave him !” I said, decidedly.

“My dear girl, you really must go with the family before the house is infected with this loathsome contagion !”

“I shall remain, doctor, notwithstanding your kind advice.” He rubbed his spectacles, looked at me doubtfully, then, with the deepest surprise depicted on his face, thus remonstrated with me :

“You have too little nerve and strength to watch with him one day. It is not your duty to sacrifice your own life so willfully, so uselessly. I will never allow it !”

“Nevertheless, I shall not desert the friend, who once saved my life, in his trial hour.”

“Stay then, and fall a victim to this fatal pestilence.”

“Doctor, I am in no greater danger here than in my quiet Northern home. I am to die sometime, it matters little to me now, when or where.”

“Rash girl ! You will realize your danger when this excitement is over.”

"I am not excited. Feel of my pulse if you doubt my assertion, sir. It is simply my duty—I shall not shrink from it."

"*Duty!*" he growled; "it is a supererogation, child!"

"See here, doctor, do you believe that any individual ever yet died by chance; in other words, before God sent forth the decree that he should die? If the very hairs of our heads are numbered, if not one sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, will He allow us to go to the spirit-world before He wills our dissolution?" I asked, in an awkward, disjointed manner.

"Well, no, I suppose not, you young fatalist; but it will be wasting breath to try to convince you that people often hasten their own death by violating the unalterable laws of nature, or telling you to review the history of Hezekiah, whose life was prolonged fifteen years in answer to prayer; but I will leave you, hoping that a stronger power than your own will has prompted you to do this unheard-of thing. Willington, poor fellow, is one of my truest friends—the noblest-hearted young man I ever knew, and I hope that his life may be spared. Good-night."

At daybreak the whole house was in the greatest commotion. Guests were departing in the wildest haste; servants were running to and fro; Mr. Mel-

bourne was walking up and down the halls giving orders, and Mrs. Melbourne was sobbing helplessly under the hands of her maid.

Mr. Melbourne called out hastily:

"Miss Idyl, flight is our only safety. See that Ruth and Daisy prepare themselves and the children for the early boat—it leaves at seven o'clock—tell them to pack everything that will be needed for a month or two, and do not waste any time yourself in getting ready, for we must be off in an hour!" I went to Miss Melbourne's room, for I remembered that that was to have been her wedding-day, and sincerely pitied her. She was terribly excited, and tears of disappointment were raining down her flushed cheeks, as she moaned, childishly:

"Oh, Mary Idyl! come here. How dreadful it is to have this undreamed-of calamity come to me on my wedding-day! He will die! I know he will, yet I dare not see him. It is terrible to be so disappointed, when I was anticipating so much enjoyment." Then she flashed past me in her handsome traveling suit, sobbing: "Yes, brother is right! I will not imperil my life by remaining another hour. Self-preservation is the first law of nature." Her brother told her to calm herself, or her agitation would bring on the fever. I tried to soothe the unhappy belle, but she pushed me aside rudely.

"Do not stand there, looking for all the world like a white tombstone emerging from Northern snows, Mary Idyl, but get ready for your journey, or you will be left!" cried the tearful Sappho. As she was entering the carriage something made me spring down the steps, and tell her that I was going to remain.

She eyed me incredulously for a moment, then extending her daintily-gloved hand, while a softer fire glowed in her magnificent eyes, said: "I am glad, for Lloyd's sake. Tell him that I did not dare to see him or stay; and write to me as soon as the crisis is past. Tell him to meet me at Cape May as soon as he can travel. *Au revoir!*" and she was gone. I suppose that the good doctor had advised the Melbournes to allow me to remain, for they seemed rather glad than otherwise; yet, in their excusable haste, there was no time for remonstrances.

Lily clung to me until her father sternly tore her from my arms, and ordered her to be quiet; while her mother whimpered, brokenly: "I bless Heaven for you, Mary Idyl! If my dear brother lives, it will be owing to your kindness in taking this fearful responsibility off of our hands. God bless and protect you both!"

"If it were not for my children's safety, I would not thus cowardly forsake my noble, talented Lloyd.

Pray constantly, child, that he may not be cut down in the prime of his beautiful manhood!" then she kissed me tenderly, the carriage-door was closed, and I was left alone under the magnolias.

How little they seemed to care for me, after all! Of what very small consequence my life or death was to those favored children of opulence, for they had not given my dangerous situation a single thought! Still, although far from being regardless of popular opinion, I was not sorry that I had dared to remain at beautiful Mayflower, and fearlessly face the noisome pestilence which I knew was lurking in every breath of air on that sweet summer morning.



CHAPTER XXV.

"THE DESTRUCTION THAT WASTETH AT NOONDAY."

"All the air is fever laden,
All our hearts are full of pain;
All the flowers are drooping, fading;
Zeus send the blessed rain!"

"WHY, chile, I thought you done been gone mid' missus an' de chil'en;" whispered Aunt Dahlia, as I took my place at the bedside of her young master.

"No, Aunty, I am going to stay and help you take care of Mr. Willington."

"De good Lor' bress an' keep yer, honey! S'pose yer stay a leetle while now, den, till I go and git some breckfus fur my ole man Nero, kase he's so foolish, honey, he'll nebber eat a bit widout me, honey." I went over to the windows and threw them open, but could feel that fever dwelt in every particle of the surrounding atmosphere, then went back to his bedside. As I studied the sufferer's burning face, Memory went back to that scene on the burning deck, to my struggle with the waves;

then, like the broken links of some forgotten dream, I again felt his strong, protecting arms around me, and heard his whispered prayer that I might live; knew that his warm breath was being breathed into my dumb, cold lips! Then came our first meeting at Mayflower—his brotherly kindness and the certainty of our separation whether he lived or died, but it all tended to strengthen my resolution to remain.

The Doctor entered soon after;

"My little Florence Nightingale must not fail to exercise daily in the open air or take her meals regularly, or I shall prohibit her entrance into this foetid, fever-laden apartment; neither must she allow herself to become unduly excited," he advised: then added; "Willington is very sick, but it is possible that his strong nerves and excellent constitution will triumph over the fever."

A week later, Dahlia declared that she, "could'nt stan' it nohow to hear poor Massr Lord talk so queer all de time. It makes my ole bones trem'le like his maggit needle to hear him askin' fur dat good-fur-nothin' Miss Angel, all de time."

Before the week ended, she, as well as all of the house servants and nearly every one on the plantation, had taken the dire epidemic. Indeed the death-angel was brooding over the entire neighborhood.

All kinds of business languished, except that of the druggist and undertaker.

The mortality amongst the field laborers was great. I visited the Quarters daily, and did all I could to comfort the sick and dying. "Darling Lily! your Bibles were not dispensed in vain! Your name and Heaven are the last words which I hear from the dying lips of these poor colored children whom your loving teachings rendered so happy months ago," I thought as I heard them bless their beautiful "White Lily," as they called my little pupil.

For several days I could see no change in Mr. Willington. Sometimes my hot tears fell upon his forehead, so handsome still in its intellectuality, yet so yellow and ghastly, while I brushed back the dark curling hair, or tried to soothe him in his wild ravings. At times he would call loudly for Angel, then reproach her for remaining away so long. Again, he would debate with his compeers in the noisy arena of Congress with such perfect rhetorical phrase that I could scarcely believe him to be rambling in the mazes of delirium; yet, during all of his incoherent wanderings, he never gave utterance to unmanly language, but breathed in all a Christian spirit; displayed a heart thoroughly pure to the core. Truly a "Sweet fountain cannot send forth bitter water."

"No, no! Angel Melbourne does not deserve him! She is not worthy of such a husband!" my heart cried rebelliously. "This is *her* place, instead of mine. I have no right to stay here a moment."

"Nevertheless," cried Reason, "be calm and do your duty, child, unshrinkingly!"

"But, must I only walk in the pale uncertain light of duty?" I asked my invisible monitress:

"Yes; and an approving conscience will be a 'pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day' to guide you."

"But have I the right to watch beside the bed of her affianced husband?" I groaned.

"Why not? She has proved herself unworthy of the privilege—go on. You shall know in the future why this trial has come upon you. It will strengthen your undisciplined heart and subdue your selfishness—besides, you are doing good for evil. Although his bride may never acknowledge your services or appreciate your self-sacrificing spirit, the consciousness of having been a comfort to a suffering, dying friend will sustain you," I still urged my guardian angel.

Toward the close of the ninth day my anxiety became so intense, that every faculty of the mind seemed to be wrought up to the highest tension. I felt that the feeble chords of reason would snap asun

der should death gain the supremacy. For eight days and nights I had scarcely left him, or slept an hour. I was too much worried to realize my own weariness. Every thought was merged into solicitude for my friend's welfare, yet through all those painful vigils, I clung to the hope of his recovery. I could not have it otherwise.

About sundown Dr. Mansfield entered, and offered to take my place for the night. I looked at him, inquiringly, but shook my head, and asked:

"Doctor, do you think that his illness will terminate in death?"

"My dear Florence, while there is *life* there is hope." I think my extreme anxiety made me answer testily:

"My name is *Mary*, sir; Mary Idyl. But do not trifle with me, I cannot bear it. I know that a few hours will decide the contest between life and death, sir."

"Well, then, Miss Idyl, I will not deceive you. I fear the worst." And he held the door open for me to go. I did not stir. His answer seemed to congeal my very pulses. My heart almost stood still—yet I would not believe him, or leave the room for a moment during the long hours of that terrible night. Indeed, scarcely took my hand from his forehead or my eyes from his hot, emaciated face. How warm and noisome were the infected vapors!

How dimly burned the lights in that dense atmosphere. How quickly the flowers—which had been brought in to his chamber but a few hours before—drooped and withered. Toward morning the fever-flush faded from his cheeks, and a faint moisture gathered on his face. He seemed to sleep, but I could not tell, for he scarcely breathed. I motioned to the doctor. He bent over his patient for a moment, and felt his pulse; then with an expression of joyful relief, whispered:

"I think—yes—I am almost sure that the crisis is past—that there is a change for the better." The next thing that I remember was being carried to my room by Aunt Dido. She was saying:

"It's no wonder de pore tired gal fainted dead away when you told her dat Marse Lord 'd git well agin, doctor, fur she's clear beat out with settin' up and nussin' him."

They had to administer a powerful opiate, even then, to make me sleep; and when I awoke, late in the evening of that day, I was as weak as if I had myself been ill, but with Aunt Dido's assistance I took a cooling bath, then dressed myself in pure white linen and went to Mr. Willington's chamber. He gave me a faint smile of recognition, and whispered, as I adjusted his pillows:

"Yes, you are my water waif—my little sister. In all

my troubled dreams you were near me, yet I could not re-call your name. When you sang softly to yourself, or flitted noiselessly through the room, you reminded me of the home-lights of a village when we are riding swiftly past on a moonless night;—or, the occasional glimpses of some half-forgotten dream, or the prelude of an olden melody that I had heard my mother sing long years before.” I tried to stop him, by offering him a soothing drink, but he went on, in broken whispers: “It was—not—so with—Angie. I always recognized her by the rustle of her silk dress, by the cloud of tuberose which floated around her. She would dance in and out of my room—but where is she? I have not seen her to-day?” I told him, and he soon closed his eyes and slept like a tired child.

Mr. Melbourne came home a few days later, much to my delight and relief.

He shook hands with me, and said:

“We shall never forget that you have risked your life to save Lloyd’s, Miss Idyl; but you shall be well *paid* for your faithful services.”

I blushed painfully, and turned hastily away to hide my tears of vexation. He saw that his words had grieved me, and added:

“I did not mean to offend you—I sincerely beg your pardon.”

“It is granted—until you again speak of remunerating me for doing an obvious duty.”

He told me that the rest of the family were still at Cape May; that Miss Melbourne was going to join a party of friends at Nahant in a week or two. Lily, he said, had been ill with a slow, nervous fever, and would not be able to travel until the weather grew cooler.

Mr. Willington’s recovery was slow, and, at times, doubtful for several weeks; but, finally, Dr. Mansfield pronounced him *a cripple for life*. The fever had deprived him of the use of his limbs.

His beautiful Juno still lingered at the North, and we only heard from her through Mrs. Melbourne. At first, when the daily mail was brought in, Mr. Willington would look disappointed, but he finally seemed to grow accustomed to her extraordinary silence. I still acted as his reader and amanuensis, for he could not hold a book or pen in his useless hands.

One evening, whilst we were seated near the fountain in the rose arbor, he asked me to write, at his dictation, a letter to Miss Melbourne.

“Tell her, *petite*, that I shall, in all probability, remain a helpless cripple for life; but, if she still desires to link her bright young life with my deformity and premature old age, I am ready to fulfil my promise.

If, on the contrary, she feels that the sacrifice is too great, I am willing to release her from the contract."

"Dr. Mansfield will do this better than I can; I shall be obliged to refuse, I think. Indeed, I cannot write to her," I stammered; then added, as I rose:

"Shall I send Dandy to carry you to your room, sir? The air is getting rather damp for you, and I fear you will take cold." He nodded, and I bade him good night.



CHAPTER XXVI.

A LETTER.

"Whom first we love we seldom wed."

MRS. MELBOURNE finally returned, bringing my frail Lily and Joy; but Miss Melbourne, she said, had concluded to remain another month at Nahant.

I was not prepared for the change in my beloved pupil. She came into my room, on the night of her arrival, looking more like the delicate white flower whose name she bore, than her former self; and said, wearily:

"Dear Miss Idyl, we will never part again while I live, will we? Oh, how I have wanted you! and—don't tell mamma—I think I am going to die, darling!"

Of course, I endeavored to quiet her, but her words kept me awake all night.

About a week after Mrs. Melbourne's arrival, a letter was placed in my hands bearing Angel's monogram, and post-marked Nahant.

It read as follows:

10*

"MISS MARY IDYL, Governess, Mayflower.

"Please say to Mr. Willington that I have read Dr. Mansfield's letter, which was written at his dictation, and have concluded to accept my release from our romantic engagement, and link my destiny with one who, also, has been a life-long friend, viz: Dr. Junius Fields.

"The doctor and myself have similar tastes—while with Mr. Willington it was far otherwise; yet, how noble Lloyd was to give me my freedom. It would have embittered my whole life to have been tied to a helpless invalid.

"After all, I rejoice that I have learned to know my own heart at last—that my mind is at rest,—for, *entre nous*, I have been *entre deux feux* ever since I left charming Mayflower.

"Remember me to the family. I hope that their good sense will prevent them from being angry at me. We start for Europe to-morrow.

"*Au Revoir,* ANGEL FIELDS."

"P. S.—Lloyd's letters and presents are in my writing-desk and dressing-case. You will be kind enough to return them to him, with my kindest thanks and remembrances. The doctor wishes to be remembered to 'Miss Charon,' and rejoices that she did not row him over the Styx, as he finds Terra preferable to the Inferno at present. A. F."

"Not very angelic, truly," was my inward comment, as I folded my letter, and went slowly into the library where her rejected lover sat awaiting me,—for I still read to him, after lessons were over,—at his sister's urgent request.

"He will henceforth associate me with his broken dream—for the bearer of unpleasant news is always an unwelcome friend,—'hath but a losing office,'" I mused, as I approached his favorite alcove. A "Manual of Classical Literature," in the original German, was upon the table before him, but I saw, at a glance, that his mind was not as usual deep in archæological research, for his head was bowed upon the book.

"You are welcome, little girl; I was growing almost impatient;" he murmured in an absent manner without looking up.

"That is strange. I supposed that you were always patient, Mr. Willington."

"I am not, however, especially when I am obliged to turn these obstinate pages with my tongue."

"Mr. Willington, I am the recipient of a letter from a quondam friend of yours, containing a message to yourself. Shall I read it?"

"Certainly,—providing said missive contains matter sufficiently entertaining to keep me awake. Please proceed."

Not a muscle of his pale face moved until I had

finished the letter, then the firm lips relaxed into a half smile, and he observed :

"She is right. There never would have been any reciprocity of tastes—any congruence of feeling between us. No, I do not blame her, either ; I should only have been a sort of clog to her happiness ; neither can I 'throw the first stone,' of reproach ; for of late, my own heart has swerved from its moorings. So you see, *petite*, that I am as worthy of censure, as my beautiful friend Angel Fields is. I hope and believe, that this severe lesson will teach me to admire a cultivated and well-disciplined heart more than a brilliant exterior."

"Then I need not purchase a bottle of prussic acid for you, or bring you your pistols?" I asked, demurely. He smiled in spite of himself, and rejoined :

"No. In the romantic language of a recent novel-writer, 'the severed tendrils of my broken dream will again bud and blossom. The rays of affection will once more culminate on some worthier object ;' and Miss Mary, whilst your friendship endures I shall continue to admire women."

I did not reply, but opened my pocket Bible and read to him the beautiful 24th Psalm ; then, without a word, left him ; but the memory of his parting glance of mute thankfulness drove sleep from my eyes for hours.

A week later, as he did not gain any strength, Dr. Mansfield persuaded him to try sea-bathing and change of air, and his sister and several of his friends accompanied him to Atlantic City, where he remained until late in autumn.

The children and myself were sent to the White Sulphur Springs for a month, but the healing waters and salubrious air did not benefit our fading Lily. She continued to lose flesh daily, while her sweet violet eyes grew larger and brighter, and her paroxysms of coughing returned more frequently. We carried her back to Mayflower in October. Her mother was still absent, and the entire care of the little invalid devolved upon me ; but I did not find it irksome, for she had twined herself so closely around my heart, and awakened such capacities for loving in its unknown depths, that I felt almost a mother's affection for my pupil.

One afternoon, as we were seated in the little Swiss *chalet*, she requested me to tell her a Bible story. "You have not told me one for a long time," said she. It was true. I had of late been fearful of fostering an unhealthy sentimentality in her susceptible mind, and had therefore avoided all allusions to death or the future state of the soul. Joy answered :

"Dear Lily, I do wish you would not talk so much about going to Heaven, for I mean to be a missionary

some of these days, and shall want to take you with me to China or India."

She lifted her pure, truthful face from my arm, and asked: "Miss Idyl, do you really believe that I shall live to be a woman?"

"Why, Lily, what makes you ask such a question?"

"Because, Miss Idyl, something tells me all the time that I shall go to Heaven before long. It makes me real glad, too—only—I don't want to leave you all. Oh, Joy, dear brother, do *not* cry so!"

"I cannot help it, sister! You shall not leave me. They've lots of little children in Heaven, and don't want you; besides, I should be so lonesome that I should have to go, too, you know!" he sobbed, impulsively. Of course I told them a story, and endeavored to divert their thoughts, but Lily did not appear to hear me; for she was looking at the crimson clouds in the west, with a misty, far-off look, which frightened me.

"How beautiful this world is, Joy; yet I want to see that brighter one where the sunshine never fades into night, and where they 'need no candle, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light;'" she murmured, dreamily, as I led her toward the Hall

I wrote to her mother that evening, telling her my fears, and urging her to hasten home. She obeyed

the summons immediately, but the dear child was so patient and uncomplaining, that the purple days of autumn drifted into early winter ere Mrs. Melbourne realized her danger.



CHAPTER XXVII.

LILY MELBOURNE.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there ;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair."—LONGFELLOW.

I WAS holding the sleeping sufferer in my arms one evening, listening to her painful breathing, when Dr. Mansfield entered, accompanied by Mrs. Melbourne. The latter was elegantly dressed in lavender satin and rare laces, while diamonds glittered on her arms and neck, and her abundant dark hair was adorned with a cluster of white camelias.

"I am going to spend this evening in the city, Miss Mary, and I want you to remain with Lily until I return—if you will be so kind. I would not go if I could possibly avoid it; but a very dear friend of ours is to be married to-night, and I really must attend her wedding. Lily will not make you any trouble, I think. Then, turning to the physician:

"Doctor, you do not think that she is any worse, do you? That is, that her disease will assume a more

serious form, do you?" He turned and eyed her gravely, then answered:

"Yes, madam, I am afraid that it will terminate fatally, unless there is a change for the better soon."

"Nonsense, doctor! She may live longer than either of us. You and our dear little Miss Idyl have been unnecessarily alarmed from the first. Still, this is the last time that I shall leave her until she is better;" and she kissed the sleeper's wasted cheek lightly and left us. As I looked upon Lily's thin, white face, I could not help recalling her reply to the little colored girl who waited upon her daily, and had once asked:

"Will I be white like you, Miss Lily, when I die?"

"Yes, Daphne, if your *heart* is white; so do not let it get all blackened by sin. But I am too pale, Daphne—it is because I am going to die."

About 10 o'clock she opened her eyes suddenly, and threw her arms around my neck with a loving embrace. I spoke to her, but she did not answer. I saw that she was gasping for breath; also, that a strange change had crept over her face, for her eyes were widely dilated and unearthly in their brilliancy, as she looked forward into vacancy for a few minutes; then her head sank heavily upon my arm, and before I could ring for assistance, my darling was dead!

Morning dawned upon a house of mourning. Its light fell lovingly upon the cold, sweet face of my angel Lily. Her faithful attendants, Ruth and Daphne, had scattered a profusion of white flowers over her couch, which was shaded with snowy folds of lace. A cluster of pink azaleas upon her pillow failed to touch her marble-like cheeks with their rose-ate hue—yet she was not dead to me. I felt that her spirit, a living, breathing *presence* was near me, and a feeling of sacred awe fell upon my mind, which the agony of her bereaved friends failed to dispel. Truly,

“There is no Death! What seems so is transition:
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Those portals we call Death.”

They could not persuade me to leave her alone; therefore, I spent that entire day in her silent chamber, in tearless, voiceless grief. The lonesome night crept on apace, yet I still refused to leave the quiet sleeper. “Oh, if tears would only come to my relief!” I thought, as good, patient Dahlia came to me, for the third time that day, and begged me to take a cup of tea. I motioned her away, yet she urged:

“But, honey, ye mus’ eat suthin’; ye hab tased nothin’ dis bressed day. Ye’ll be sick, honey, sure as dis libbin’ worl’. Do jest drink dis cup of nice

green tea, honey. I fix it jest as yer like it—wid good deal ob cream an leetle bit ob sugar.”

“No, my good Dahlia, it would choke me now. Take it away, please.” She quickly put the tray down, and as she wiped away her fast-falling tears, moaned:

“Miss Idyl, God no do widout dat bressed angel any longer, no how. She am dun bin long nuff in dis wicked worl’! I only wish we all am as sure ob hebbin as she.”

Hours passed, but I still sat there amid the clinging memories of the past. At length a sound in the hall arrested my attention, and, on looking around, I saw Mr. Willington leaning on his crutches near the open door.

“Mary Idyl, this is no place for you. The room is cold, and—you really must come with me to the library.”

“I cannot leave her alone; it still seems to me that her sweet spirit is hovering near the casket which has held it so long.”

He came slowly toward me, repeating in a low tone a fragment of Longfellow’s “Resignation:”

“She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone into that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead."

"Thank you for reciting those lines; they have been ringing in my ears all day long," I said.

"In mine, too, Miss Mary. Is it not strange that we should both have been thinking the same thing, although we were miles apart? I only just arrived in the evening boat. You are right. Our dead are never dead to us. This is the reason they always appear so well and happy in our dreams."

After finding that he could not persuade me to leave the death-chamber, he left me and sent old Dahlia in to bear me company. She went into the adjoining dressing-room and was soon fast asleep. Toward morning I seemed to hear Lily calling to me in a whisper, and went quickly to the bed, but she still slept as dreamlessly as before. A sickening odor of heliotrope and mignonette filled the room, making me feel faint, and I went out into the hall for a breath of fresh air, and was surprised to find Mr. Willington asleep in a hall-chair near the door. I concluded that he had pitied my loneliness and remained. They buried her in the family vault; we were not obliged to hear the unfeeling earth rattling upon her coffin, but it seemed cruel to leave our darling there in silence and darkness.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A GODSEND.

"There is, in life, no blooming like affection;
It soothes, it hallows, elevates, subdues,
And bringeth down to earth its native heaven;
Life hath naught else that can supply its place."—L. E. L.

A Leaf from my Diary.

YESTERDAY, whilst reading Schiller to Mr. Willington, he requested me listen to a secret, of which, he said,

"You have never even dreamed, Miss Mary."

"You will find me a good listener, Mr. Willington."

"Thank you. Next to one who converses well, do I admire a good listener. While it is true that I have realized in your self-sacrificing spirit my idea of a perfect womanhood, I have only regarded you with a brother's lawful affection until recent events have given me the right to offer you a warmer place in my affections. And even now I should not dare to ask you to marry a cripple, had not my physician informed me that cases similar to my own had been permanently cured by the healing waters of some

medicinal springs in Germany. Now I know that you have never regarded me in the light of a lover—that it will take you some time to accustom yourself to the idea; but, if you could be induced to think favorably of my suit, and accompany me to Europe as my wife”—

“Excuse this interruption, Mr. Willington, but the thought is too new to me for an immediate answer.”

“I know it, Mary. Yet, believe me, *love* is not a plant of slow growth. My regards for Angel were weak compared with those which actuate my heart at present. If you do not love me, I will teach you to do so; only, do not give me final refusal now,” he added, pleadingly. I felt compelled to say:

“Understand me, dear friend; I know that in heart, in character, in family name, I am not inferior to yourself, to your proud family; yet they and the world will call our union a *mesalliance*. Therefore, I will never become your wife until I have won a name and fortune worthy to be linked with yours.”

“And this is your only answer? Ah, child, you little dream how I have yearned for some token of your love! I would have prized it as the greatest blessing vouchsafed to man. Remember that I have wealth enough for us both—that I can and will compel my friends to acknowledge your worth and receive you as a sister.”

“Yet, my best friend, I cannot have it said that you married beneath yourself. I love you too well for that; yet do not cast me off entirely, for I feel certain that I shall yet be worthy of your priceless love in the eyes of the world.”

“Then you do not quite hate me, *petite*?”

“*Hate* you? Oh, Mr. Willington! I have regarded you as we do the stars, too far off.”

“Then I will not give you up, my darling! I will wait for you as long as Jacob did for Rachel, if I may hope to claim you at last, my little, proud, Northern Snowdrop!” he exclaimed, in that beautiful, humble manner which characterized him. His words touched my heart as nothing else could have done, and I could not help saying:

“It may be years before I can come to you as your—yet, with God’s help, I will come, if you shall still wish to claim me.”

“Thank you, my dear, ambitious Mary. If I could only fold you to my heart—but, alas! these useless hands and arms!” I was at his side in a moment. Scarcely knowing what I did, I bent down and kissed his pale forehead and helpless hands, while my tears fell upon his poor, thin fingers.

“God bless you, Mary! The memory of this moment will brighten the years of tedious waiting

to which you have doomed me," he whispered; then asked me to go to the organ and play one of his favorite songs. I did so, while he accompanied me with his glorious voice.

As I was stealing out of the room he called me back, and asked if I would not exchange my one thin circlet of guinea-gold—which had been in the Idyl family for a hundred years—for one of seed pearls and opals, but something made me refuse his request.

"Your friends will recognize it, and dismissal from beautiful Mayflower will be the result. I shall not need any ring to remind me of you, my best, my truest friend."

"Why, how strangely you talk, Mary; of course I shall make our engagement known to my sister immediately." On my knees I begged him to be silent, and let affairs remain as they were at present. After a severe struggle with his sense of right and honor, he said, reluctantly:

"It shall be as you say, Mary; I can refuse you nothing to-night."

Thus I consented to an engagement, although fully aware that long years of labor and study must intervene before I could win a name and fortune which I could exchange for his, yet I knew that, with God's help, I should succeed.

There never was a more thankful recipient of a priceless treasure, or a more humble one, than myself. I valued his love more than his wealth, or the position which he could give me in society.

After study-hours on the following day, I dressed myself in white merino, and fastened a bunch of half-opened rose-buds at my throat, and went down stairs. Mrs. Melbourne remarked, as we left the dining-hall:

"I am glad to see you looking so well this afternoon, Miss Mary. I have been worrying about your excessive pallor for weeks; but you are gaining color, or else these rose-buds have thrown their pink enchantment around you. After to-day you shall not teach longer than noon, until my brother is either better—or has started for Europe."

I lingered longer at table than usual on that day, then promenaded on the veranda with Joy, until Mr. Willington's bell had sounded several times, impatiently. Mrs. Melbourne joined us, and said, rather nervously, I thought:

"My brother has been asking for you this half-hour; to read some dry political harangue, I presume. Between us both, you scarcely have time to think or breathe!"

I went to him immediately. He greeted me with one of his wonderful smiles, and said, in a low tone:

"You are welcome, my stray sunbeam. This has been the longest morning of my life!"

Before I left him, he told me that he had decided to start for Germany in a few days, adding:

"If I could only take my little comforter with me! Must I really go alone, Mary?"

"You really must, Mr. Willington."

"I feared as much, my proud darling; but—*Mr. Willington!* How cold and formal! Will you not call me Lloyd?"

"I should not like to at present—it does not seem quite right until"—I felt my cheeks burning, and did not finish the sentence. He smiled, and observed:

"You mean until you can call me by a *dearer* name? Ah! if you could only get your own consent now—but my selfishness shall not plead for me. If I needed you less, I should not submit so passively to your decision. As it is, my chief joy will be in reading your letters."

Thus we parted, for we did not meet again alone, and I went back to my one pupil rather sadly, knowing that I had put my lover to a hard test; that he would never need my aid, and sympathy and companionship so much again. Truly, my love and woman's heart pleaded for him, but my judgment, which was stronger than my love, conquered; and for weeks after his departure the memory of his kind farewell filled my soul with music.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CLOUDS GATHER.

"Das Hertz ist gestorben,
Die Welt ist leer,
Und weiter gibt sie
Den Wunche nicht mehr
Dü Heilige rüfe dein Kind Zürrück,
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet."—SCHILLER.

THE winter passed slowly at Mayflower. Mrs. Melbourne saw no one except her most intimate friends. Angel was traveling in foreign lands; Lily, my darling pupil, was sleeping quietly with the dead, and Mr. Willington was a helpless invalid: while Mary Idyl was the happy recipient of his priceless love. Truly, the figures on the chess-board of Mayflower had changed wonderfully in one brief year.

While reviewing my past life, I am half inclined to believe in astrology, and wonder under what vengeful planet I was first stranded upon the shores of time? Again, I am tempted to adopt that absurd theory called "transmigration of souls," groundless as the Bible and reason have proved it to be. What

terrible sin did I commit in some anterior state of existence, which must be expiated in this? Why is it that others move so calmly over life's thoroughfares prospering in everything they attempt, while every effort of mine either ends in disappointment or is reached by the tedious ladder of pain and disappointment? I have been like a tide-driven pebble continually washed back into the boiling surf of discouragement.

The Southern spring was with us again. On the first of March I received a letter with a foreign postmark. How well I remember that bouquet of violets and orange blossoms which Joy laid on my table with the letter and a copy of the "Washington Star." I have hated the perfume of orange blossoms ever since. The letter was written in a hand that I well remembered. I was tempted to fling it into the fire unread. If I had done so, it would have saved me from months of untold sorrow and distrust. But a woman's miserable curiosity compelled me to read as follows:

"MISS M. IDYL,—Allow me to inform you that the Hon. Lloyd Willington is about to be married to the daughter of Senator Smythe of Georgia. He wishes me to tell you that it will not be possible for him to

fulfil his engagement with his friend, Miss Idyl, and hopes she will kindly give him his freedom. I write at his dictation.

"STARBERT LESLIE."

At first, I believed that Leslie had written the letter on his own responsibility, in order to perfect his threatened revenge, knowing that he had been staying at the German Spa, where Mr. Willington had spent the winter; but one glance at the "Washington Star," confirmed the truth of his words. The paper fell from my nervous hands, and I sat for an hour, rigid and motionless as if turned to stone. The very blood seemed to be frozen in my veins. I realized that the beautiful love-dream which had been interwoven with all my thoughts for months, was broken; yet I did not grieve so much over my lost love as my dead faith.

I felt sure that Starbert Leslie had poisoned my reputation, but I had too much pride to allow me to attempt any explanation to Mr. Willington. Hour after hour I sat there thinking,—cold, passionless, motionless. A traveler, thrown suddenly from a balloon into an unknown trackless forest, must feel as I did on that bitter day. "Why has God poured all of His phials of wrath on my defenceless head?" Heedless of the lapse of time, I still sat there with that

stony hardness in my eyes, that outward calmness, while

"O'er the treasures of my soul,
There swept a blacker tide
Than e'en the dismal floods that roll
O'er Sodom's buried pride."

I forgot that the church-bells had rung hours before, that the supper-hour was near, until Aunt Dahlia made her appearance and asked:

"Why, honey, what in dis libbin worl' is de reason ye no come to dinner. Massy sakes! Yere sick honey sure nuff. Your face is as white as my apron. What ails yer, honey?"

"Nothing, good Dahlia; only one of my headaches. I am quite well again, I think, and will be down stairs directly." Then I sat down and wrote a brief note to Mr. Willington, releasing him from all claims to my hand, and informing him that I should leave Mayflower immediately.

My rose-colored poplin failed to dispel the death-like palor of my face, so I stained my cheeks with carmine—for the first and, I hope, only time in my life—and went to Mrs. Melbourne. I handed her the "Star," and pointed gaily to the paragraph, which had given my hopes such a death-blow.

"Ah, that is charming! I am really delighted with the idea of brother's marrying the beautiful 'Belle

of the Capital.' I met her in Washington last summer. She is his equal in every respect,—I shall be glad to welcome the lovely Grace Smythe as a sister." Then she informed me that she had decided to spend the coming summer in foreign travel, and advised me to make my contemplated visit to my Northern home during her absence. I received this delicate dismissal from the only home that I had really loved in silence, and went back to my room to prepare for my journey.

The oppressive heat of my chamber almost suffocated me, and the peaceful moonlight without lured me out upon the veranda. The family had long since retired, and the hall door was locked, but there was a bunch of keys hanging near the door, and among them, I noticed one marked, "Melbourne Vault." Instantly an irresistible desire to visit that charnel house took possession of my mind.

"I must look once more upon the face of my dead darling—my sainted Lily!" I hurriedly thought, as I took the key from the ring, and went into the back kitchen for a candle and a box of matches; then fled silently along the muddy highway, unconscious of time, of distance, of fatigue, of fear even, until I stood at the entrance of the vault. The door creaked frightfully on its rusty hinges, and I was soon beside her little coffin. After a moment's hesitation,

I lifted the rosewood lid of her casket, and stood face to face with my dead pupil.

How beautiful she looked! How little she had changed! Even the waxen flowers on her bosom were perfect. A smile still lingered on her purple lips. There was a thick, transparent glass lid over her, and my eyes were dimmed with unshed tears, yet I could still see the silken fringes of her eye-lids; and her long golden hair still clustered sweetly around her sunken cheeks and temples.

There was a dizzy whirl in my brain, a choking sensation in my throat; then consciousness vanished, and I knew no more until I awoke, an hour later, upon the cold granite floor. My light was extinguished and the door was *closed*! Horrors! had I buried myself alive? I hastily drew a match and closed the lid of the coffin, then groped my way to the door, which I finally succeeded in opening, and, after locking it, turned toward the hall; but I do not remember how I reached my own room, where for hours I lay shivering as with an ague chill; but for months afterwards I nightly lived over my visit to Mayflower Vault in my dreams.

Alas! "we make us idols and find them clay!"

Nero drove me to the station—but before we started he brought Hero, my favorite horse, to the block, that "Little Miss Idy mought see him before she

started for de Norf," he explained, as I bent my head for a moment on his glossy mane.

My parting with Joy was the saddest of all. "God help me!" I thought, as he kissed me good-by, "what an eerie, desolate future is before me!" Then I drew my thick veil over my face and commenced my homeward journey, of which I remember very little—for I took no heed of time, or place, or distance—only the cars did not move fast enough; I wanted them to fly.

II*



CHAPTER XXX.

HOME AGAIN.

"Breathe among those heart-hopes lightly,
 Breathe the hopes of other years;
 List the echo—list the answer—
 Memory tells it o'er with tears."—LILLIE LILBURN.

AS I walked from the station to Daisydell, I wondered if the soft air and April showers could again awake to new life the frozen buds and flowers. Everything looked so dead, and chill and hopeless. It was still winter at the North. Snow-reefs lay white and chill upon all the shady hill-sides and along the fences, as well as beneath the pine trees, in whose branches the wind soughed mournfully. The weird rustling of the dry beechen leaves—those pale ghosts of the dead summer-time—struck a chill to my heart, and reminded me of my faded hopes, as I hastened onward.

I tremble, even now, when I recall the feelings of doubt and frenzy which filled my prayerless heart on that bitter day. Alas! where was my sinful soul drifting?

The broken gate stood wide open. The garden fence lay rotting upon the ground. Everything about the old farm-house wore an air of silent decay, of desolation. I pushed the front door ajar softly and entered the parlor, thinking I would surprise my mother. The shutters were closed, and a pungent odor of camphor and fresh varnish sickened me.

A terrible, undefined fear took possession of my thoughts. The snow must have blinded me, for, on going toward the window, I stumbled over a dark object, and, in falling, my hand fell upon a cold, clammy substance. Half paralyzed with fright, I opened the blind and beheld—*my only beloved brother in his coffin!* A scream—which might have almost awakened the dead child—burst from my lips, and I fell senseless upon the carpet.

When I awoke to consciousness, my parents were bending over me with terror-stricken faces.

"Our only child is with us again! God be praised for sending you to us at this time, Mary!"

"Oh, mother! is this the end of my struggle to earn money enough to send him to school?" I moaned, tearfully. They buried him under the pine trees that afternoon, and I turned away with but one wish in life—to lie down beside him and rest.

On our return to the desolate house, my father told me that we would soon be obliged to leave Daisydell; that the farm was mortgaged for nearly a thousand dollars.

My resolution was instantly taken, and I said, as I handed him my purse:

"Here, father. This money was saved for Willie's education. Take it, and redeem his home—his grave."

The look of glad surprise which swept over his face would have repaid me for ten, instead of two years' teaching.

I went up to my little, lonely room—the one I had occupied in childhood—where I had brooded over real and imaginary troubles, hidden my borrowed books, studied and hoped for a brighter future. I unpacked my trunk, and placed my books upon the rickety shelves and square cherry table; hung my plainest dresses on the dusty pegs (my best ones never saw the light at the farm-house); hid Mr. Willington's likeness in the bottom of my trunk, then threw myself face downward upon my bed, in order to shut out the contrast which the bare walls, rag-carpet, broken window and unsightly furniture made with my elegant appointments at Mayflower.

The door softly opened. My mother bent over me lovingly, pityingly, and soothing words fell upon my

tired, mourning heart, like balmy dew upon thirsty flowers. How unselfishly she had put away her own grief to comfort me! Who—who can fathom a mother's love? Her words calmed me as nothing else could—made me silently resolve to hide my own feelings, and patiently take up the old life again. "Yes, after all my wanderings, after all of my incessant toil and hard study, I am no better off than I was years ago, before I left the roof-tree," I thought despairingly.

Carlyle has truly said: "In idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Blessed is he who has found his life-work; let him ask no other blessedness. Labor is life; from the heart of the worker rises his God-given force, the sacred, celestial life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God."

From that time, until May, I worked in the yard and garden, besides assisting in renovating and repairing the old house. My hands grew hard and brown; but the sun-baths and delicious air, as well as exercise, proved a powerful elixir to my depressed spirits and overworked nerves.

Finally, the absence of earthly anchors drew me back to my old moorings—to the sympathizing heart of Jesus—filled my tempest-tossed soul with "the peace which passeth all understanding." I saw, too, why I had been chastened so deeply. I had been

leaning on my own weak arm for strength, had felt so strong and self-sufficient. Yes, the flood-gates of Marah were turned back, the lightning-charged clouds had gathered themselves up and fled sullenly away.

The tide-winds, which had driven the waves of sorrow's sea over my spirit, died moaningly in the blue distance—while the billows of unrest sighed themselves to sleep upon the shores of my new life of hope and trustfulness, of labor. But this was not the result of a month, but of two years. Thought had drifted so long in one channel, that it required intense labor to woo rest and forgetfulness? No. We shall never forget

"Till we drink of the Lethe that flows
Through the land where they do not forget;
That sheds over memory only repose
And takes from it only *regret*."

In May, Miss Idyl, my cousin, sent for me. She was dying, and wished, she said, as I was her only young relative of the name, to make me her heiress. She had donated the "Grove" to her "Home for Indigent Maiden Ladies," especially those who were too old or feeble to earn a livelihood, but she had still twenty thousand dollars in the—Bank, and had recently purchased the old Idyl homestead in Connecticut—the house where my father was born. No words

can express my gratitude to my cousin, but all of our efforts to nurse her back to life proved unavailing.

After lingering a few weeks longer, she went *home*.

O, so trustingly—so peacefully! regretted sincerely by all who had known her, or enjoyed her friendship or charity.

There was a codicil appended to her will, enjoining me to enter O. College and remain there until I had graduated. I obeyed her request the following autumn; and at the close of the second year, as it was the desire of the faculty, was examined with the senior class with a satisfactory result.

Horace Alton and Leila were at Commencement. I was disappointed in my cousin. He had settled down into a lifeless, second-class minister; complained incessantly of nervous debility, dyspepsia, and bronchial affections. I was not surprised to find that Leila loved her children better than she did her husband. She told me that her brother Starbert was residing at "Myrtle Lodge with his pretty wife, Marian, the children's quondam governess, you remember, Mary."

"Why, cousin Mary," said Horace, "the change in your complexion, teeth, gait, form and voice is perfectly miraculous! What *have* you done with those round shoulders which used to worry me so?"

"Followed Cutter's rules for the prevention of spinal curvature" I answered, laughingly.

"How? Do tell us how?" asked Leila.

"Why, I used to walk my room with a book or some other heavy weight on my head, for hours at a time. I said to myself: God made Eve beautiful in face and form; therefore it is every girl's duty to make herself as perfect as possible by attending to and obeying the simple rules of hygiene. Air and exercise and healthy food, with plenty of sleep, have improved my health as well as complexion."

"Then you never wear false hair, pads, corsets, or use pomatums, rouge, powders, dyes, curling pins, rats, mice and jute switches?"

"No, Leila, my hair, teeth, and general make-up are all my own."

"Well, your old careworn expression has left you, too. Somehow, your face makes me think of the light shining through a translucent vase from some imprisoned fire within," Horace added, with his old boyish enthusiasm. I was sorry I could not return the compliment, but did not say so.

"Horace is right, Mary. Never did a sculptor labor more faithfully or carefully to eradicate blemishes, to perfect his marble Psyche, than has my dear friend, Mary Idyl, to rectify faults of character and destroy the effects of early physical training and ill-

ness; but it has been almost the work of a lifetime; indeed, you deserve great credit for making of yourself such a splendid woman!" observed Leila.

"I have just received a copy of your new book, entitled 'Phoenix.' Dr. Morris, who has become one of the head managers of the celebrated publishing house of ———, New York, writes me that it is already a success. But when did you get time to write such an extensive serial?"

"I wrote my 'Phoenix' the year you were married—about five years ago. I could not at that time obtain a publisher, therefore I laid it aside. Last winter Dr. Morris kindly offered to bring it out, and has done so with great credit to himself. I wrote it as much for the elevation of my sex as for mammon, or Fame's unsatisfying chaplets; and, if it shall outlive the attacks of anonymous critics and continue to be as favorably received, it will, of course, be very gratifying to me, Cousin Horace."

"At any rate, little cousin, I am very proud of you; but who would have thought it ten years ago? I can still see you sitting in that old lumber-yard of a garret, with your books and compositions and drawings strewn around you!"

"Yes, I have never lost sight of the picture. I can see you there, too, laughing at me and assist-

ing me in my self-appointed tasks at the same time. I am still your debtor for many useful lessons."

"You can cancel all fancied obligations by sending me a copy of each of your new books."

"Agreed! You shall be remembered."

"I do wish that Leila would read and study, and try to improve herself, and keep up with the times a little more. She would have been a great help to me if she had been like you, Cousin Mary. Why, *you* can write a better sermon to-day than I can," he observed, lazily, as I left him.

Whenever I thought of Horace after that visit, I could not help comparing the love of a child and that of a woman, to moonlight and sunlight, alloy and virgin gold, to quartz crystal and diamonds. Of course, he fell far short of my matured idea of manly beauty, and I no longer wondered that the subjects of poor, weak, womanish Sardanapalus revolted on account of his effeminacy. I should have done the same had Horace been my king—or husband.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IDYLIA.

"**I**T never rains but it pours," is an old saying; yet, we have all noticed that misfortunes, as well as blessings, do not always come singly—so it was in my case.

Providence had begun to pour favors upon me—the tide of battle was turned—success crowned all my efforts—the Nemesis was satisfied at last. It made me think of the "Vicar of Wakefield."

Geology and mineralogy had, for years, been my favorite studies. The more I searched into their half-hidden mysteries, the clearer became my conviction that the entire four hundred acre tract of sterile land, which we owned at Daisydell, covered a rich vein of coal. On my return to Daisydell, I invited a celebrated mineralogist to visit and examine the barren soil, iron pyrites, etc., which, with slate covered with impressions of ferns, abounded everywhere.

The result confirmed my most sanguine expectations. Daisydell, after all its apparent worthlessness,

was an inexhaustible source of wealth—embraced one of the best coal mines in the Keystone State. As I had now sufficient funds lying idle to open a colliery, I immediately engaged a competent superintendent and practical miners. Their operations were entirely satisfactory.

Our next movement was to carry the ashes of our dead to Idylia, Connecticut, and re-inter them in the old family cemetery. It was my parents' first visit to their childhood's home since their marriage, twenty-five years before. I shall never forget their joyful emotions on entering again the old homestead. I wondered how they could have absented themselves so long from a place so delightful and sacred. The old mansion stood upon a slight eminence overlooking the sea. An extensive strip of woodland shut out the view on the north, but gave the place a highly romantic appearance.

The dwelling was a fine old-fashioned Gothic structure, roomy and picturesque; and I saw at a glance how beautiful it could be made by putting here a gable, there a bay window; by throwing out porticos and verandas, and building on a Mansard roof and observatory. The redundant foliage and vines, which almost covered the house, wanted pruning; while the grounds and conservatories sadly needed my attention. We took possession of the

dear old place in September. How delighted we all were with the wonderful change! It seemed to lift such a weight of care from the hearts of my parents, that I scarcely recognized the morose Daisydell farmer in the urbane Charles Idyl, or the pale face and drooping form of my mother in Idylia's cheerful mistress. There was nothing of the *parvenu* about them, either, for they had moved in the same sphere in early life, before the loss of fortune drove them Westward.

"Ah, mother, this is the most joyful moment of my life!" I whispered, as we walked toward the beautiful old Gothic church near, on our first Sabbath at Idylia.

"And mine, too, almost, my daughter; but among all my blessings, I am most thankful for *you*," was her tearful reply.

It was the Indian-summer time; the season that I liked best at the North. Late apples and quinces hung listlessly on the tired trees, waiting to be gathered. The forests were still arrayed in gorgeous robes of gold and crimson, blended with the eternal green of the pine and juniper. Those glorious fires of autumn warmed and kindled my thoughts into a day-dream more bewilderingly lovely than that of an Oriental lotus-eater, as I sauntered along through the woodland.

"Yes, I am happier than I was during Love's short-lived mirage," I thought, as I remembered a similar walk in Mayflower Park three years before. Then I chanted '*Gloria in Excelsis*,' as I gazed down the sylvan vista which had recently been cut through the forest, giving a fine glimpse of the sea below. A squirrel laughed at my merry mood, but I sang on, heedless of my wild-wood companion.

Suddenly a shadow fell across my path, and the sharp report of a revolver startled me; then a partridge fell dead at my feet. Footsteps sounded near; and, as I looked up, Lloyd Willington stood beside me!

I stooped down and picked up the bird tenderly, and examined its death-wound.

"Alas! poor Perdix!" he exclaimed, "I have treated him worse than Daedalus did when he threw him from the tower."

I flung the bird aside and eyed the intruder silently. He was leaning against a ferny rock, looking weary and dejected, and ten years older than when I saw him last.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ECLAIRCISSEMENT—A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS.

"Mournfully listening to the wave's wild talk,
And marking with a sad and moistened eye
The summer days sink down behind the sea,
Sink down below the level brine, and fall
Into the Hades of forgotten things;
A mighty longing stealeth o'er the soul,
As of a man who pineth to behold
His idol in another land—if yet
Her heart be treasured for him—if her eyes
Have yet the old love in them."—ANON.

"MARY, have you no welcome for me?" he finally asked.

"What right has he, the husband of another, to address me so familiarly?" I thought, as I answered, calmly:

"No; that is, if your intrusion is intentional."

"It is intentional, however," he replied, pleasantly.

"Who gave you authority to seek me, pray?"

"The hungry waves, when they placed your lifeless form in my arms, gave me the right, Mary. Do you not know that some of your very breath is mine? Child, child! how can you thus steel your woman's

heart against me? Why did you believe that untrue newspaper gossip and Leslie's false statement, and thus leave your best friend a heart-broken man? You should have believed in me more thoroughly."

"Mr. Willington, Ik. Marvel says, 'Hearts never break—it is only the *dream* that is broken,' " I said, as I seated myself upon a mossy log. He tore a cluster of delicate ferns from the rock and ground them beneath his feet. I could hear his hard, deep breathing, and see how the three years had left lines of suffering upon his face and streaks of silver in his midnight hair; yet I was glad that no unsightly crutches marred his noble form; that he could once more fold his arms and use his limbs: but I think that I felt no other emotion as I sat there silent as the trunks of the venerable pines—as the giant boulder against which he leaned. A bee buzzed past us, and a tiny green snake peeped out from under a log and hissed at me. He placed his foot on the reptile, saying, as he did so:

"It reminds me of another serpent which entered our Eden. Read this, please; it will remove the shadow which has so long hung over the sun-disk of our lives, I trust;" and he handed me a letter which looked as if it had been soaked with blood.

"It was found on Starbert Leslie's dead body two weeks ago. He had spent the night in a gambling

hades in Washington. At day-break he went to his hotel. After ordering his breakfast, he locked himself in his room, and when they went to call him he was dead—had shot himself through the heart! I was boarding at the same house, and this note was inclosed in one to me, giving a full account of the one which he wrote to you from Germany—not, however, at *my dictation*."

I opened the letter, which read as follows:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., October, 18—.

"MARY IDYL,—I have had my revenge. The letter I wrote you from the German Spa was false from beginning to end. I am sorry now that I dashed the cup of happiness from the lips of two people who have never injured me.

"I have been for years your most deadly enemy; but this is the only reparation I can ever make you, as my time is short. If you had listened to my temptation, I would have been true to you; although I should, also, you know, have done you an irreparable injury, as I was already married to Marian. Tell her that I loved her too well to meet her again after ruining her, as well as my worthy family—for I lost fifty thousand dollars last night at a faro hell in this city; for father intrusted it to my care for investment in stocks, she will remember, and we are all ruined. I

would rather face annihilation (you know I never believed in any hereafter) than my wronged family.

"Go to Marian and Leila, and try to soften my death to the poor girls a little, if possible.

"Grace Smythe was married a year ago to a gentleman from her native State. She had been engaged to him for years.

"Willington, poor fellow, has always been true to you, Mary Idyl, and, by Jove, deserves your love and forgiveness.

"Written during my last hour on earth by

"Yours as ever,

"STARBERT LESLIE."

After I had finished reading the letter, I went to him, with eyes blinded by thankful tears, and asked, as I extended my hand:

"Can you pardon my credulity—can you forgive my weakness?"

His dear arms were around me in a moment, and his first kiss fell upon my lips like a seal of peace—like a benediction.

"I have nothing to forgive. I have always had faith in you, darling! I was sure that you would remain true to me until death—felt all along that I should find you again. This thought has sustained me during our almost hopeless separation. You can

never imagine how I have longed for my idol; yet I knew that any explanation by letter would be useless; that you would return it to me unread; and—I have only been in America a month since we parted at Mayflower. May I not claim you now, after three years of weary waiting? Do not refuse my request, please. Mrs. Melbourne says she will never welcome any sister excepting yourself. She actually commanded me to bring you home with me immediately. Starbert, poor fellow, obtained your address from his brother-in-law, and said he supposed you were still teaching. Where are you boarding? and what kind of a school are you in? I have not thought to inquire sooner."

I told him that I would show him the house if he would accompany me—he had come directly to Idylia from the depot, and, instead of following the main road, had taken the short path through the Park. He told me that he had decided to donate his property to colleges, provided I would not consent to become his wife, on account of my lack of a similar fortune. What a flood of light broke over his face when I answered:

"If you are willing to do that, I will be yours as soon as I can leave my school."

"God bless you, Idylette, for your answer."

We went into the parlor and I introduced him to

my parents. They kindly welcomed him; and when he found that beautiful Idylia was my home, his surprise can better be imagined than described.

We walked down to the beach that evening and enjoyed a ramble along the white sands, upon which the restless tide was sending thousands of purple, gold and silver-hued shells and pebbles and clusters of shining green dulse and sea-mosses of rose color; and he made me tell him how I had spent the two-and-a-half years of my exile from Mayflower. When I had concluded, he looked down at me with a mischievous half-smile in his eyes, and remarked:

"Then my proud Miss Mary will allow me to retain my property, I presume?"

"Yes; you will have to, as far as I can see, or I cannot perform my part of the contract to the letter, Mr. Willington."

"I remember. You said you would never be my wife until you could be my equal in wealth. Very well; I will not dispose of it until you wish me to make my will," he jocosely answered, as we sat down upon the up-turned keel of an old boat and watched the in-creeping tide in silence, which was more eloquent than words. He remained with us a week, and we enjoyed ourselves greatly—sailing, walking, riding and talking over the past as well as our plans for the future.

The evenings were growing rather cool. On the last night of his visit we all sat around the "low-down grate" in the library, enjoying the crackling drift-wood fire which lighted up the frescoed walls and dark oaken panels of that spacious room with opaline splendor, when Mr. Willington suddenly turned to my father and asked him for his daughter.

"She is our only child—how can we part with her?" looking at my mother, who rose hastily and left the room; then, turning to his guest, he added: "We owe all of our happiness and prosperity to this one dear daughter." Then, much to my embarrassment, he told him how Daisydell was preserved to them; also, that Idylia belonged to me.

"Instead of one child, you will have two, if you will allow me to come into your family, Mr. Idyl. You need not be separated from her—we will spend our summers with you; you can winter with us at the South," he still urged.

"Then—take her, my son; love and cherish her until death parts you; only do not leave us alone. God bless you, my children!" was the rejoinder, as he left us alone. An hour later I bade him good-night and went up to my room, where I found my mother waiting for me. Her white face and tearful eyes made me reproach myself for my selfish joy.

"Why, mother, dear, what is the matter?"

"I cannot part with my precious child," she sobbed, brokenly.

I kissed her sweet face in silence.

"Are you perfectly satisfied, Mary? Do you really love this dark-eyed stranger well enough to leave us for him? Oh, I had not thought of this, or I could not have been kind or polite to him, even!" I flung my arms around her and told her the story of my love, of my disappointment, of our reconciliation. At its close she said:

"And you have endured all this alone without a murmur—forgetful of self, have striven to lighten our cares and sorrows. It grieves me to think that I did not know this"—

"Forgive my lack of confidence, mother; this is the first time that I have mentioned this imaginary trial. There should be silent crypts in every human heart for the burial of dead hopes. I never like to worry my friends with my troubles, mother."

"You are right; yet it is a relief, sometimes, for us to share our trials with another—better still to tell them to Jesus, whose loving sympathy is sweeter than all earthly consolation."

"I did not fret about it long, mother. I soon came to the conclusion that I was no worse off than before my beautiful dream. Peace came to me after that. We cannot lose a thing we *never owned*, I said to myself."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A WEDDING.

"We are all here.

Even they, the dead, though dead so dear,
Fond memory, to her duty true,
Brings back their faded forms to view.
How life-like, through the mists of years,
Each well-remembered face appears.

We are all here."—SPRAGUE.

"THOSE whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder: I pronounce you man and wife," fell solemnly upon the deep stillness which reigned in Idylia's spacious library. The May sunshine stole in through the colored glass windows, and rested lovingly upon the bridal *tableau*. Standing there, beside my noble husband, in my rich, white silk, with its trimmings of creamy lace, which had belonged to the Idyl family for a hundred years, with those trembling flowers in my hair which Lloyd had brought all the way from Mayflower for the occasion, I think that I clearly comprehended the full import of the marriage ceremony.—"For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish and

obey till death" should separate us; and I wondered, with a shudder, how people could not only frame but obey laws which legalized the dissolution of this God-given, hence most binding ordinance.

We visited Mayflower a week later. The Melbournes had attended our wedding; therefore we did not feel surprised at the gracious welcome which we received at our "*Heim-Bringen*."

Before we had been there an hour, the parlors and drawing-room were crowded with the *elite* of — city and the surrounding neighborhood. Truly, *money* is a wonderful passport into fashionable society. The *heiress* was of much more consequence than the poor governess had been, forsooth. Yet it would not do to quarrel with my good fortune. I really enjoyed my visit amazingly. Idylia was our chosen home, however.

How familiar Lloyd's beloved apartments appeared!—I mean the library, cabinet, picture-gallery and conservatory. Delicious memories, like sweet incense, lingered everywhere in beautiful Mayflower.

After a brief sojourn with the Melbournes, we went back to New York and boarded at the St. Nicholas, until we were ready to start on our European tour.

One evening we found an elegantly-bound volume

of my "Phoenix" upon the Mosaic table in our private parlor. Lloyd took it up, and said:

"Ah, here is Lyra Glenwild's "Phoenix!" Shall I read aloud to you, Mary? By the way, I think you have never told me how you like my favorite American authoress?"

"Why, I believe this is the first time you have asked my opinion of it," I answered evasively.

"Do you not think that her writings touch a chord in every heart—set the most unsympathizing natures to music?"

"Perhaps so; but—have you any idea who she is, Lloyd?"

"No. Yes. I presume, we should find her surrounded by a perfect chaos of books, furniture, papers, children—to say nothing of inky fingers, uncombed hair, soiled, slatternly dress, and faded, woe-begone face; her children ill taught and unrepresentable; her husband in soiled linen (minus buttons), looking like 'Patience on a monument smiling at grief,' were we at this moment to visit her unannounced—her sweet, home pictures, her model wives and mothers to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Oh, Lloyd! What an uncharitable man you are! Poor Lyra Glenwild! how I pity her," I said with a sorry attempt at playfulness, while his quick, scru-

tinizing look at my white cheeks and nervous hands (which fluttered over and under each other like frightened birdlings), made my heart almost stand still. Then he observed :

"I am glad that my wife is not a *bas bleu* of the *genus nouveletta*. Such a picture as I have just drawn would drive me to the verge of desperation."

"Yes; I believe you. You have drawn a horrible caricature of poor Lyra, husband mine; yet, when you become better acquainted with me, you may feel as sadly disappointed as did Epimetheus after wedding Pandora, the 'All-Gifted.' Alas, for that fatal casket which she presented to her husband! I used to think of it in my dark days, and rejoice that Hope remained in the bottom of the box."

"Well, little woman, I do not fear the fate of her husband," he observed, as he opened the book and turned over a few pages. It was strange that, with our perfect unity of feeling, I should have feared him so much—that I had not divulged my secret—but I once heard him say to Angel Melbourne:

"I am glad that you are not ambitious to win the poisoned wreaths which Fame places upon the heads of her votaries. Women of genius should never marry. Their sphere is in the thorny paths of erudition, not in the holy home circle."

"No," I said, "I will not tell him until I have

shown him that I can preside over his house gracefully and well." Yet the secret troubled me exceedingly at times.

"I am not afraid that I shall find my wife otherwise than a blessing; I think, too, that she will grow dearer to me in all the years to come," he finally said, as he threw the book upon the table.

"Did not Socrates think the same of Zantippe, Mr. Willington?"

"I suppose so"—

At that moment a servant entered and laid a copy of the *Times* upon the table. Mr. Willington turned to the column of arrivals, remarking:

"I wonder if any of our friends are stopping here? Do listen, Mary!"—

"Arrived at the St. Nicholas, on the — inst., the Honorable Lloyd Willington and his talented wife, 'Lyra Glenwild,' author of 'Phoenix,' the most popular novel of the age. We understand that they will sail for Europe in a few days. Success to the happy couple."

Then he drew me to a seat beside him, and asked, softly, as he peered quizzingly into my blushing, frightened face:

"Ah, my child, did you think that you could deceive me? Did you not dream that—that I divined your secret months ago? I did, however, and have been

waiting for your confidence. Sometimes you were on the point of telling me; but, alas! like poor Tantalus, I was always disappointed—your confession receded ere it reached my ears.”

“Tantalus was punished for his misdeeds,” I finally found voice to say. “Your dislike for literary women compelled me to withhold my confidence, Mr. Willington.”

“I do not blame you; I was altogether too uncharitable.

“At least you tried to make me think so, sir.”

“But Mary,” and the shadow faded from his face, and in its place gleamed the old love-light; “I would not have had my wife continue to fear my displeasure for all the wealth in this city. Do not look so sober—you have converted me already. I shall never denounce an authoress again, even in sport. Resume your pen, Mary; let its beautiful, truthful emanations continue to thrill the hearts of thousands—to elevate your sex. May your works, in future, light your struggling sisterhood heavenward—bring them back to their pristine purity.”

I knelt down beside him and laid my wet cheeks upon his hands, whispering:

“Oh! Lloyd, I so longed to tell you all! I have feared you more than I have my God—I shall never have another secret, try to believe me.”

“Dear little Lyra Glenwild! My peerless, gifted bride, I should not have loved you half as well if you had not been a literary woman;” and his dear arms were around me in a moment, while his kisses fell upon brow, cheeks and lips, as he whispered:

“I am proud of my talented wife, alias ‘Lyra Glenwild.’”

DIARY CONTINUED.—IDYLIA, CT., 1860.—Home at last, after an absence of almost a year and a half. What a treat it is to be here again, in this dear old mansion by the sea.

My father has had the oversight of our Coal Works at Daisydell during our absence. He says that everything has gone on prosperously; that the mines are in fine working order still; that the coal there seems to be of the best quality. My husband has concluded to free his colored people and sell out his share of the Mayflower estate; then buy up all of the salable lands around Daisydell, and become a coal-operator on an extensive scale.

It is delightful to be here once more with my dear mother. Even the sea seems to welcome me with outstretched hands and loving murmurs. How I should like to remain here during the coming winter. I am so weary of travel, of excitement, and long so for rest and quiet; but the Melbournes will not hear

of it; they insist upon our spending a few months with them, before we finally settle down at Idylia; therefore, we shall start for our beautiful Southland in about a week.

Since my marriage, I have constantly endeavored to improve my mind and manners for my husband's sake alone; have scarcely allowed a shadow of sadness or weariness to creep into my face in his presence, or a complaint to escape my lips—have striven to be worthy of his respect and confidence and affection, for which I would almost barter my soul; yet I daily pray that in my worship for the creature I may not forget the Creator!

I cannot refrain from smiling at my youthful belief, that friendship was all-satisfying, that love was a myth or commodity in which only novelists dealt largely; at least, that it was not necessary to human happiness.

At times, a shadowy phantom creeps into my Eden, and stands between us, whispering:

"God will separate you; such earthly bliss is transient." Lloyd says the same thought has occurred to him a hundred times since our marriage. What does it mean? My baby Lily looks up smilingly into my face and "coos" softly. May God spare us all, and help us to be more thankful for our numberless blessings.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A FEARFUL PRESAGE.

"*Wizard*. Lochiel, Lochiel, beware of the day
When the Lowlands shall meet thee in battle array,
For a field of the dead rushes red on my sight,
And the clans of Culloden are scattered in flight."
THOMAS CAMPBELL.

DIARY.

I AM growing weary of this maelstrom of excitement! These *soirées, tableaux*, musicals, private theatricals and select readings are beginning to pall upon my taste; to render me half disgusted with fashionable gatherings, for they leave us too little time for thought and conversation. God forbid that I should degenerate into a mere butterfly of fashion, an aimless, useless woman of society! Thou who hast given me higher tastes and aspirations, save, O save me from myself! Let me not neglect my duty to *Thee*, to my friends, to my child, my sex!

Last evening, my husband came into our room, exclaiming:

"Abraham Lincoln has been elected President of the United States by a large majority."

"Thank you for the good news!" I ejaculated.

"He is the man of my choice, Mary, and will prove invaluable to America during the next four years; but I scarcely know whether to rejoice or tremble!"

"Why, how strangely you talk, husband mine, please explain your fears."

"Because I have a premonition that the Southern States will decide this contest with the sword, Mary; that they will secede from the Union."

"But you do not believe that we shall have war?"

"*Oui, petit*, a lingering, sanguinary war; brother fighting against brother! I have long foreseen that it must come. Only fire and blood can wipe out that one damning blot upon our 'Star-spangled Banner,' that black plague-spot upon the beautiful escutcheon of our beloved country—slavery!"

"O, Lloyd! Will nothing else atone for our great national sin? Must it come to this finally? Must our God-ordained, discovered, peopled and prospered Columbia, be deluged with blood again?"

"Yes, Mary, nothing can avert the impending crisis; but we shall come out of the crucible purified, by fire and sword, from the dross of our national sins—a sorely chastened, but, I believe, a wiser and better people. Our Northern brethren are surely in the right."

"Yes, Lloyd; *Dieu défend le droit*."

Charles Melbourne and my husband have disagreed in politics ever since the latter gave his colored people their freedom. The former believes that slavery is the normal condition of the African race; that the "institution" is a divine one; that it is Heaven's will and decree that a "servant of servants" shall be the lot of Ham's descendants whilst time endures. "Negroes," he says, "are not capable of self-government." He really desires to extend this terrible curse into all the States and territories. Of course he is in favor of an oligarchical government; says he is weary of democracy, and believes in an aristocracy, and is bitterly opposed to the Union. He execrates Lincoln and the abolitionists bitterly. He said, this morning, he hoped that there would be war; "should glory in the downfall of those cowardly cabals of the North who are constantly plotting the destruction of our lives and property;" that he knew "the down-trodden Southerners would teach those despicable cravens, the Yankee mudsills and abolitionists, to attend to their own affairs in future." "Yes," he continued, "the real aristocracy of America will arise as one man and assert their rights, their supremacy over those accursed dastards who have for years attacked our domestic institution!"

A strange fire gleamed in Lloyd's eyes, whilst a purple flush mounted his cheeks, and the veins in his

forehead stood out painfully for a moment, then his face grew pale as marble. I was frightened, for I knew a storm was gathering which would sweep away all the old landmarks of affection between the two, yet I dreaded its outbreak so much that I laid my hand soothingly upon his own. One glance into my white face calmed him, and after re-assuring me with a smile, he went up to Mr. Melbourne, and extended his hand; then said:

"Dear brother, whatever else may happen, we two will never forget what close friends we have been, all along, through boyhood, youth and early manhood; shall we, Charles?"

The other took the proffered hand and wrung it passionately, with these words:

"Oh, Lloyd! dearest and best of brothers, truest friend of my later years, why, why cannot we think alike? God forbid that I should ever raise my hand against you!" then left the parlor hastily.

Mr. Melbourne has treated me with continued respect since my return to Mayflower.

In his family he is the polite Southern gentleman: is hospitable and kind-hearted, notwithstanding his haughty bearing.

Knowing his sentiments, we have avoided an open war of words, for controversy usually engenders

alienation or endless discord, and injures instead of favoring a cause.

For the above reasons, it is tacitly understood that slavery and disunion, secession and rebellion, are sealed topics in the presence of the Melbournes. I think we all try to bury our animosities and to control our feelings as much as it is in human nature to do, in order to contribute to each other's enjoyment; I am happy in the belief that Emma and I are more closely allied by sisterly affection than ever before, although our sentiments are tacitly understood. She has a strong, true liking for Southern slavery, but I think she will never allow differences of opinion to destroy her love for me.

DECEMBER, 1860.

On the 21st of December, South Carolina seceded.

"O, Lloyd, will nothing hold her back? Is there no power which can compel her to remain within the pale of the Union?" I asked, half frantic with fear and grief; for, up to that day, I had hoped against hope that the South would be conciliated in some manner.

"I fear not, Mary" was the quiet reply. I shall never forget the feelings of that hour! Already the booming of artillery, the whizzing of death's iron missiles, the shrieks of the wounded, the groans of the

dying, war-cries, the thunder and shock of battle, and martial music seemed to fall upon my ears. Murder, famine, conflagrations, all the horrors of civil warfare, of fratricide, of parricide, and of homicide, greeted my eyes. A reign of terror, compared to which the French Revolution was a farce, ensued, and, in imagination, I saw villas, farm-houses, towns and cities in ashes—widows and orphans—cripples, maimed, wounded;—bleeding, moaning wretches, crawling away from bloody battle-fields, dying with hunger or thirst, or fainting from their wounds beneath a burning Southern sun; and long narrow ditches, where, beneath the yellow clay, lay thousands of mangled, unshrouded, uncoffined men in reeking uniforms, their unshriven souls sent into the presence of their Judge without a moment's prayer! My husband and his brother-in-law! What parts will they take in the national tragedy? Ah me! What will the end be? How long will this dreadful carnage continue? God save our distracted country!" The last three questions were asked aloud. Mr. Willington laid his hand upon my head and said, as he brushed the tumbled curls from my forehead:

"Why, what is the matter? Have you been dreaming, little wife?"

I shook my head sadly, but did not answer.

"How pale you are!" he added, "I must kiss some color into your cheeks; but tell me, darling, what frightened you so terribly in your sleep?"

I told him my vision with a broken voice. He looked very grave, but called me a "nervous little puss," and carried me down to the music-room, with as much ease as if I had been Lily, saying:

"Now, Mary, play something patriotic." I gave him the "Star-spangled Banner," "Hail Columbia" and "America," whilst he accompanied me as usual.

JANUARY, 1861.

The holidays have come and gone. In all the gay crowds which convened at the Hall, my husband and I did not find one, except our minister and Dr. Mansfield, who sympathized with the Union. How entirely alone we felt amidst the laughing, thoughtless throng which daily filled the house! In imagination I constantly saw the quiet library of Idylia, or heard the sound of merry sleigh-bells, and the restless tides beating upon the beach below, whilst the tempest in my heart kept time with the ceaseless music. I longed for home's quiet atmosphere, and counted the days, even hours, which would intervene ere I could leave Mayflower.

On the second of January, Mississippi seceded, and on the fourth was our National Fast-day. We re-

mained in our apartments until evening, praying that the coming storm might be averted, or of short duration; also, that it would end in the restoration of peace and unity, and brotherly love between both belligerent sections. On the following morning Mr. Melbourne sneered at the idea of keeping a fast-day, and treated us with icy politeness. Since that hour I have seen how it would all end. My country, O my country!



CHAPTER XXXV.

THE GATHERING STORM.

"Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
 Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts
 Given to redeem the human mind from error,
 There were no need of arsenals and forts!
 The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!
 And every nation that should lift again
 Its hand against its brother, on its head
 Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain."

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

EACH succeeding day brought its quota of startling tidings. Alabama and Florida seceded; then the Pensacola Navy Yard surrendered, and Louisiana left the circle of States and joined the new faction. Next our revenue cutters were surrendered to the rebels, who seized the New Orleans Mint on the following day; and on February 1st, Texas followed her rebellious sisters, whilst on the 4th inst. the Confederate Congress convened at Montgomery.

Alas! must I record the fact that Charles Melbourne was at that time in that city, exerting his influence to the utmost in favor of rebellion; urging the people to fling off the "Northern yoke" and

trample upon the laws and Constitution of the United States?

He had bidden us a hasty farewell; exclaiming that his "country, which was dearer," he said, "than friends or family, had called him to defend her interests;" then sacrilegiously quoted the sublime words of Patrick Henry, viz.:

"Gentlemen may cry peace, *peace*, but there is no PEACE! The war is inevitable! But I repeat it, sir," (looking at Lloyd sneeringly) "let it come! But as for *me*, give me *liberty*, or give me *death*!"

"*Grace a dieu!* as if the stirring words of that immortal patriot were appropriate when applied to the present emergency—to high treason!" I came near saying; but Lloyd placed his dear hand upon my mouth, and drew me into the library, whispering:

"Be calm, my Northern snow-flake—silent as the granite hills of your beloved State, always remembering, dearest, that 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord: I will repay it;' that the God of battles will not suffer the hosts of Sisera to destroy His chosen people. Be patient and trust in Providence."

"Poor Charles! It is natural that the owner of a thousand slaves should defend his property," said his wife.

That one of the largest owners of human flesh and blood in our country should have occupied a seat in

Congress, and made laws for free men, is a disgraceful commentary on Republican institutions. "No wonder that Europeans mock at our government; sneer at our patriotic speeches in regard to freedom and equality," says a Northern editor. Emma might have interpreted my thought-answer, for she continued, after a pause:

"You saw with what stoical indifference I bade him go and fight for his rights, home, wife and child! I am proud of my husband's courage; glad that he dared to display his true colors. The Southerner who does not stand by his native State is worse than an arch-traitor!"

Again my face crimsoned and my eyes blazed; but I allowed her to add: "It is high time that the vexed question which has alienated the two sections is settled. There never has been any union between the North and South, excepting in name, or in lakes and lands. Mary, our hearts and hands cannot be united whilst our interests are so diametrically opposed to each other. I think it will be better to draw a line of demarcation between the two countries. The sword and bayonet must decide the contest between right and wrong; and I pray that the crisis may come now, whilst we are so well prepared for fighting, and have such an excellent pretext for rebelling!"

"Pretext, did you say?" I ventured to ask.

"Yes, Mary; why, cannot you see that the South has been quietly, but surely, preparing to withdraw from the Union for the last thirty years? It is true, however; notwithstanding the papers blame the radical abolitionists of the North and fiery politicians of these States for expediting the issue. Do you not agree with me, Mary?"

"No, dear friend, candidly, I do not! I think that a Higher Power than both parties combined has ordained this family trial; that, instead of disruption and final alienation, it will end in placing our Constitution and Government upon a firmer basis than ever before; in uniting and cementing this glorious Union into a closer bond of brotherhood, by purifying our national sins, thus making us ultimately the greatest and happiest people upon the face of the earth!" was my answer.

Soon after the above conversation, my husband received a telegram, urging his immediate presence at Washington. He left us that evening; and I should have accompanied him, had it not been for Lily's slight indisposition; which made us afraid to take the frail flower North until spring was farther advanced.

"I will return for my treasures as soon as I can leave Washington," said he, as he held us both tenderly in his strong arms and kissed us good-by.

What was it that made his heart beat so loudly, and his face grow white and rigid, as we clung to him so tenaciously, or when he bade adieu to each beloved room?

"These silent witnesses of our great happiness," he said, looking lingeringly at the books and furniture in the library, "are dearer than any others will ever be to us, my Idyllette; and if Mayflower should happen to become a battle-field during the fearful storm which is coming, I shall have them quietly removed to the vault. Those book-cases are arranged with hinges, and will make capital packing-boxes; so will the cupboards in the cabinet." Then taking Lily from my arms and covering her wondering baby face with kisses, he added:

"I cannot crush back an undefined fear which completely un-mans me; but, darling, whatever else may happen during our first separation, the memory of our great love and perfect happiness, since our union, will sustain us under every other trial. Our souls will constantly visit each other, for neither time nor distance can separate them—even death itself will fail to tear our hearts asunder. Love like ours spans the shadowy vale and dark river which flows between the terrestrial and celestial. I do not fear to leave you among political enemies, knowing that your excellent judgment will continually remind you

that 'prudence is always the better part of valor.' Adieu, my *lares et penates* (household gods). *Dieu vous garde.*"

For days after his departure, I remained in my darkened room, feeling that all the light had gone out of Mayflower; that I should never see his beloved face again. "Why, why did I allow him to go without me?" I asked myself a thousand times before the receipt of his first letter. It assured me of his safe arrival at the Capital. Oh, the sweetness, the bliss of that letter! It seemed truly a part of himself; his tender affection breathed in every line, and afforded an ample compensation for all the weary waiting. It dissipated that enervating despondency, so unusual to me, and, for days, banished the fearful presage of evil which had clung to me like a nightmare vision since his departure, darkening every thought with its mighty pall. Truly, "coming events do cast their shadows before." My poor, shuddering heart! How it had ached with fear! With what silent agony had I looked at my sleeping babe as she lay smiling, perhaps dreaming of angels, or clasping her tiny hands together as if fearful of losing her pristine hold upon Heaven—upon the sinlessness of infancy!

"Will her father ever return!" I had asked myself a thousand times; but the letter—his precious letter

—dispelled my fears for a season. He wrote weekly, yet postponed his return until some indefinite period. I tried to be patient, for I knew that he was exerting every faculty of his mind to allay the violence of the storm which was ready to burst upon us and deluge our country with blood; which threatened to engulf the ship of State in its deadly elements, or to shatter the staunch timbers which had hitherto held her together; yet I felt that he labored in vain; for even then I heard the thunder-tones of the coming tempest, which were shaking our political world from center to circumference. I had hoped and prayed at first that wise legislation and Lincoln's sapient policy might, with the aid of Providence, conciliate the Southern mind, and, for a season, prevent the fall of the avenging sword, which I distinctly saw suspended over our heads "by a single hair;" but hope's taper flickered and went out when I heard of Abraham Lincoln's flight by night. Did our Chief Magistrate ever before fly to the Capital and Presidential Chair like an assassin fleeing from justice?

Thank God! He has foiled the demoniac designs of those who thirsted for the blood of our honored President. He and my husband have been intimate friends for years.

I need not pause to describe my agitation on hearing how the *Star of the West* was received, and of

the bombardment of Fort Sumter, for the heart of every wife, mother, sister and daughter in the land must have been filled with similar terror. Ay, forsooth! there were white lips, tearful eyes, blanched cheeks, trembling limbs and aching hearts all over Columbia's wide domain. My horror was too deep for words—my agony too great for tears! Gods! I wondered that the waves of the Atlantic did not break Heaven's command, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," and submerge that hot-bed of sedition—Charleston—which was more deeply dyed in blood and crime than the "ancient Cities of the Plain;" yes, than those of the antediluvian world!

How can an avenging God suffer such wrongs to be perpetrated? I asked myself.

Ah, truly, "His ways are inscrutable, past finding out!" All day long I heard, in imagination, the booming of cannon—the shrieking shells crushing in the walls of the fortress. And this is only the beginning! Ah, what startling events will the next newspaper chronicle?

APRIL 15th.

The war has actually commenced! The aphorism, *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat!* is a true one. Fort Sumter has fallen into the hands of insurgents. Major Anderson, its brave commander, was obliged to surrender unconditionally, or sacrifice his own life

and those of his men; but he was wise in so doing, for they will all be needed in future engagements.

A FEW WEEKS LATER.

The President has called for seventy-five thousand men to quell the rebellion. Mr. Melbourne writes: "A million troops cannot conquer the haughty Southrons, who," to use his own words (which would do for General Bragg himself), "will fight until the last man is dead; yes, like those noble Spartans, they will fall willingly like the three hundred who perished at the 'Narrow Pass of Thermopylæ,' before they will yield to Yankee thralldom!"

How different are Mr. Willington's letters: "I love my beautiful Southland—pray for her welfare and weep for her misguided sons. She is the home also of my nativity, and my parents' graves are in her sacred soil; yet, *ubi libertas, ibi patria*."

"The people of the South are the aggressors; the North must take up arms in self-defence; the sword must settle forever the following question:

"Shall liberty or tyranny rule the Western Continent?"

"Alas! my brothers have struck at the very life of freedom—aimed a death-blow at the best government that the sun ever shone upon!

"There is a general uprising at the North, une-

quelled since the days of the Revolution. The 'Star-spangled Banner' floats exultingly from every house top. Union sermons electrify the masses. Even the youngest schoolboys and girls wear the 'red, white and blue,' and form themselves into companies. The women are all engaged in making clothes for the volunteers. I have been offered a commission; but do not fear, darling, I shall not take up arms against my own relatives so long as there are sufficient men north of 'Mason and Dixon's line' to quell the rebellion. There are more volunteers already in the field than the President can equip suitably at present. Should it become necessary for me to enlist, you will be the first to bid me go and stand up for the dear old flag of the Union. I shall be with you in a few days; but do not look for me until you see me coming up the avenue. Loving kisses for yourself and my little Valley Lily.

"Yours unalterably,

"LLOYD WILLINGTON."

"Lily, violet-eyed baby, PAPA is coming home! Let me give you his kisses while they are still fresh upon my lips!" I cried, tossing my pet up and down in my glad arms. All that week, when not reading his letter (which was sweeter to my woman's heart than was ever the first declaration of love from the

chosen of her heart to a happy maiden), I was standing at the window looking for him or listening for his step, which I had learned to distinguish from all others.

"Why, how excited you are!" cried Emma, who understood my emotions about as well as she did Sanscrit; then added, in an exultant tone: "But do listen! 'The Confederate Congress has not only passed the ordinance of secession, but declared war against the United States. On April 21st the first South Carolina regiment started for the Potomac. On the 26th inst., debts to Northern men were repudiated; while on the 28th the powder was seized by the Confederates at Cairo. On the 29th, three vessels were taken by our men at New Orleans.' Heigho! 'North Carolina seceded on the 2d of May,' and oh see! Mary Willington, Lincoln—your plebeian mudsill and rail-splitter—has called for ninety-six thousand men. The Confederates have issued a proclamation to this effect: 'All Union sympathizers must leave the Confederacy within thirty days.'"

She stopped reading and looked at me with a frightened expression. "Then I shall leave within the specified time, Emma."

"You will be wise in so doing, Mary, dear, for I have recently heard some pretty loud threats against

yourself and Lloyd. You have been very reserved and prudent, I know ; yet, dear, your sentiments and brother's are well known in this community. My husband has accepted a colonelcy in the Southern army, and starts, he says, immediately for Virginia. He wants me to meet him at Washington as soon as they take possession of the 'White House.' I shall start for Montgomery this evening."

"A new fear curdles the very blood in my heart. Will my husband be able to reach Mayflower before I leave it? Will it be safe for me to go by land? Oh, for some one to advise me what to do!" I thought.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

NORTHLAND.—DIARY CONTINUED.

Farewell, farewell, sweet Arcadian bowers,
My beautiful Southland, adieu!
Farewell, farewell, my beloved Mayflower—
I hasten, dear Northland, to you!

MRS. MELBOURNE has started for Montgomery, with the expectation of meeting her husband before his regiment leaves for the Potomac. She will be proud of his affected bravery and *epaulettes*; but, alas! I pity her!

She is still too much in favor of the "chivalry" to realize that defeat is possible—that they are ruining their own cause; but then she never would anticipate trouble or meet it half way. Phlegm predominates in her composition. She is good-natured, easy, affectionate, and has always the same even, lymphatic temperament. She said, on bidding me adieu:

"You are growing nervous, my dear, and I must again urge you to hasten your preparations, and follow suit as soon as possible; but, of all things, do not allow the colored people to understand why we

leave, or show the least excitement in their presence."

I have noticed, ever since my husband's departure, that people seem to avoid me. Ladies who, a few months ago, were my warmest admirers, have recently called at the Hall and inquired for Emma, but passed me with only a cold nod, or worse, non-recognition. Yesterday, after Mrs. Melbourne's departure, Madam De Lacy and several other ladies came to Mayflower. I was in the reception-room when they were announced, and supposed that their call was for me; but, judge of my astonishment and mortification, when they hissed, like so many serpents, and drew in their ample skirts as if my very flounces would contaminate them. I was determined that they should not disconcert me, and, with a smile, and my happiest voice and blindest manner, said:

"Good evening, ladies; this has been a perfect day, has it not? I hope you have all enjoyed it?" Still no answer; and, I continued: "I regret to tell you that Mrs. Melbourne has just left for Montgomery. She wished me to say to any friends (who might do her the honor of calling during her absence), that it was not possible for her to bid any one 'Good-by'—that she had not a moment to lose, after her letter was received, as she wished to meet her husband before he left for the Potomac."

"It would be well for you to follow her example, madam. I would advise you to evacuate this fort immediately, if you do not wish to be mobbed," said one of the party, with undisguised acerbity and venom.

I bowed pleasantly to the last speaker, and said:

"Thank you for your exceedingly kind warning;" then turned toward the door, when they all swept past me like so many white sea-gulls. (I came near saying geese, for they hissed like the latter, only their gracefulness forbade a closer comparison.) It is always best to treat even our enemies politely. A lady should never forget herself. Such conduct is verily an outrage to common sense, society, politeness, good breeding; but it shows me that my life is in danger every hour that I remain in this beautiful Southland, in this blooming garden of Eden, where the hydra-headed monster "Secession" lurks in every sunny bower. Like Eve, my sorrowing ancestress, I moan tearfully, regretfully:

"And must I leave thee, Paradise."

LATER.

Something tells me that we shall never all meet again at Mayflower—that the insatiate Mars will deluge these fair grounds with blood. The colored people are all very friendly, especially the house-servants. Uncle Nero, Moses, Dido and Aunt

Dahlia are true as gold, and have surreptitiously carried Lloyd's books, minerals, a few paintings, with many other valuable things, to the station with my trunks and boxes, besides hiding many choice pieces of furniture and statuary in our part of the vault. The arras, curtains, carpets and *statuettes*, I have packed and forwarded with the rest of my baggage. I wonder if it will ever reach Idylia.

WASHINGTON, July 10th, 1861.

As I did not hear from Mr. Willington again before I started, the most intense anxiety filled my mind during my journey. I was sure that some harm had befallen him, or he would have come for us; and my heart kept saying, in a sad undertone:

"You will not find him at Washington."

A terrible presentiment of evil haunted me constantly. One night, as I was just getting asleep, a hand was laid upon my head, with his old familiar touch; then a kiss fell softly upon my forehead, and I fancied that he said: "*Do not be alarmed at my absence. I am safe and well, but, alas, a prisoner of war! Our vessel was captured by the Rebels.*" I sprang up and turned on a full jet of gas, but my room was as silent as a charnel-house. There was no one with me except my baby, who was asleep in her crib. Even her nurse, in an adjoining chamber, slept soundly. Hours of restlessness passed; then,

again, the dream repeated itself, with this addition:

"Hasten North immediately—your life is in danger." The strange vision burned itself upon my brain for the third time, ending finally with these singular words:

"Truly the wrath of man shall praise Him!"

Having read of the seizure of three vessels at New Orleans, also that the "Ocean Eagle" had been captured by a privateer, I tried to cheat myself into the belief that the above news had been the original cause of my dream, as our waking thoughts often reflect themselves upon the mind's mirror whilst the body sleeps. "But, after all, it may be true," said my poor, quaking heart. "Dreams often proved true warnings in old Bible times."

The God who watches over the welfare of individuals, as well as nations, finally conducted us safely to Washington. On entering Willard's Hotel, the first person whom I met, in the wide hall, was Dandy, Mr. Willington's valet.

"De good Lor' bress you Misses Willin'ton! I was affeard de 'Rebs' would gobble you an' our White Lily up, doun dere in Seceshy, sure nuff. You see, I stayed here, cause dey make de cullud folks dig graves an' fight de men who am settin' 'em free. Kotch me a-fightin' fur de Souf, Misses, an' you'll find a weasel asleep."

I wanted to ask where my husband was, but the words died on my lips unuttered; and he added:

"But whar's Masser Willin'ton? Hope he didn't stay to Mayflower to fight de Secesh? He said he'd come back right away."

My limbs sank under me as if paralyzed; my senses were leaving me. Never was suspense more awful; yet I could not speak. As I sank down upon a rustic chair, Mrs. Melbourne's voice—which seemed miles away—crept through my dulled senses: "Why, is that you, Mary Willington? Is it possible that my erratic brother did not reach home before you left? But why do you not come up-stairs?"

I heard no more. Perhaps it was a mercy that brain-fever blotted out all consciousness for weeks; for I know not how else I could have borne that lingering, agonizing suspense which uncertainty of his fate would have caused. I subsequently learned, that, before Mrs. Melbourne reached the Rebels' headquarters, her husband had marched with his command for Harper's Ferry. She followed him, but finally concluded to come *incog.* to Washington and wait there until further orders from the Colonel. During my illness, she acted the part of a true sister; procured the best medical attendants, and sent for my mother—for they said I called for her incessantly in my delirium.

Flowery May had drifted into the lap of laughing June before the fever subsided, and Reason again asserted her throne. One morning I awoke and found Mrs. Melbourne sitting near my bedside *crocheting* some pretty fabric, looking as fresh and cool in her white wrapper as the sweet June roses upon her bosom, and those amid the raven waves of her abundant hair.

For several minutes, I regarded her silently, thinking how much earlier my favorite roses bloomed in the South than at home (for I still thought myself at Mayflower); then, in an instant, the consciousness of some trouble or fear crept coldly into my heart, ere the dim shores of sleep had entirely faded, or the dream-clouds had vanished. At first I could not gather up the misty chain of my past thoughts and join it to the present, but asked:

"What time is it, Emma? Have I overslept myself?"

She quietly laid her work aside, then looked at her dainty, Swiss watch, and said, after softly kissing me:

"It is not late; you have had a most refreshing sleep, little sister."

I told her I had never known the June roses to bloom so early, even at Mayflower. Then, as my eyes fell upon several bottles on the table near my bed, hastily asked what day of the month it was:

"The 20th of June," she replied; then continued: "Why, Mary, you must be half asleep not to remember that you left Mayflower a month ago." Then, in her calm way, she laid some roses on my pillow, and told me that I had been very ill, but was convalescing finely; that my mother and father were at the hotel, and would come to me in a few minutes, if I would be very quiet.

"But where is Lily? and my"—Then, as memory suddenly returned, I fell back upon the pillow, whispering:

"Tell me where Lloyd is, or I shall die!"

"We have traced him as far as Cairo, but can get no further tidings; yet my husband writes that Lloyd is probably a prisoner of war. So do not worry about him, now, but try to calm yourself," she answered, soothingly.

Later in the day, they brought my child, whose vine-like tenderness calmed my perturbed spirit.

At first, she was afraid of me; but I soon regained her confidence, and she almost cheered me with her wee, winsome ways. She was almost a year old, and could walk alone, and talk quite prettily.

I have recovered my health, but not my former elasticity of spirits. I have but one thought now, viz., to obtain passes through our lines into the Con-

federacy, which I will search day and night, until I ascertain where my husband is incarcerated.

The uncertainty of his fate is almost maddening. God give me patience and endurance?



CHAPTER XXXVII.

MARS REIGNS.

"Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness;
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war
Might never reach me more. My ear is pained—
My soul is sick of every day's report."—COWPER.

WASHINGTON, D. C, July, 1861.

THE affairs of our distracted country have not worn so dark an aspect since that dismal winter at Valley Forge, in old Revolutionary days.

Yesterday, I opened a Northern newspaper. It was headed with a globe supposed to represent the Western hemisphere—which was almost submerged beneath the billows of a stormy ocean; and I fear that I came very near being angry.

O, that the people of the Free States were more united! I have felt, from the first, that God is on our side, that he will crown the Federal Army with success; but, then Emma feels that He is on the other side, and believes that the rebellious States will be victorious.

To-day, notwithstanding my sanguine hopes, every

thing wears a discouraging air. Even the sun shines with a strange, sickly glare, as if wading through blood. Ten States have passed the ordinance of secession, and others declare that they will follow the example of their misguided sisters.

Massachusetts's noble sons have been shot in the streets of Baltimore—the gallant Col. Ellsworth was murdered in Alexandria, while several battles have been fought, and the President has called for ninety-six thousand men.

One would suppose that, with such an army, the War would be of short duration—but raw recruits are not like veterans. It takes time to teach both officers and privates the art of warfare.

Privateers are afloat on the high seas, Union men have been imprisoned, bridges and railroads have been destroyed, and the most bitter animosity exists between both sections, while their armies are preparing for a great battle. Ah, in my opinion, it will take more than one victory to send the arch enemy of Liberty—*Treason*—wounded and reeking back to his native Hades. I fear, greatly, we do not realize that Spartan must meet Spartan, that Americans must fight *Americans*; for the Southerners will fight bravely.

O, my beautiful Southland! Home of my adoption! why will you work against your own interests?

The President has refused to give me a pass through the Federal lines. He writes: "We are on the eve of a great battle, and little know 'what a day may bring forth.'"

JULY 31st, 1861.

On the 21st of July the never-to-be-forgotten battle of Bull Run was fought. I still retain my old childish belief that on Sabbath mornings the insects and birds are hushed, that even the atmosphere wears a holier calm. The very sunshine is warmer, brighter then, than on other days, I sometimes fancy even now. I shall never forget with what feelings I watched the advent of the grey morning. Even the "City of Magnificent Distances" was quiet. The sun arose as from a sea of blood. Alas! he set upon an *Aceldama*!

On the previous evening, Emma had treated me with news of vital importance, tidings which had driven sleep from my eyes the live-long night. She had just received a note from Gen. Melbourne. He was almost in our immediate neighborhood. After boasting of the strength of the Confederate Army, he said that the impending conflict would compel the Federals to recognize the Rebellious States, as an independent Republic. "I think you had better leave Washington, for a season, Emma; for if successful, we shall march immediately into the Capital. Willington is safely incarcerated in prison, where he will

be treated well until the close of hostilities. He knows our affairs too well to be allowed to run at large; then I cannot have him fight against his own interests."

Shall I ever forget how soon that refreshing quiet changed to a scene of the wildest confusion? Washington was one wasp's-nest of excitement, during the entire day. The history of that wholesale murder has often been attempted, and will again be essayed; but the truth, with all its horror, will never all be told. I believe, however, that our discomfiture, as well as the disgraceful panic which followed, were ordered to teach our inexperienced soldiers a salutary lesson. There was brave fighting on both sides. Greek truly met Greek. Thousands marched up to the cannon's mouth, were mown down in swathes, like wheat before a reaping-machine; but the breach was instantly filled by men who knew that a similar fate awaited themselves.

O, will not the ghosts of their murdered brothers start up from every hill-side in the sun-bright South, and confront the leaders of the Rebellion? Will not every breath of air in the Old Dominion be tainted with the stench of the unburied army that lies bleaching within that hideous Golgotha?

Ah, who shall in future have sufficient nerve to plow that bloody soil, enriched, Oh, God! by the bodies of friend and foe?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HORS DE COMBAT.

"And everybody praised the Duke
 Who this great fight did win ;
 But, what good came of it at last ?
 Quoth little Peterkin.
 Why, *that* I cannot tell, said he ;
 But 'twas a *famous* victory."—SOUTHEY.

CONSTERNATION filled every loyal heart, when the news of our disorderly retreat reached Washington. One of our friends brought us word that Gen. Charles Melbourne had been wounded in the early part of the engagement and sent to the rear. We subsequently learned, from a rebel deserter, that he had been carried to the hospital. His wife said: "Poor Charles! He may become one of the first martyrs to Southern rights; still, I shall be proud, even then, to remember that my husband did not shrink from duty, in the hour of his country's need." Then, turning to her weeping son, she urged:

"Do not grieve so, Joy, my son, remember with what noble stoicism papa bade us 'good-by.' Let us emulate his example, and love our country next to

God. I still have this thought to comfort me—my boy will not be obliged to blush at the record of his father's cowardice in future!"

I was truly sorry for Joy, but his mother politely, but firmly, made me understand that she did not desire any sympathy. Said she:

"My proud ambition has still something to feed upon, for the Confederates have claimed, yes gained the victory at Bull Run, and put the Federals to a total rout."

Of course the Southern sympathizers were electrified. Great Britain laughed at our panic-stricken recruits and rejoiced with the South; and Northerners, although at first petrified with grief and disappointment, soon rallied from the effects of the stunning blow and nerved themselves up to action. Subsequent events have proved that our disgraceful defeat did more toward uniting the hearts of our loyal men than all the stirring appeals from the pulpit and press had hitherto done. It opened their eyes to the full realization of the stupendous work which lay before them; showed them what vast, undreamed-of proportions the rebellion had assumed; made them willing to *do* and *die* for their beloved land; to wage a war of extermination, sooner than allow one State to be severed from the Union.

Ah, forsooth; the end is not yet!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WAITING.

"And my heart will not be quiet,
But in a purple riot
Keeps ever madly beating
At the thought of that sweet meeting."

IDYLIA, CT., May, 1862.

WHILST awaiting my husband's release, last summer, I concluded to spend all of my spare time in assisting the nurses and reading to the sick in the hospitals, in and around Washington; but my nerves soon became so shattered by the horrible scenes which I witnessed there, that there was constant danger of a relapse of my fever. Whenever I closed my eyes, the dead and dying seemed to fill my room, whilst scores of mutilated limbs and fleshless skulls performed hideous war-dances around me day and night. Even a strong jet of gas or faithful attendants failed to dispel the singular illusion.

I was, therefore, forced to abandon my self-imposed task, and seek my quiet home in Idylia, where a pleasant surprise awaited me, in the shape of an addition to the old mansion.

It comprised a study, drawing-room, picture gallery and conservatory on the first floor, with corresponding rooms above for my own especial accommodation. Our books and other baggage had arrived in safety, and it afforded me constant employment, for the next month, to arrange the minerals and other curiosities in the gallery and the books in the library as they were at Mayflower. We then filled the conservatory with the choicest collection of flowers and exotics which could be procured in America. My father desired me to furnish my suite of rooms according to my own fancy; therefore, for the first time in my life, I gave full rein to my taste. A trunk still remained to be unpacked, containing statuettes of Psyche, Vesta, Pallas, Minerva, and Hebe, with their bronze and Parian brackets, also a few choice Sevres and Bohemian vases. They were all unharmed, excepting a waxen cross of white flowers which I had once presented to Lloyd. The base, containing the following injunction:

"Let the love of God precede all other love," was all that remained of the pretty ornament. A withered passion-flower lay beside it, which I immediately recognized as one which he had taken from my hand years before at Mayflower.

Ah! I began to see clearly, while musing over that imperishable motto, that we had loved each

other more than than we had the Author of our happiness; I had loved the *creature* more than the CREATOR!

God had separated us in order to bring back our old allegiance to Him. Truly, we both deserved to be "beaten with many stripes." I had climbed the "Hill of Difficulty;" then rested supinely in Love's pleasant arbor, lulled to sleep by its intoxicating delights, until, like Bunyan's Christian, I had lost the "Roll," supreme love to the All-Father. Yes, I had had more gods than one—I had fallen into idolatry. With my hands upon that broken emblem of Christ's vicarious sacrifice, I prayed for pardon, and promised henceforth to make Him paramount to all others; to take for my motto, not *amor omnia vincit*, but that of the royal flower which typified His passion and death for the redemption of the world. The heart is like a deep well. The more you draw from it, the larger seems its capacity for loving. I soon found that love to God did not diminish my love for Lloyd. I had needed the lesson. My Father had known what was best for us both.

After that I endeavored to be patient, but often felt that it was easier to drift into a sin or habit, than to conquer it, or eradicate its defects.

Autumn faded into winter; still my husband did not come home. The sea-coal or driftwood fire

crackled and blazed up lovingly as if laughing at my fears or talking with me, but I was happier when the wind shrieked weirdly around the house, and through the evergreens and leafless trees, or bore on his wings the driven snow and lashed the hungry waves into fury. On those days, I used to go down to the beach and listen to the angry billows, while they moaned and howled around the light-house point, or tramped in against the old worn-out rocks with deafening rage, or broke madly upon the shingles in sheets of livid foam. I well remember how that fierce elemental strife aroused my fainting energies and nerved my soul to action.

In such moods I could gladly have done or dared anything honorable for my husband and country, yet my child as well as my parents needed me daily.

December, 31st.—DIARY CONTINUED.

I have been enabled to take up the burden of my life again, and "kiss the rod which has chastened me" in love. Lassitude, doubt, fear, despondency, dare not show their unwelcome visages at Idylia.

I have received only one little note from Mr. Willington. It contains about six lines, viz.:

"I am well, and am waiting impatiently for the long-talked-of exchange of prisoners. Kiss Lily for me. Keep up your old courage, my darling. I shall come home soon to my treasures."

"Yes, he will surely return!" said my glad heart, as I folded the letter and sought my mother.

Summer has given place to chill bleak December, with its drifting snows and southing winds, but still he lingers. We have kept the fire burning brightly upon the hearth, the house cheerfully illuminated; have set a chair and plate for him at every evening meal, as well as kept his slippers and dressing-gown ready for him in our new study; but alas! he comes not.

Will his presence ever gladden our spirits again? Lily, who now talks quite plainly, keeps asking for papa. He will scarcely know his pet when he does come, I fear.

Mrs. Melbourne has gone to Europe with Joy. They spent several weeks with us, last summer, and were charmed with Idylia. Her husband died at Richmond soon after the battle of Bull Run, from injuries received during that fatal engagement. His wife and son never saw him again after he left Mayflower for Montgomery. Mrs. Melbourne will remain abroad until the cessation of hostilities.

This is the last day of eighteen hundred and sixty-two—an epoch which will live as long as the fabled Clio shall preside over history.

Among its most important events were the battles of Roanoke Island, Pea Ridge, Hampton Roads,

Newbern, Winchester, Shiloh, Fort Jackson, New Orleans, Williamsburg, Hanover, Fair Oaks, Memphis, Gaines Hill, Malcolm Hill, Bull Run, Chantilly, Antietam, Shipton, Port Royal and Fredericksburg.

The following items are also worthy of note: The Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia, sinking of the Merrimac, draft for three hundred thousand men, and removal of Gen. McClellan.

January, 2d, 1863—DIARY.

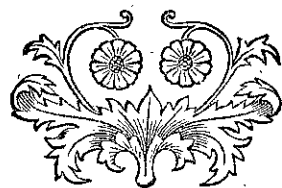
This has been a day of general thanksgiving in all the loyal States. The city has been wild with joy over the tidings of the President's Proclamation of Emancipation to the slaves in the seceding states. Guns have been fired and hundreds of church bells have repeated the good news to listening thousands.

The dear old flag waves from almost every house in the free North. The emancipation of a race! Truly, we have entered upon a new era! Would to God, that the hearts of all American citizens were prepared to acknowledge this master-stroke of the nineteenth century—second only to the Declaration of Independence. Thanks be to the Ruler of nations that slavery is dead!

The people of the Free States have learned to bless the hand which scourged them so terribly during the first months of the war. Had we then crushed the

rebellion, the hydra-headed monster—Slavery—would have continued to exist until this fearful tragedy must have been repeated. Alas! that this national sin can only be canceled by fire and sword. We are living in a wonderful epoch; one pregnant with historical events, but it is the harbinger of dawn. The long night of bloodshed will soon be over. Nor is the time far distant when those who now so bitterly denounce this act will see that a higher power dictated and compelled the deed which they now anathematize.

Yes, when the smoke of battle shall have cleared away, when "The Union and Freedom" have become their Shibboleth, when the rebellious portions of our country have come back to their former allegiance, as one family, and our glorious "Star-spangled Banner" waves again from every public building in our land, my Southern brothers and sisters will rejoice with me, that this plague-spot is removed from Columbia's fair escutcheon forever.



CHAPTER XL.

RETURNED.

IDYLIA, March, 1863.

"PRAISE the Lord, O, my soul! and all that is within me praise His holy Name."

If Hope had not been left in the bottom of Pandora's box, what would have become of us poor mortals?

The day was glorious. There had been a storm of snow and sleet on the previous night, covering grass, trees, shrubs, everything, with a robe of glittering sheen. It glistened on our window panes with whole cities and forests of ferny, flowery frost-work; depended from gables, lattices, the leafless vines around the veranda; from the fluted columns, architraves, entablatures, cornices. Its infinitesimal wealth of gems sparkled upon the rank grass of the salt marshes; petrified the trembling spray and foam, and held the impatient wavelets spell-bound on the shingly beach. As the sunbeams smiled through that shimmering panorama, everything, save the azure arch with its floating scrolls of cirri, glistened like innumerable diamond sprays. Even the spotless, untrod-

den snow and distant water looked like a sea of glass, reminding me of St. John's beautiful description of the new Jerusalem. As I was still contemplating the fairy splendor of the scene, Lily bounded into the library, exclaiming in her sweet, bird-like tones:

"Now for a kiss! dear mamma! I know my papa will be home to-day; for see! mamma; Oma has put on my pretty dress, and says you made it for me to wear when papa comes home!" Then her clasping arms were around my neck and her sweet lips pressed to mine so lovingly. The dress was of white merino, and was richly embroidered with festoons of *Calla Ethiopicas* and valley lilies. It had whiled away many an otherwise tedious hour of weary waiting. The child went out to ride with her doting grandpa, and I took my accustomed place at my easel, which stood in the brightest corner of the library. It held an original fancy picture, upon which I had sketched my varying feelings for months past. I called it *Hope*, but it should have been named '*The mirror of my heart.*' It was a marine view, with a foreground of irregular rocks stretching away to the left and terminating in a frowning promontory. A woman stood upon its summit leaning upon an immense anchor. She was habited in Grecian costume, and her long flowing robes were confined at the waist by a small cable, which was decorated

with anchors instead of tassels. Her hair, which was dressed after the fashion of those beautiful vignettes which we have seen upon ancient coins, was encircled by a wreath of ivy leaves and white everlasting. She was gazing upon a distant vessel, and to-day her countenance wore such a longing, far-off-at-sea expression, that it almost belied her name; and a mist crept over my eyes, dimming the picture, as I slowly arranged the colors upon my pallet.

It was a night scene, also, with a stormy sky whose black uneven clouds looked like the broken rocks might have done after some anterior geological period; while a single rift in their watery depths revealed the young moon, whose narrow path of light faintly illuminated the cliff and its immediate vicinity, leaving the remainder of the picture in darkling shadows.

How madly those foam-capped breakers lashed the base of that promontory, mocking and laughing at *Hope*, in their wild revel.

For months, I had changed the expression of her face to suit my own happy or gloomy moods, until, at last, her once hopeful countenance had become one of despair. It would have done for Longfellow's *Evangeline*; the mouth was so sad and wistful; the eyes had such a yearning prayer in their dark depths.

You could easily see that the land gale was fast

driving the vessel seaward. Alas, for poor Hope and me! My husband had been absent over two years. He had for twenty months been incarcerated in a loathsome Southern prison. We had all missed him greatly, during those lonesome years! I had almost become a recluse, persisted in refusing all invitations, for: "How, O, how, how can I mingle gaily in society while he is isolated from liberty, home, comfort and friends?"

"Believe me, I am grateful for your kindness, neither have I lost all relish for pleasure, but my husband must share it with me," was my only answer when invited out. My friends understood me, and turned away ruefully, while I went back to my Masora, my Talmud, my Greek Bible, or to my music or painting. I was perfecting myself in the above languages and accomplishments during my leisure hours, besides reading the news of the day and his favorite reviews. It did not do to allow my mind to dwell too much on the cruel treatment which the Union prisoners received, or their sufferings; for, truly, it would have driven me insane to have known half of the truth in those anxious days. The "Black Hole" of Calcutta was nothing in comparison to the horrible Belle-Isle; for the anguish of those confined in the former place was of short duration. Its victims endured not a tithe of the slow, lingering agony

which tortured our soldiers. I have searched the history of the dead nations in vain to find a parallel! When I thought of that foul den, alive with creeping vermin and festering with the fetid air and stench of undressed wounds, or the foul water and unpalatable food on which those famishing invalids were compelled to subsist, I used to sicken and turn away from a well-filled board without tasting a mouthful. *To do. and die* for one's country! Ay, those patient prisoners, who did the latter, were braver in their uncomplaining endurance, than those who faced the cannon's mouth in the heat of battle! I often wondered how any loyal daughter of the North could thoughtlessly satiate her hunger, whilst at the same time thousands of walking skeletons were longing for one mouthful of nourishing food—starving, dying, suffering almost a living death to gratify their malignant captors.

"O Lord of lords! King of kings! stay Thy avenging hand! Do not devastate my beautiful Southland with the sword and famine for this damning wrong,—for there are many within its borders who helplessly mourn over this crying sin; let their tearful prayers, O God, prevail, and expiate the misdeeds of their kinsmen," was my heartfelt orison.

With all my anxiety, I would not allow an unhappy, worried or disappointed expression to linger on my

face, knowing well that it would grieve him to see those painful inroads of grief,—wrinkles, grey hair,—eyes which had wept away all their brightness, and white cheeks,—therefore, no matter how much cause I had for fretting, I rigidly schooled my features. Anything but a countenance upon which sorrow is prematurely stereotyped. The room was so silent that morning I could hear my watch tick—even the beating of my heart. Lily had returned, and fallen asleep in Oma's arms. "What a sweet picture my darling makes!" I thought, as I glanced up from my painting. The sunshine which streamed through the crimson curtains upon her delicate features and ringlets of pale gold, intensified the dark beauty of her nurse's olive cheek and black wavy hair, making the contrast between light and shade perfect.

The young Octaroon—Oma Altonville—was the sister Omega, of whom poor Mida had spoken so tenderly, when dying, at the De Lacy mansion. She and her mother found their way to Washington among other contrabands. I knew the girl by her striking resemblance to Mida, and employed her immediately, believing that it was a duty incumbent upon us to give the colored race employment, to remunerate them accordingly. She has made an excellent domestic thus far,—but I digress.

Dear Diary, *pardonnez*; I am too happy to write calmly. I did like my morning's work, and said, as I leaned my head wearily upon the easel:

"I must name my picture 'Hope Deferred,' unless he comes soon;" then, with a heavy sigh, as I laid aside my brushes and pallet, continued aloud: "O my Heavenly Father, *must* I give him up? Will he never come home? Are all my prayers vain?"

"No. He has heard your prayers, Mary; blessed be His Holy Name!" and a pair of arms clasped me to his heart, while his mustached-lips showered kisses upon my face. I was so frightened by his sudden appearance and the emaciated shadow of his former self, that, at first, I verily thought it was his wraith. I finally found strength to tell him how supremely happy his presence made me, then caught Lily in my arms, exclaiming:

"Papa has come, darling! Wake up, pet, papa, PAPA, is at home!" She opened her eyes, and kissed him joyfully, saying:

"Papa's darling is so glad! Oh, so glad to see him!" He laid his hand on her sunny head, and drew me to his side, then looked reverently toward heaven, exclaiming:

"My treasures are safe! 'Praise the Lord; O my soul! and all that is within me, praise His Holy Name!'"

Strange as it may appear, he was captured on the very night of my thrice repeated dream !

His long hair and beard, combined with his shrunken face and large hollow eyes, had so changed Mr. Willington's countenance that his friends scarcely knew him. He was wasted to a skeleton, and lack of proper food and pure air had dried the cuticle on his hands, as well as on his face, until it looked and felt like brown paper.

It was many months before he regained his usual health—therefore he was excusable for refusing a generalship in the Union army—but he joined the noble company of good Samaritans, called the "Christian Commission," and gave his services, as well as a portion of his income, to the suffering soldiers until the close of the war. He used to say :

"I feel that we owe everything that we possess to those brave boys in blue, who have left all that was dear to them and laid their lives upon the altar of their country. We cannot do too much for them."

The Christian Sanitary Commission was one of our greatest blessings during our National struggle. I thank Providence to-day for this association ! Its members did more for God and the Union than they could possibly have done in the ranks of the army. Verily, they will be richly blessed, both in time and eternity, for following Christ's example.

CHAPTER XLI.

FIFTH ACT.

"Westward the course of Empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past ;
The fifth shall close the drama with the day."—BERKLEY.

GOOD FRIDAY, *April*, 1865.

I HAD just been reviewing the events of the year eighteen hundred and sixty-four, when Mr. Willington entered with a face so pregnant of good news, that I asked :

"Why do you look so happy ? Has General Lee finally surrendered to our modern Ulysses ?"

"Yes, little woman ;—let us thank Him who hath given us the victory !"

Again the North was electrified with the joyful tidings, and the tri-colored banner once more flaunted gayly over Idylia, and was visible from the domes of the adjacent city.

LATER.

We shall start for Washington to-morrow. Lloyd has been invited to join a party *en route* for Richmond. I cannot write to-day, for even my pen is

tremulous with joy. "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously."

WASHINGTON, D. C., *May 30, 1865.*

We arrived at this city on the evening of the fourth anniversary of the surrender of Fort Sumter to the Confederates; and, although excessively weary, were finally persuaded to accompany our friends to Ford's Theatre. It was no new treat for me, for I had witnessed the performance of "Our American Cousin" at Laura Keane's Theatre in New York City. I merely went to please my companions and watch the play of soul upon the President's countenance. His strongly marked face, if once seen, was never forgotten; for it indicated mind, heart, firmness, honesty, humor, humility, justice, benevolence, tenderness. I liked its lines of thought and feeling better than the pictured ones of all our former Executives. There was nothing effeminate about its contour. To me, it was a grand visage—a curious study. The flag which draped his private box left his profile in deep shadow, giving it a dark, stern outline, that forcibly reminded me of the profile of the White Mountains after the changing lights of sunset has faded into the purple twilight.

"The 'Moses of the age,' his wife and Miss H—with the handsome officer opposite, really make an interesting *tableau*," said Mr. Willington. At that

moment the report of a pistol made me whisper quickly:

"Lloyd! the President has been shot! See! he is falling!"

"Forbid it, gracious Providence!" he answered, with suppressed emotion. The scene of wild excitement which followed has already become a page of history, and I will draw the drapery of silence over it, as well as over the sorrow and horror which agitated the hearts of a nation.

Alas! if he could only have lived to enjoy the bright daylight which the rosy dawn presaged even then. Like the great Lawgiver of old, he was not permitted to enter the "Promised Land of Peace" which he saw within his reach. Yet a greater man than Moses was Abraham Lincoln. If he could only have told us, while the death-smile still lingered on his dying face, what glimpses of eternity saluted his enraptured eyes, our agony would not have been so acute. I tried with the eye of fancy to follow him up the shining way and behold his first meeting with those of his loved ones who had gone before, but alas! imagination was too weak to pierce the vail of the *holy of holies*." He rests from his labors, and to-day I thank the Father of all our blessings that Abraham Lincoln was raised up for this emergency. Our country will be doubly dear to us in future, for

it has cost many of the best and bravest lives in our land.

Lincoln's murder was the last act of the bloody drama. We remained at the capital until the funeral of our martyred President was solemnized. The mournful cortege moved slowly toward his Western home, but the day with its thernody of bells and martial music, its weeping thousands, its flags at half-mast draped with the lonesome black, will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed the solemn spectacle.

We had scarcely dried our tears before a comedy was enacted, which made us laugh as loudly as we had wept. Johnson has also surrendered, and peace again blesses Columbia.

JULY 4th, 1865.

I have been watching the long lines of returned volunteers, and feel like taking every one of them by the hand, and saying, "God bless you, hero!"

The glorious old "Stars and Stripes" again wave over every State in the Union; and, to-day, there is not a slave in our beloved land. Yet I cannot keep back my tears when I think how many of America's brave sons have fallen during the late fearful struggle, or realize how many once happy homes and hearts have been desolated by the red hand of War, from the granite hills of New England to the sunny plains of Texas.

How many mothers, wives and sisters are mourning to-day for loved ones who will never return, who sleep in their lowly graves far from their childhood's homes. On every battlefield—at Richmond, Belle Isle, Andersonville, Salisbury, and all along "Sherman's line of march to the sea"—lie their worn and mangled bodies, wrapped in their bloody uniform, "Unknelled, uncoffined and unknown!" Still, they will live in every American heart, and History will rear a monument more enduring than the mausoleums of Egypt's proudest kings. It is true that every noble cause must have its martyrs; therefore it matters little where our ashes repose; for this green earth, so often baptized with tears and blood, is naught but the mossy roof of the great charnel-house toward which we are all journeying.

In a few years, the waves of time will erase every trace of War's desolating track, leaving us a more united people than formerly. My Southland will then recognize the Hand which has laid waste her fair plantations and palaces, and strive to emulate her Northland sister in free labor, free schools and home manufactories.



CHAPTER XLII.

CONCLUSION.

"Though fools spurn Hymen's gentle powers,
We, who improve his golden hours,
By sweet experience know,
That marriage, rightly understood,
Gives to the tender and the good
A Paradise below."—COTTON.

IDYLIA, April, 1868.

A PERFECT April day. Sunshine, showers, rainbows, hurrying clouds and patches of blue sky, contending with each other like the smiles, tears, frowns and blushes upon the face of a beautiful maiden. The soft air comes in through my study-window laden with the perfume of Spring's first violets and opening buds. Schools of tiny flies wander drowsily up and down the glass panes, and a robin-redbreast calls musically from the linden tree that shades the bay window; but dearer, sweeter than all other sounds are the cooings of our infant son in the chamber beyond, and of Lily's rippling laughter at his baby nonsense.

Mr. Willington is writing busily near the open

window, through which I catch glimpses of blue waves and white canvas. He has been on a visit to his old home in the South. Mrs. Melbourne has just returned from abroad, and is residing in New Orleans; Joy will remain in Germany until his education is completed. Charles Melbourne's remains have been removed to Mayflower vault.

Lloyd had the pleasure of again seeing *la belle Angel*—Mrs. Dr. Fields—for the first time "since she fled from the fever." He says: "She has grown so *embonpoint* that I scarcely recognized her at first. I told her so, and she said:"

"Well, I do not think it at all strange, for I now wear my hair *a la Grecian*, and dress so differently. Those intolerable, horrible, brutal Yankees have taken away all our servants, and I cannot afford to employ a dressing-maid, as I did in the good old days when I was a girl, and I never could curl my hair myself. The care of my house and six children leaves me very little time for dress or anything else. I scarcely get time to look into a book or even at the fashion-plates in 'Godey's Magazine.' Oh! those horrid Yankees! they have made servants of us all here in the South!"

Lloyd asked her to play, but she declared that she had not learned anything new since her marriage. Her husband has a large practice in the city. He

superintends Mrs. Melbourne's affairs during her absence.

"I left Mrs. Fields," said Lloyd, "mentally returning thanks for that attack of yellow fever."

There were only two of our negroes at Mayflower—the faithful old Nero and Dahlia. They still guarded the ruins of their former home, and could not be induced to leave their cabin, which they had reared upon the site of their deceased master's mansion.

The plantation gives evidences of a terrible engagement. Every tree has been cut down for fuel or tent poles. The Confederate army made the Hall and its environs their "headquarters" until driven away by shot and shell.

Only a single wall remains of beautiful Mayflower. The charred chimneys of the "Quarters" also tell a similar story. Heavy wagons and ordnance have worn deep ruts through the graveled walks and fenceless grounds; while the Park no longer exists. An earthquake could scarcely have defaced the home of the Melbournes more completely.

Silver Lake alone remains unchanged. Its surface was as serene as if it had never witnessed the carnage of that army of vandals. The larger part of the plantation is being cultivated by hired hands; but Mayflower will not be rebuilt until the young heir, Joy

Melbourne, takes possession of his broad acres. "It was fortunate that I sold my interest in the estate before the war, and invested my money in Northern lands and bonds," said my husband.

Adieu, my beautiful Southland! The memory of thy former loveliness will linger in my mind as sweetly as did the aroma of thy orange blossoms and magnolias around Mayflower in its palmiest days. I am very thankful that my picture of the mansion hangs in our new gallery at Idylia, also that the statuary and articles of *vertu* were forwarded to us in safety. They had remained in the vault during all those cruel years of bloodshed.

IDYLIA, 1870.

As I have almost reached the last page of my diary, I must not forget to mention our affairs at Daisydell. We have converted the old farmhouse into a school for soldiers' and miners' orphans. Mrs. Marian Day Leslie has been its Principal for four years. A flourishing village has sprung up near the "Idyl farm," and I scarcely recognize the old landmarks to-day. My father has erected a memorial church in the old family cemetery, which he has named St. Mary's, in memory of the redemption of the farm from debt after Willie's funeral. Our mines have yielded us a princely fortune, and still afford a handsome income.

My parents are very happy, and I pray that life's

autumn may be as beautiful with their children as it is with them. They say that our Lily and Willie Idyl fill the hiatus which Alice and my brother made in their lives; and I notice that they make fewer pilgrimages of late to the two graves at "Idyls' Rest"—the burial-place of the Idyls for generations past—which in summer are always bright with flowers, and in winter are white with wreaths of immortels from Daisydell. There, too, I have erected a cenotaph to the memory of my beloved benefactress, my almost more than mother, Mary Idyl, whom I daily remember. She wanted to be buried in H—; but imagination always brings her here when I decorate her cenotaph with floral offerings.

I have just corrected the last "proof-sheet" of my "Pandora." It will appear in book form in a few days. My publisher predicts that it will be a greater success than my "Phoenix," which has already reached its twentieth edition.

This is the twelfth year of our married life. Our union is perfect, for we have similar temperaments; the same literary and æsthetic tastes, as well as love for the fine arts. Lloyd says that I have grown dearer to him with each succeeding year; and I daily feel that I can never be sufficiently thankful for the sweet peace and rest which our home life affords.

Lily is ten years old. I am her teacher, from choice, for I cannot trust her education in other hands at present. She has just been singing with her father the following secret of our happiness:

"A Deity believed is joy begun,
A Deity adored is joy advanced,
A Deity beloved is joy matured."

And as the music swelled through the spacious library, hundreds of master spirits seemed to step from their dusty covers and join in the anthem.

And now, unto One who hath led me through the "Red Sea" and "Wilderness" of poverty, of illness, of discouragement, of opposition and temptation, ay, and repeated failures, to the "Promised Land" of plenty and almost unparalleled happiness, I give all the glory and honor for what I am and for what I possess; besides thanking Him sincerely for every early trial and disappointment.

FINALE.

DURING a recent visit to Idylia, Mrs. Idyl, who is one of the loveliest characters I have ever known, gave me an account of her daughter's struggles for an education.

Thinking that the publication of her autobiography

would encourage hundreds of indigent, but worthy, young women in our land, I requested permission to copy her Diary and send it to her publisher.

"I cannot allow this bundle of egotism and adjectives to be seen by other eyes than my own. Remember, my friend, that it is a *heart* history," she quickly answered.

"But, Mrs. Willington, I thought that you did not sacrifice to that dear idol of the masses—Popular Opinion!"

"Nor do I, usually; but how can I give the story of my love into its merciless keeping?"

Determined to carry my point, I still urged: "Yet, dear friend, if it would prove an incentive to those of our sex who are crushed and held down by the iron hand of poverty, and stimulate them to renewed exertions, you should not refuse to aid them by your rich and varied experience."

"You are right; and if I were positive that it would not displease my husband to make our affairs so public, I would willingly accede to your proposal," she replied, hesitatingly.

"You have *my* entire permission, Mary. It has been my desire to see your journal in print," exclaimed Mr. Willington, as he stepped out of one of the curtained alcoves of the library; then added: "It would be well to suppress all *real names*, however

and substitute fictitious ones, as it is never pleasant to hear one's private affairs discussed or commented upon by the masses. Yes, Mary, give it to America's young daughters by all means, for they must strive to fit themselves for the position—which I see in the signs of the times—for women in the new 'Golden Age' that is dawning."

She instantly handed the manuscript to me with this remark:

"My sisters are welcome to my autobiography. It reaches back over more than a quarter of a century. In it I find pages of light and shadow—of joy and sorrow—some things to regret—much to be thankful for—yet I would not, if I could, be willing to live my life over again; for I am confident that I should not improve it, if placed under similar circumstances.

"If it shall prove a beacon to one of my sex, and stimulate her fainting energies to renewed exertion, I shall not regret the hours I have spent in recording my own experience. Stay;—close it with Longfellow's stirring 'Psalm of Life.' I will copy it here for you," and she went to her writing-desk. As she bent over her task, I thought that I had never seen a more interesting face than Mary Idyl Willington's. Her pure, smooth forehead and white throat were shaded by a heavy fall of natural curls, which still held an

imprisoned sunbeam in their brown coils. Her large, almond-shaped, luminous eyes (I never could describe them) changed with each passing emotion. Now blue, again violet, anon grey, then black as if darkened with unshed tears.

Her mouth and chin indicate more firmness, and the upper part of her face more intellect than beauty, perhaps; but her chief charm is the ever-varying expression of her speaking countenance. To my mind, this noble-hearted, self-made woman is a perfect Psyche.

"THE PSALM OF LIFE.

"TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal!
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul.

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way;
But to act that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

"Art is long, and time is fleeting;
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife.

"Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant,
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

"Footprints, that, perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother—
Seeing, shall take heart again.

"Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."



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