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BENSLEY:

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LIFE BEFORE HIM."



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JAMES G. GREGORY.

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BENSLEY

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A STORY OF TO-DAY.

CHAPTER I.

MR. ANTHONY BENSLEY, with his last cup of coffee, pushed back from the table, and stirring the compound with a spoon in one hand, and broadly grasping the saucer with the other, deliberately turned a wise saying over in his mind, and prepared to utter it. Skittish sons and vivacious-daughters are pretty sure to stimulate anxious moralities in any household; and Mr. Bensley, not a croaker nor a preacher, but a good observer, and given to get at the kernels of things, could not forego opportunities to set up guideposts, utter sound axioms, and reduce great truths to the necessities of young gentlemen and ladies. The axioms were rasping as well as sound; and Emma and Betsy, who think papa Bensley the wisest and the best of men, sometimes shrink, with tingling cheeks and demure looks from these sharp reminders. But the heart of girlhood is light, and the would-be solemnities of Mr. Bensley float over their spirits like summer clouds. There is a laugh, a shake of curls, a darting glance from bright eyes, and the old sins trip back—little minor sins, which to the big world of vice are only like pins and needles to the ponderous shafts of a steamer.

Mr. Anthony Bensley stirred his coffee, and drank his coffee as fast as the revolving spoon could cool it, and Mr. Anthony Bensley, while he drank and stirred, and grew a little red with the exercise and the heat, also talked, as he

was notoriously fond of doing. Mr. Bensley has very little reticence; he is portly; the flesh bulges over his cravat, and rolls in ample masses upon the confines of his collar; his voice is loud and emphatic; his face rugged and browned by many summer suns; his manner is hearty, broad, sunny, genial, and his whole utterance is pitched in resonant bass.

"Girls," said Mr. Bensley, whipping up his coffee with a more than usual energetic turn of the spoon; "girls, you are spoiling him."

"George!" said the girls simultaneously, interpreting the word "him" by this proper noun, and with corresponding unanimity turning their eyes upon one who clearly responded to this sponsorial.

"Yes," said the senior, "you are petting and making a child of him. It is time he was in harness—time he laid out his furrow. Eh, George?"

"Why George is only twenty-one," said Emma, the elder of Mr. Bensley's children, and by the death of Mrs. Bensley, head of the household, "and there is really no necessity for his adopting a profession so speedily."

"Twenty-one!" exclaimed George, reddening a little, as he was wont to do when made the theme of discourse; "I am ashamed, as it is, to begin so late. At twenty-five a man ought to have made a name."

"At twenty-five, Master George Bensley, a man has just laid his foundation; at thirty-five, you may look to see what sort of thing he is."

George bore the fresh, honest bloom of youth; his cheek was smooth, and of mingled red and white. He was a fresh, clean-eyed, smooth-browed youth, of a pleasant grace in the figure, still boyish in the *contour* of the cheek and lip, but earnest and mature in the meditative eyes.

"I think," said he, "that youth is often the victor. In the history of the world, sir, a great many things have been accomplished by men under twenty-five. Look at Napoleon, Pitt——"

"Look at George Bensley," interrupted the senior, "who at twenty-one has done such wonders. At twenty-five you are likely to make the best stable-boy in the county."

"But, papa," broke in Emma, "George has had no opportunities; and you and he never will agree as to what profession he shall adopt."

"No opportunities!" roared Mr. Bensley, emptying his cup at a gulp; "no opportunities! He has had nothing to do but thrum books and learn. When I was a boy I had an almanac, and a testament with every third leaf gone to the waste-bag—that's all! I learned the alphabet on a shingle, and there was but one grammar in the whole county. Opportunity! I was a poor boy, and in my day a row of books a span long was a wonder. Now, schools are everywhere; science is made as easy as lying, and books are bought by the wagon-load. Let me tell you one thing—smart men get up in the morning and make opportunity. George has nothing to do but choose a trade and follow it."

"An unlimited privilege," said George, with some indignation, "to choose any profession but the one I care to choose."

"What do you think, girls," said Mr. Bensley, beginning to shake violently with laughter, "George thinks he's cut out for a great man. He expects to be a statesman, or an orator, or a general, or something grand. He goes into the stable and rehearses his fine speeches; he gets up into the woods and talks to himself like a philosopher. Sometimes he thinks he'll be a warrior, and pants for countries to conquer; then he changes his mind, and concludes to be a statesman, and frightens the oxen in the fields with his eloquent philippics. Then he prefers history; and suddenly abandoning history for poetry, bursts upon our astonished gaze in Byronic hair and collars."

The youth flushed a deep red, and looked unutterably confused and distressed. His nature, extremely sensitive to ridicule, shrank from this merciless exposure of his vanities into abashed and mortified silence. But a hand was passed under the table and laid upon his knee. It was his sister Betsy's, who, not content with this act of sympathy, replied with spirit to Mr. Bensley.

"George ought to be a great man, papa, and I don't see any harm in his trying to be one."

"Certainly, my dear, he ought."

"Of course," said Betsy, spreading out her hands with a gesture of triumph.

"But you must excuse me," pursued the relentless senior, "for not seeing that he does try."

"Not try!" cried three voices in chorus.

Not try! Emma's eyes opened wide into her father's.

face. Betsy's black eyes flashed fire, while her lips shut with a defiant snap. George thrust his fingers into his waistcoat with a look of astonished and injured innocence. Mr. Bensley had evidently committed high treason by the suggestion.

"Wishing and spouting ain't trying, take my word for it," said the incorrigible old gentleman. "So long as a man is *doing*, there is hope for him; but if he lolls on the grass, and stares at the sky in a dream, his chances are about as good as a butterfly's."

"But father," retorted George, "the fault is not mine. I have frequently named the profession I wish to follow."

"The law?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry to hear it, that's all."

"Why? It is honorable, and in America it is the road to rank and preferment."

"True enough."

"Webster and Clay were lawyers."

"Were they?" cried the senior, as a glance of comic humor shot into his eyes. "Of course, nobody ought to object to your doing what Webster and Clay did. But why not be a printer—Franklin was a printer? or a farmer—Cincinnatus was a farmer? or a spinner—the Peels were spinners? or a cobbler—Bloomfield was a cobbler? George," thumping the table emphatically with his knuckles, "I wish you wasn't such a fool."

"You are harsh, sir," replied the young gentleman, and bit his lips with suppressed anger.

"Law," resumed Mr. Bensley, "is like most everything else—very fine if you are successful. You are fond, George, of thinking yourself a genius. A genius is a man who seizes upon his circumstances and subdues them. But it is no sign of genius to prattle about what it would do if things were favorable. It doesn't expect everybody to give it a boost; it doesn't keep declaring that if the sun shines, and the winds blow, and matters generally are pleasant and nice, why then it will do wonders, and so spends its life waiting for the sun to shine, the winds to blow, and things to get pleasant and nice to its taste."

"Well, sir," said George, rising from the table and walking to the mantel-shelf, against which he leaned, "well, sir, you are urging me to do, and I am urging you to let me do. Have I your consent? Shall it be the law?"

"I have an old merchant's prejudice against the law," said Mr. Bensley, vigorously rubbing his ear.

"Come, father," said Betsy, running up behind her father, flinging her arms around his neck, and putting her peach-red cheek next to his, bristling, gray, and formidable, with its unshaven beard; "come, father, let George have his way. He ought to be a lawyer, for he's cut out for a great man. Ellen Sanford says he is; Carrie says so, and I say so; and you think so."

"Great men, my little girl, are a cheap family article. They are to spare in every household. But if George is determined, I must give him up, and hope for the best; only remember this, young sir, I am making a reputation as a thrifty farmer, so I'll have no broken-down, spavined stock on my place. If you smash up, don't expect to come to grass on my fields. You may turn poet, politician, book-writer, or anything decently obscure, but not an agriculturist—at least not on my acres. So, remember. Where will you study?—with whom? Will you go to town?"

"I should prefer one of our country offices."

"Of course," said Betsy, both flushing and laughing—for Betsy could rarely either laugh or speak without a blush on the cheek and a flash from her dark eyes; "in the country, of course, papa, or else somebody"

"Pshaw, Betsy!"

"Ellen likes you, doesn't she?" inquired Betsy, demurely.

"Yes," said George.

"Ellen?" cried the senior; "she is old enough to be his aunt."

"But Carrie isn't," said the matter-of-fact Emma, who never could understand an equivocation, or follow any theme but in straight lines.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Bensley, his eyes twinkling with their usual mirth, and his large frame beginning to shake with suppressed laughter.

"I tell no secrets," replied Betsy, pursing up her lips, and with an arch sidelong glance at George.

"Is the boy in love?" cried Mr. Bensley, with accents so explosive with mirth that George, well pricked and stung in the gauntlet just escaped, and thoroughly unwilling to run another, sprang forward with the purpose of a blind rush from the room. But the nimble, quick-witted

Betsy was too rapid for him, and darting from her father's side, intercepted him, and put her back against the door. There was a clapping of hands at Betsy's triumph and George's discomfiture.

"Betsy," said George, reproachfully, and put his hands upon her shoulder.

"Hold him fast," cried Mr. Bensley, "and make him confess. Is it the young kitten or the old maid? Stab him with pins, Betsy, until he is penitent and makes a clean breast of it."

But Betsy was a little traitor; or she was bribed by some whispered promise or threat of the prisoner; or she could not abide the appeals of the young gentleman's eyes; or her heart was weak, and nothing but a woman's heart at best—how it was, I cannot tell, but George, with his hands upon her shoulders, looked into her eyes, and down dropped her colors, vanquished. She melted away like ice in the tropics; and so even while the rest applauded, she glided aside, and George darted through the door. His sudden escape was followed by a volley of exclamations from Mr. Bensley—a portion shot after the flying lover, the rest launched at Betsy's shameful treason.

CHAPTER II.

MR. BENSLEY had always opposed George's wishes for the profession of the law; he experienced some of the vulgar prejudices against that pursuit, and moreover had hoped George would take part with him in his ambitious agricultural schemes. He believed that agriculture in its highest form was a science; and that business talent, enterprise, liberality, largeness of treatment, so indispensable in commerce, would be as well rewarded in husbandry as in the counting-room. His own teeming acres bore out his theory; his fruits and products were of enviable reputation in all the marts; his stock and crops were themes of admiration many miles around.

For twenty years Mr. Bensley had been a merchant, when a period of profound commercial distress determined him to escape, even if with considerable loss, from uncongenial ledgers, price currents, debits and credits, to a prac-

tical realization of what had been his dream from boyhood. Every man nurses an Utopia—Mr. Bensley's had been purely agricultural.

Mr. Bensley's lands are not only fruitful, their situation is picturesque. They border a small, rapid stream that courses through a narrow valley, and after many devious windings, find out the Hudson. It is a narrow, pleasant stream, never touched by the keel of vessel save those tiny craft that are sent dancing over its surface with pleasure at the helm.

The house is built upon a little plateau thirty feet above the level of the river. A deep wooded cliff flanks it on one side, at a little distance, and extends far up the side of the hills; it is a hollow, shaded, ravine, with rare mosses, flowers, and "tanglery," adding no little to the picturesque charms of the situation, and giving to the place its name of "Cleftside."

The house itself is rich in its honest simplicity. There is not a prettiness about it; it sets itself flatly against oddities or eccentricities of all kinds. It is only a house of a home-like pattern, and not a villa or any such odd fish. It is a caricature of neither the Gothic, the Italian, the Florentine, the Norman, the Elizabethan, nor the Swiss; imitating none of these. The inmates are so fortunate as to obtain commodious, well-lighted rooms, and roomy spaces. In attempting to describe it I am reminded at once there is nothing to describe. It is spacious, it is low, it is set down amid the grass and under trees, with neither circles, squares, parallelograms, rectangles, triangles, pentagons, heptagons, nor any known geometry disfiguring its approaches. Imagine, if you please, this long, low house, deep, and wide-windowed, roof projecting, ample piazza almost on a level with the grass that spreads all around it; then think of the sun shining down through the trees flickering with shattered light its old roof, of its brown-tinted sides, over one of which clammers honeysuckle and woodbine, of its wide, hospitable chimneys, of the hearty humanity that brightens up its spaces, and you will be charmed I hope. Around the lawn are clumps of shrubbery, and here and there are little clusters of flowers; but gardens ruled to copy-book patterns; gardens pranked out with flimsy conceits, and conceived in spasms of geometry—it cries you mercy, and knows them not!

Our hero, George, escaping from the breakfast-room by

the connivance of the fair Betsy, is soon seen scampering on his horse, Tony, along the road that winds by the river through the valley. Tony is a handsome, spirited nag, whom George pets and fondles, and sports, and perpetually rides—rides almost daily on errands the intelligent beast, no doubt, surmises. If intelligent there can be no doubt of it, for George has the vain habit of talking aloud. That brow, bulging at the sides and rocked always in dreams, is too full of speculation, hopes, and aspirations, not to let them out in swelling sentences when it is certain sneering bipeds are not the listeners, and only Tony pricks an ear to the glowing sentiments.

Life, so far, had been singularly happy with George Bensley. At the early age, when the boy is a mystery, when sympathies, as profound as a man's, and as delicate as a woman's, are half suspected to be weaknesses, and lie concealed; when aspirations, big and strange, trouble his waking dreams; when his visions are all visions of some magnificent heroism and dazzling adventure; at the age when the boy is restive, eager, passionate, with a heartiness of nature which delights in all pleasure, and with outbreaks of feelings that he cannot understand, and does not attempt to analyze; at this impressible age our hero met with a friend who penetrated to the very heart of his nature, gave voice and clearness to his half-formed thoughts, and by the spell of an almost passionate sympathy bound him captive at her feet. It was a woman some years his senior, of large understanding and wide knowledge, profoundly enlisted—as there are such women—in behalf of youth; a woman of fine imagination, who, shut out by circumstances from a career for which her talents well fitted her, had fastened her aspirations and fed out her dreams upon another. It is frequently the fate of brilliant women to live through destinies apart from their own; and in discovering the germ, promoting the growth, and watching the success of genius, attain all the sweets of fame which either their natures desire or their circumstances permit.

Even in his school-days, when George, with a pile of books, stole off to the woods, or among the rocks that capped the hills, Ellen Sanford would join him and share his studies, always applauding his skill and stimulating his exertions. She entered, with the most subtle knowledge into his boyish spirit, identifying herself with every aspiration, and making his career, his hopes, his future glories,

his coming triumphs, his splendid destiny, the incessant themes. She delighted always in painting his glittering history; and the lad—for to the young, genius is so magnificent—could not fail, under this delicious flattery to become suffused and penetrated with a rapturous elation.

George, to his dying day, never accused Ellen Sanford of insincerity. How pernicious these flatteries were, he lived long enough to know; but his maturer judgment, in detecting the nature of a friendship like hers, did not fail to do justice to her character and motives. And yet, while this strange friendship fostered vanity, pride, and, perhaps, other bad qualities in George, it was not without its benefits. Ellen, in all her glowing pictures of the future, always inspired him with a love of the lofty and chivalric; and although her own history was to show how often sentiment and even principle yield to trial and temptation, George often resisted evil in desire to justify the friendship and retain the approval of this singular woman.

Of course the ride on that morning was to Ellen Sanford—the first to whom the pleasing decision of his father must be conveyed. It was she who pointed out the profession to George, who nerved him to a persistent adherence to that choice; and justly it should be she who should first rejoice in the consent of his father, so reluctantly obtained.

And yet not she alone. There was another name that went coupled with Ellen's—a name that made music in his heart, and seemed hummed day and night to his ear.

It was six miles from "Cleftside," and George reached it in less than an hour. He was sure of not finding the ladies in the house, for Ellen almost lived out of doors; and so, tying Tony to the post, he went to seek for them in the garden. In one of the walks, skirted by shrubs and flowers, he found them; Ellen walking with an open book in her hand, and Carrie gathering a bouquet.

"Why, there is George," said Ellen—the first to hear, or at least to notice his step; "and he brings good news, I am sure." She said this as she saw his face.

Carrie only partly turned to answer the young man's salute, and then resumed her task. She was a reserved girl, not timid, but abstracted. Her face seemed always settled in a thoughtful repose. Her eyes, however, were restless and varying. Their dark, luminous, and searching character continually evinced a hidden, undeveloped

power. Her complexion was a pure, delicate olive tint, and her features of exquisite regularity and delicacy. Her brow was somewhat prominent along the upper lines, but was pleasantly shaded by the bands of dark hair that lay upon the temples. To George she was continually an object of jealous watchfulness; but never, either in blush or smile, had she evinced more than the most distant interest in him.

"Now, I know you have good news," said Ellen, "so don't play at fence."

"How do you know it?"

"You know a telltale face. Well, what new scheme, or new profession?"

"You know my resolve, so don't talk of new profession. My father consents."

"Carrie, my dear," said Ellen, turning at once to her niece, "hadn't you better take the flowers in and arrange them? You have plenty, I think."

Carrie did not reply, and walked slowly towards the house, while the slight movement made by George, in deprecation of this command, was unnoticed by Ellen. Her emphasis was so positive that George always hesitated to encounter it; and on the heel of any opposition at that moment would follow so much surprise, so much to explain, and so much that must remain unexplained, that the lover hesitated, and the proper moment slipped by; so it had been a hundred times before. I am afraid that George, with all his grand dreams, had more weaknesses than he dreamed of. It is, indeed, difficult to suddenly turn and breast a current; and the young lover, hesitating with the confession on his lips, trembled at the storm of passion that confession would be sure to arouse. Yet it was strange that Ellen, whose sharp eyes saw every thing, should fail to see a more potent confession than words that burned in the lover's cheeks, shot from his eyes, and trembled in his utterance.

It was one of Ellen's delights to plan a grand marriage for George. She always talked as if she had taken his destiny in this particular entirely in her own hands. She had told him a hundred times the kind of woman he must marry, and took pleasure in depicting the qualities, and painting the charms of this ideal personage. For her reserved, childish, rather awkward niece, she entertained no very profound respect; she sneered at her acquirements

and decried her beauty whenever it was alluded to. The ideal wife was a different person—a grand woman, a belle, a somebody to give rank, consideration, and even wealth. Ellen liked Carrie in a distant, protecting sort of way—as somebody inferior and a long way off. How then could George make confession of his passion when he knew it would be overwhelmed with merciless contempt and scorn. To thwart Ellen in this way was to wound her in a most sensitive point; and so the love secretly grew upon him, penetrating with a subtle magnetism his whole composition, until his ears would linger with passionate pleasure upon Carrie's speech, and his pulse beat swiftly if the hem of her garment even touched him.

But as Carrie walked down the gravel path, stopping momentarily to pluck a flower, he could not repress a desire to edge up, as it were, to the subject.

"Why did you send her away, Ellen?"

"Is she old enough to listen to your rhapsodies? I can understand you, my friend; but Carrie is a child, and you puzzle her."

"She is almost a woman now."

"The young may think so; but I am thirty-five, and to me she is such a distance off! Life has not begun with her; a passionate young fellow, with his extravagant dreams and notions, would put her little head in a tumult. It takes a good many years to make a woman wise enough for George Bensley."

"How absurd you talk."

"Oh, it is more difficult to follow you than you suppose. But I have a faculty of sympathizing with a thing whether I understand it or not. In your most transcendental moods I appreciate you. Where is there another woman who could do as much?"

"I don't know," said George, and looked towards the house.

"That answer is a little surly."

"I am not surly, Ellen."

"Why do you keep your face away? Why did you beat your foot on the ground just now? But you needn't answer—there is another virtue besides wisdom, which I have. It is patience. I can wait upon people's moods demurely."

"You! Patience!" retorted George to Ellen's self-praise. "It is the last virtue you have a right to claim."

No matter. Do you want to know what my father says?"

"If your lordship pleases."

"He surrenders, but with a wry face. He dotes on the idea of my being a farmer, but at last is willing to forego his agricultural ambition."

"You would make a sensible farmer, after all. But isn't it strange, now, that our own so rarely understand us? Nobody understood me when I was a child. They mistook me for a fool, and let me run wild. Well, I am thirty-five, and haven't a husband—which, of course, sets me down as a hopeless failure. A woman without a husband, George, is as bad as a man without money or brains."

"But I expect to see you married yet."

"Which would furbish me up as good as new, of course. But, thank you, It is too late for the men I like, and too soon for the men who like me. No, I am a woman with the ambition of a man, and I give the passion vent in building castles for others. I know your dreams, George, and dream with you. It is so noble for the young to look high; it is so grand to have an ambitious spirit!"

"It is such a delight to have a friend who understands it."

"I can give you sympathy, advice, applause; with these I must be content. My participation must end when the crown is won. The glory of striving for it I share with you—the glory of wearing it you possess alone. And so your father consents. I knew he must at last; but I am glad of it. And now I have news for you."

"News? Important?"

"Carrie's father comes home to-morrow—and her brother"——

"I never knew she had a brother," exclaimed George, in great surprise.

"It is a terrible pity she has. We have not dared to talk about it, and scarcely own the fact to ourselves."

"What *do* you mean?" exclaimed George, pausing abruptly in the path.

"He is deranged."

"Good Heaven!"

"I dislike to call him so, but it is too true. His intellect is the ripest and fullest, I think, I ever knew. Extensive reading, much travel, large observation, give his thoughts a range and scope quite remarkable—but all is

disordered and unbalanced. He can talk exquisitely, and will pour out a crowd of fancies that would delight you, but his moods change like the wind. In talk he is a genius, but in judgment an infant. He is incapable of the most ordinary forethought or prudence, and his words have a wildness in them which indicates only too clearly his infirmity; but it is a kind which excites your admiration and pity rather than your disgust or fear."

"How old is he?"

"Twenty-five, I think."

"Where has he been all that time? With his father?"

"I know almost as little as you do about the movements of my brother. When, three years ago, he was here, he left Harold in an asylum with the view of trying the effect of professional treatment. He suffered and grew worse, and his father hastened to resume his wandering life, impelled partly by the advantages which change of scene conferred upon Harold, and partly, as you are aware, by the requirement of his business."

"Mr. Sanford is a sea-captain?"

"I believe not now. He travels as mercantile agent to various foreign ports. What his duties are I do not know, for my brother is most reticent. He reveals nothing."

"But have you not mistaken excitability of temperament and impetuosity of feelings in Harold for insanity?"

"You describe the impression he will produce upon you. He will evince only at first a vividness of imagination which might be attributed to any other cause than derangement of intellect. But when you know him you will find that something worse remains behind."

"It is terrible; and to think that Carrie is his sister. So, of course, she must be aware—but perhaps," said he, with eagerness, as a thought broke upon him, "perhaps Carrie and he are not children by the same mother."

"How surprised you will be," replied Ellen, after a moment's pause, "when I tell you I do not know."

"Why, this is a mystery."

"Yes. But here is a garden bench; let us sit while I tell you all I know. My brother, Mr. William Sanford, is taciturn, secretive, mysterious. From the age of sixteen he has been a rover, and that dates from my infancy—so he knows little of me, and I little of him. Occasionally he appeared among us, none knew whence; and one day he presented himself with a boy, whom he introduced as his

son Harold. He offered no explanation, and none was asked. We were all afraid—my poor mother and all—of William Sanford. For my part I should as soon think of assailing Gibraltar as of attacking him with questions.”

“And you are not timid.”

“No. But my brother is stern, and he thrusts people away from him in a manner not easily forgotten. Well, the boy was placed at school, where he remained until his sixteenth year, when he joined his father, and has been his companion ever since. Father and son have visited us at intervals; and about six years ago my brother returned with Caroline, or Carrie, as we all call her, aged about ten or twelve years, whom he called his daughter, pronounced her motherless, and requested my care and guardianship of the girl. There’s the story—as short as I could make it.”

“But did Mr. Sanford have more than one wife? If Harold inherits his infirmity from his mother, and Carrie is also the daughter of that mother——”

“Oh,” interrupted Ellen, with cool indifference, “there’s no danger. If Harold’s brain is too active, Carrie’s is too dull.”

“Don’t say unjust things of Carrie, Ellen.”

“I never say unjust things, Mr. Bensley.”

“You never appear to like Carrie.”

“Who can like bread-and-butter girls? They are so green, so dull, so silly. But never mind Carrie; go home and think about my story. I have many things requiring attention, and cannot talk more with you to-day. Come to-morrow—you shall then see Harold, and can tell me what you think of him. Good-bye.”

She put her hand in his, with her usual brisk, cordial manner.

“Where is Carrie?” said the lover, with hesitation and confusion. “She is not occupied.”

“Carrie,” said Ellen, sharply, and with a lightning glance into George’s eyes. “Carrie? I do not know. What do you want with her?”

“Nothing,” stammered the youth.

“Nothing,” retorted Ellen, briskly, but with a slightly puzzled look! “nothing, as Lear says, comes of nothing. Good morning, and recollect that now begin our studies. We two, by putting our heads together, certainly ought to make one good lawyer. Be sure and come to-morrow.”

She turned quickly from him and walked away, appa-

rently unconscious of the secret that was struggling to his tongue’s end. The lover looked wistfully after her, and then, with a pang of disappointment, went in search of Tony.

CHAPTER III.

OUR hero rode away in a moody temper. Not three words had been exchanged with Carrie, and he muttered to himself with some indignation, that Ellen always served him so.

“She might let me have a chance to talk with Carrie,” he said, with an angry flush. “I like Ellen, immensely, but I like Carrie—well, it’s different. I don’t see what has got into Ellen. She has always something for Carrie to do; she is sure to send her away just when our talk is getting a little important. Sometimes I go there and do not see Carrie at all, I used to meet her once in a while, and we could walk together; now we never do. And Carrie is so silent, too. She never speaks without looking over to see if Ellen consents. It is queer.”

More queer, no doubt, than George surmised—there is so very much between heaven and earth which philosophy makes no guess at. The lover was inclined to get more and more angry as he thought about it. Ellen, indeed, had ruthlessly cut off every chance to shine before the maiden. If he ever got eloquent, or witty, or pleasant, and looked into the eyes of Carrie for applause, down came Ellen’s stern mandate—Carrie’s ears were stopped. This passionate, earnest, imperative friend was determined, it would seem, that he should be appreciated by her alone. She offered herself his audience, but none other must share even the opportunity to admire and approve. To a magnificent youth, profoundly assured of his own parts, and very anxious to dazzle people with them, this would have been offence enough, but when he was pricked on by passion to desire the admiration of his mistress, it was the cruellest thing in the world to crush opportunity in the bud.

Let us not blame George because he liked to shine before Carrie, for, after all, which of us is not an actor? Even if we do not calculate upon our effects, we are not

insensible to pleasure when the hit is made. The veterans of us, perhaps, prepare our "points" and carry our ears always turned to catch the applause; but the first murmur that reaches the heart of youth, as he steps before the world, is such rapture as flashes into the eye and leaps into the throat. George, who was spoiled and a favorite, rode home through the pleasant valley, enraged at his friend for the wrong she was doing his self-love, and perplexed, too, at the mystery of this suddenly turned-up brother. Of course he meant to love Carrie just as earnestly as ever—if she would let him—but her silence about her brother surprised and offended him; the exacting youth never hesitating to find an indictment even against his mistress for this palpable wrong to his self-importance. The lover, in fact, felt wounded and sore in more ways than one, and his imagination had a gift of invention which put no limit to the offences which his aroused temper conjured up; so whipping himself into a foam and passion, he went dashing along the road, indulging in a great deal of poetic and dramatic suffering.

In this high temper he galloped so suddenly around a turn of the road, that he was nearly precipitated upon a carriage slowly approaching. There was a cloud of dust, a tramping and stamping of feet, a slight cry, a few emphatic exclamations to the respective steeds, and our hero found himself close upon the wheels, with Tony's head fairly thrust into the box of the carriage. The top was folded back, and a lady richly dressed and somewhat peculiar in feature and expression, occupied the seat. George, a good deal confused, backed his horse, bowed with considerable *mauvaise honte*, and would have escaped from the awkward situation by a rapid scamper, had not the lady raised a bouquet which she held in her hand, and motioned for him to remain. He obeyed, and the lady smiled and bowed with indescribable grace.

"Will you pardon me, sir," said she, "if I take advantage of an accident which I now perceive is a fortunate one? Servants are so dull, and unless I can find a gentleman who will inform me, I shall be seriously perplexed. I am a stranger—from the city—as you suspect, and only three days ago rented a cottage in this beautiful valley."

George bowed again, with more self-possession, and wondered if the lady meant to entertain him with a biography.

"To my surprise," resumed the lady, acknowledging George's courtesy, "I learned this morning that I am a neighbor of Mr. Sanford. Would you inform me if I am right, and acquaint me with the direction of his residence?"

The lady smiled, put her bouquet to her nose, and looked at George over the flowers. Nothing that George had ever seen was so impressive as her manner. The voice was rather highly pitched, but modulated into a fine rise and fall; her words were uttered with a peculiar precision and well defined emphasis that were charming, while the smile of the half-parted lips was courteous and deferential. George explained that Mr. Sanford's sister and daughter resided in the valley; that he himself had been absent for years, but that, fortunately, his return was expected the very next day; and he concluded by giving the required directions. These brief sentences the lady received with a gentle tattoo upon the air with her bouquet, and a slight nodding acquiescence of the head.

"I am so glad, sir, to receive this intelligence. I assure you I am relieved of a world of perplexity. If Mr. Sanford returns to-morrow, I shall not call upon his sister and daughter until I shall have the pleasure of being presented to them by himself. I am exceedingly obliged. Of course you are Mr. Sanford's friend, which I am glad to know, because I shall have an opportunity of thanking you hereafter with greater propriety. I wish you a very good-morning, sir. William, drive on."

The lady sunk back in her seat, touched the bouquet to her lips, swept George from head to foot with a smile, and a moment later the carriage disappeared in a cloud of dust.

For several minutes George remained in the road, watching the retreating carriage, and then rode slowly forward, puzzling over his little adventure. A gay, splendid creature, he thought, but rather astonishingly dressed for a country drive in the morning. And then such a voice, and fine sentences, and cool assurance—the manner a little *prononcé*, but decidedly pleasing for all that; awkwardly artificial smile, he thought, with lips ripe and red, and teeth very white, and her expression rendered somewhat peculiar by a visible scar on her left temple. Still he was puzzled to make up his mind whether she was handsome or not. Young, he confessed; and yet he didn't know—her eyes didn't look young. There was no youth in her

voice, nor in her cheek—and no age, either. Her manner never belonged to a young girl, he was convinced, and her complexion lacked the lustre of youth. But wherein was she otherwise than young? He could not tell; the ordinary types of women he had met, afforded no criterion by which he could safely judge or understand this one. Ellen almost sunk into a rustic by the side of this grand creature; and Carrie, by the contrast of so much color and tone, faded away into dim whiteness.

"I wonder who she is?" he muttered; "but I suppose I shall meet her again, and then I shall know. I was never more curious, never."

This little incident kept his imagination busy the rest of the ride homeward. As he reached Cleftside, and entered the gateway which led into the private road, he met Mr. Bensley in his buggy on a journey, as George detected at once, to the county town of Hareton.

"Ah! George," exclaimed he, "here I am in your traces, doing your bidding instead of my own. I am off to Lawyer Twitt, and be hanged to you."

"Father, please to yield with a good grace," George responded, gaily; "I'll win reputation, and delight your old age."

"Pshaw! if reputation is what I wanted, I'd win it myself. Although, for the matter of that, I have. Don't they tickle me with prizes at the agricultural shows?"

"Honors of that sort," said master George, with superb superciliousness, "are cheaply won."

"That's a fib, young man. It's mighty easier for a talking lawyer to trick people into the belief that his talk means something, than for a man to build a reputation on naked facts, in which there is no nonsense and no throwing dust in the eyes."

Mr. Bensley spoke with irritation, for his agricultural triumphs was his hobby.

"Well, George," he resumed, whipping up his horse, and recovering his happier thoughts by the aid of that exercise—"well, the thing is done. I've thought of Twitt as the man for your purpose, and will get his opinion on the matter to-day. But remember this, if you turn out a seedy, rickety, plodding, tricky lawyer, hanging to the tail of the profession, without law enough in you to hold water, and given over by common consent to do the sweepings and leavings of the craft, make up your mind

to abandon the county at once. I don't mean to have my reputation for good stock spoiled by your bad name for poor law. Do you understand?"

"I'll take the chances, sir."

"Of course," said Mr. Bensley, giving his reins an indignant twitch—"whoa!—of course! Everybody believes that brains were never invented until he came into existence, and so expects to knock the world into a cocked hat by his genius. It's funny, though, to see the starch come out as soon as he is set out of doors a little while—*whoa!* What plagued fools we who have been unsuccessful are! Confounded fools, I say, when winning is only to look pretty and have a sentiment or two."

"Well, sir," said George, sitting bolt upright in his saddle, like a handsome knight in the lists, and sure of his seat and lance—"well, sir, I give you permission to rail at me to your heart's content, if I prove as great a fool as you suppose me to be. I am not an ass; I do know something, and can make my way as well as other men."

The knight flushed, and looked both proud and hurt. Handsome, young, hopeful, strong—even the father's heart secretly warmed, and a mist stood in his eyes.

"I am going to Twitt, George," said he, "so don't look hurt. If I didn't believe in you I wouldn't do that—would I?"

"I dare say not. Good-morning, sir. Oh, by the bye, I forgot to tell you that Mr. Sanford is expected home to-morrow."

Mr. Bensley had touched his horse into a trot, and was nodding good-morning over his shoulder, just as this bit of postscript reached him. He drew up abruptly, and called George back.

"Who comes with him?"

"His son, Harold."

"No one else?—not his daughter?"

"What do you mean, sir? His daughter resides here."

"One daughter, I know."

"One daughter," echoed George, in surprise.

"I believe I've told you," replied Mr. Bensley, curtly, "that I knew Mr. Sanford, years ago in the South,"

"Yes."

"Well, at that time he had two daughters, or two children whom he called his daughters. Is the elder one dead?"

"I never heard of her, and I do not believe Ellen ever heard of her either."

"Not very probable, it strikes me."

"But it is, sir," exclaimed the positive young gentleman. "I know Ellen so well, and this morning she told me the whole story of Harold and her brother, and not a word about any other daughter."

"It might be. Sanford was mysterious, and some odd stories were told about these very daughters. But I never heard you speak of this Harold before; of course, you knew about him."

George looked very confused as he confessed he did not.

"What! never heard of him before to-day?"

"No, sir," answered George, getting very red.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Bensley, with a marvellous prolongation of the ejaculation, and accompanying the vocal performance with a snap of his whip in the air. "Of course I cannot doubt the assertions of so positive a gentleman as yourself, and this old maid of yours who has concealed one fact so long on no manner of account, would be guilty of concealing any other fact. Of course not—whoa! Well, when Mr. Sanford arrives I think I'll ride over; perhaps a dunce like me may see a thing or two which the sharp, knowing eyes of younger fellows would fail to take notice of. But here we seem to be stuck fast in the road in a talk; we may as well break off at once, and discuss the question when I get back. Get up, Nettie! G'long."

And applying whip and rein, Mr. Bensley rolled away on his journey; while the youth rode slowly homeward, frowning and musing. It was very clear there had been some mysterious concealments in the Sanford family, and think of the subject as he would he experienced a marked disquiet. That both Carrie and Ellen should have been so long scrupulously silent about this brother—and that at almost the very moment of the fact being revealed to him his father should come to him about a mysterious daughter of whom, years ago, in Mobile, odd stories were told—were certainly calculated to fill his mind with tormenting questions, which, conjecture as he would, remained unsatisfactorily answered.

CHAPTER IV.

THE morning bustle of a house in commotion of brooms and dusters, is not a pleasant thing for the anti-house cleaning sex to encounter. But Emma and Betsy were such brisk and cordial housekeeping sprites, that even a male in all his panoply of lordly superiority to such matters, could not fail to be impressed and pleased with their spirit and genius for activity. In most households of a rank similar to that of the Bensleys, a goodly portion of the house labor is performed by the female members; and these sisters were fine types of the cheerful, thorough-going, American housekeeper. Emma, thoughtful and grave, as one with so many responsibilities should be, went about with an eye at every point, marshalling her forces according to the requirements of the labor, combining and dividing like a skillful general, and always watching details with solicitous care. But Betsy, who sung at her labors, who flitted in and out, and from task to task, with irrepressible gayety, was always a little heedless, and incapable of method or combination.

Betsy was in the parlor when George arrived at the house, with broom in hand, windows wide opened, and furniture in disorder. Her locks were confined from the dust in a jaunty, coquettish cap; on her hands she wore gloves which reached to the elbows, and the sleeves of her dress were pinned up, displaying the rounded arm nearly to the shoulder.

Betsy's figure was plump and little, but exceedingly graceful and pliant in movements. Her cheek was rounded with the curve always seen in the faces of blooming youth, and of that mingled red and white which nature combines so exceedingly well. In fact, Betsy was pretty, plump, and of a merry temper; not very profound, nor wise, nor learned; carrying her heart in her hand, and an impetuous spirit on her lips; with a ready faculty for laughing or crying, but with sensibilities, George thought, not of the highest order. That was because she cared very little for poetry, and found novels dull reading. She had no little taste for many of the graceful arts of the needle, in which she felt a profounder interest than in the "Sorrows of

Werter," or the finest bit of poetic suffering in the world. She liked practical things; men and women, mirth—whatever was bustling and brisk. Her spirit stirred and was alive to the music of household activities. She smelt home, and her composition was tinted through and through with the life of the fireside. If her capacity was narrow her little head was sound, while her heart rang chimes and melodies the day long. And so, because of all these things, she was the pet of the household.

George, as he saw Betsy in the parlor, called upon her to come out from the dust and confusion upon the piazza; and then made a free heart to her of the story about Harold and the sister. But Betsy, who was cool, and whose imagination never magnified anything, could not see anything very mysterious about the affair, and very spiritedly told George he was a goose to give the matter a serious thought. They all simply didn't like to talk about Harold, she said, on account of his infirmity, and as for Mr. Bensley's story it was quite as likely to be wrong as right. "Perhaps," said she, "father only heard the story, and it was told to him wrong; or perhaps Mr. Sanford had a granddaughter, or a ward, or some one he had adopted, or somebody who liked him and just called him father, as girls sometimes do. And, then, what if she did have a sister? I don't see why she couldn't have a sister?" Betsy ended by laughing at our hero outright, and George, beginning to see with Betsy's clearness, confessed that he had been disposed to give altogether too much importance to the subject.

Betsy was soon back into the parlor with an active broom. The morning was filled up by George with a listless book in his own room, and an idle ramble about the farm. They were all in the dining-room, postponing an already late dinner in the hope of Mr. Bensley's return, when his welcome voice was heard emphasizing a command to the mild-blooded Nettie. Scarcely did his burly form show in the door-way ere two pair of voices—the hero was too grand to exhibit so marked an impatience—greeted him with an interrogative,

"Well?"

"Twitt can make nothing of him," exclaimed the senior, with a long breath of relief, as he flung himself into a chair, and forced his features into as serious an aspect as possible.

The young man turned intensely red, and the sisters opened their eyes in surprise and sorrow.

"I can make nothing of him," were Twitt's words, remarked Mr. Bensley, after enjoying for several seconds the consternation his remark had made. "I don't make lawyers; they make themselves. Can the boy study? Can he work? Can he hold his tongue and ask no questions? Can he watch what's done, and go and do it again? All that may appear easy; it isn't. If a man has any brains he can soak up law; if he hasn't, I can't drive it into his figure-head as if it were so many tenpenny nails."

"What an odd man," said Betsy.

"Law, he declares, is tough work for a fool, but nothing more than two and two to a clear brain."

"An odd man, but I believe a very able one," said George.

"Yes," responded Mr. Bensley.

"Not anything accomplished, then?" asked George.

"It's done. Twitt pulled up his shirt-collar, pulled down his wristbands, tugged at his waistcoat, arranged his hair, and fixed and re-fixed himself a dozen ways, all the while I was talking, and kept snapping out his consent at the same time. 'Pon my soul, he talks percussion-caps all the time; doesn't know it, though, nor mean to be harsh. But I must say, George, any impartial fellow unacquainted with him would pronounce him the most ill-natured, snarlish fellow in the world."

"Then George ought not to go with him," said Emma, with affectionate solicitude.

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Bensley; "George is not going to back out for any such reason; besides, the fellow is kind enough at heart—quite as kind, I do believe, as a lawyer by hook or crook could be."

"But you do not explain what arrangement you have made?" suggested George.

"You are to have a desk in Mr. Twitt's office, the use of Mr. Twitt's library, the benefit of Mr. Twitt's law and society, the study of Mr. Twitt's legal papers, and the opportunity to do up Mr. Twitt's papers and 'chores.' Mr. Twitt permits you to labor for him eight hours a day, and pick up what crumbs of study you can in the intervals."

"Why this is a clerkship," said Emma, and George looked a good deal disconcerted.

"So I suggested," said Mr. Bensley, "and thought my

head was snapped off for my pains. 'Practice, sir,' said he. 'Theory can be thumbed out of books by any idiot; but the practical knowledge, the modes and formulas, the proceedings, etc., they can only come by life in the active contests. Do you know,' said he, 'how Judge Greenbrier got his law?' I told him I did not. 'Well, I'll tell you. He was only a clerk—a messenger to the courts—and he would hang about the court-rooms, listen to the pleadings, pick up the decisions, button-hole people at the door, and worm out a fact or a reason, study the law papers he copied, and so by such mere sweepings and leavings he got so much law that the best readers had to scratch to beat him.'"

"What genius!" exclaimed the sisters, with a species of cold, distant admiration.

"I yield," said George. "I will submit to Mr. Twitt's peculiarities if I can, and emulate the worthy Judge Greenbrier so far as my abilities will permit."

"Then," said Mr. Bensley, clapping his son vigorously on the back, "playing is done with, eh! By all good things, if I could live to see you on the bench! Judge Bensley, eh!"

The senior repeated the phrase in various intonations, as if trying its effect upon his ear.

"The idea of little George a judge," said Emma.

"A learned judge," repeated Mr. Bensley, merrily.

"Why, it is only a year or two ago that he was whipping his hobby-horse around the room."

"Or only yesterday," said Betsy, "that we were playing blind-man's-buff, and now to think of his being a judge."

"Not a judge yet," suggested George.

"But will be, of course," said Betsy, whose faith was always as large as her affection. "And then, when he is married"—

"By-the-by," interrupted Mr. Bensley, quickly, "did you say, George, that Sanford's daughter had not arrived, or was not to arrive with him?"

"I said, sir, that I never heard any mention made of Carrie's sister."

"Well," said Mr. Bensley, with a prolonged accent, and staring at the floor, "I am certain that I saw her this very day."

"Saw who?"

"Sanford's daughter, Carrie's elder sister."

"Impossible!"

"I am sure of it. Could not mistake her, though at first could not fix her, but knew it was she in a moment, by a little scar on her temple. It is a long time since I saw her, but I am good at recollecting faces, and hers was impressed on my mind by some peculiar circumstances."

"What was her appearance?" asked George, eagerly, recollecting at once the strange lady of his morning's adventure.

"Richly dressed in green silk—very stylish-looking—in a carriage driven by an Irishman in livery."

George uttered an exclamation of amazement, and rapidly entered into a detailed description of the person he had encountered on the road. His description agreed so closely with his father's, that no doubt could remain of the identity of the lady.

"It is very certain, then," said George, when this conclusion had been arrived at, "that the lady in question is not Mr. Sanford's daughter. For she inquired of me if such a person did not live in this valley, and spoke of being presented to his sister and daughter. So, sir, you must be wrong."

Mr. Bensley rubbed his chin, and looked perplexed.

"She either is," he resumed after a pause, "the woman who in Mobile was called his daughter, or vastly like her. And then, you see, by your own story, she must have known Sanford. A plague take it, though: am I to fret myself over a puzzle? Let her be whom she may, a pipe is the only thing for a philosopher and a man of sense. Nothing shall coax me to trouble my brain a whit more about it. There!"

But George, unskilled in puffing away his perplexities in smoke, and with quite too much youthful blood for a philosopher, could not escape the subject so readily.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY the next morning, George rode over to the Sanfords', bent upon learning if there could be any truth in the story of his father's. The household was in a bustle

of preparation for the expected comers, and although Ellen pleaded for excuse a multitude of duties, George pressed his request for an interview so earnestly, that at last she yielded.

"Give me five minutes," said he.

"Five minutes, then," said Ellen, leading the way into the parlor; "you friends of the male sex are sure to be most exacting tyrants. Now let me see how brief you can be."

"I'll come to the point at once. Has Carrie, or did she ever have, a sister?"

"No."

"Excuse me if I ask you to be sure."

"How can I fail to be sure," said Ellen, impatiently.

"Carrie has no sister, and never had so far as I know. And what if she had? Why do you ask?"

"No matter why, but please suppose that I have good reasons. You see a brother has turned up mysteriously—why not a sister?"

Ellen looked sharply into his face.

"That's a question, my friend, you might have asked an hour ago; but can you ask it now? I have told you there is no sister—but why does it matter whether?"

She stopped, and a shadow so dark and almost menacing came into her eyes that the youth looked startled and confused.

"George," she resumed, with sharp emphasis, "a great many men are fools!—a great many! Think about something else than Carrie, or Carrie's sister. I cannot remain to talk with you now. Come this afternoon, and perhaps we may have half an hour together."

She gave him her hand, and then bustled from the room, leaving him to let himself out from the house alone. As he stepped upon the piazza, he met the servant hurrying past with pail and mop. To his eager and confusedly guilty question of Carrie, the girl replied that she had gone up along the river. "I seen her meself, sir, this ten minutes ago."

The Sanford Cottage was a small, snugly embowered house, situated, like "Cleftside," on the bank of the narrow river. An orchard stretched from the house down to the brink of the stream, along whose pleasant banks wound a rustic path, which George and his friends almost daily frequented. Hastening down the orchard slope and

along the river path, sure of finding Carrie in some of the favorite pausing places, George soon detected her close by the water's edge, seated on a rock, underneath a group of trees that stood in a picturesque cluster, wide-spreading, deep-shadowed, and low-boughed. Her face was turned from him, and either from the abstraction of her thoughts, or the low sound of George's footfall, she did not detect his approach until he stood within six feet of her side. Then she looked around abruptly, and as abruptly averted her head. A little startled by this apparent rudeness, George paused a moment, when again, as if from second thought, she turned her head and distantly half bowed to him.

"Good morning," said he.

"Good morning."

The response was so constrained that George became embarrassed immediately, and stood hesitating, awkward, and silent, looking into her features. Carrie's eyes drooped, and although a flush deepened in each cheek, she remained still and otherwise self-possessed. Carrie certainly was beautiful. At that moment the fact struck the lover more forcibly than at any former time. The sun threw her shadow forward, and her face, in the clear, transparent shadowing of her bonnet, appeared softened and chastened into an expression of indescribable delicacy. The shadows seemed to tint and mellow her cheeks and brow into a rich, luminous softness, that heightened the dark, lustrous beauty of the melancholy eyes.

"Carrie," at last said George, finding that he must speak, and breaking into the necessity with an angular harshness, "you expect your father to-day, I believe?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"You are glad of it, of course."

"Yes."

"I came to see Ellen," said George, with the nervous necessity of starting a theme which would meet with other responses than monosyllables, and a little inclined to resent Carrie's coolness—"I came to see Ellen, and found her so occupied, I ventured along the river with the hope of finding you. But as I disturb you"—

"You do not," said Carrie, with some quickness, and rising.

"Please sit down and resume your book," said the youth, puzzling over the tone and meaning of the last reply.

"No, it is dull. I would rather walk back to the house."

It was such a relief to have her propose anything, that George acquiesced, although secretly wishing to remain.

"It is a lovely morning," said he, after another pause, as he walked at her side, and making this feeble bolt at the weather in sheer despair.

"Yes."

"I am anxious," after another pause, "to see your brother."

"He isn't well," replied she, tremulously.

"How much I sympathize with you I needn't say," said the lover, earnestly, encouraged by her slight emotion.

"I cannot doubt it."

"Perhaps there is hope. He may recover—be as well as any of us."

She placed her hand on his arm.

"Do you think so?"

"I sincerely hope so."

"Father writes that he is better," she answered; and again her accents were tremulous and broken.

"It must be many years since you have seen him."

"Not since I was a little girl—some ten or eleven years of age."

The constrained manner was yielding somewhat. They were walking very slowly, a little apart, and each spoke hesitatingly, with eyes steadfastly fixed upon the ground.

"Seeing him so little," ventured young Bensley, it is almost strange that your affection for him is so deep."

She turned her black eyes upon him strangely.

"He is my brother."

"But does not sisterly love," George responded, with warmth and eagerness—"does not sisterly love depend upon association, acquaintance, intercourse? Could you love a brother whom you had never seen?"

"Yes," with quiet decision.

"An affection of duty," replied George, "and not of sympathy—not personal and real, but abstract and sentimental."

"Must I really live with one to love him? I don't understand it, George."

"George!" Not for the first time, of course, but for the first time that interview. The lover caught the word, and his heart lightened—sunshine came suddenly out of a cloud.

"I am not sure about brotherly love," said the youth, advancing his parallels like a skillful engineer, "but all other loves are magnetic—they are inspired by presence, awakened by eyes and ears."

Not a word in answer. Her face turned aside, so that the summer bonnet intervened between his eager eyes and her cheeks, and rendered nothing visible of her face but her chin, and that intensely white and still. They were standing; for by a mutual impulse their progress had gradually subsided from a walk to a loiter, and from a loiter to an absolute pause. They stood under a tree, where a fallen trunk had often afforded seats when aunt and niece, with their young cavalier, had sauntered along the stream. It had been so usual for them to remain in this spot, talking or reading, that their present pause was merely in obedience to an instinctive habit.

"Let us sit down here," said George, placing his hand upon Carrie's arm. "We are not looked for at the house. This, you know, is one of our favorite resting places. We always thought it very pleasant."

She did not respond, but kept looking away.

"Carrie."

"Well?"

"Won't you sit down?"

"I would rather not."

"Please do not keep your back turned toward me," he whispered, bending forward with a hope of looking into her face.

Her head dropped a little, but she made no answer.

"Carrie."

Still no answer—a hush that seemed profound.

"Carrie, answer me, if you please."

Instead of answering, she made several hasty steps forward, and then remained as motionless as before.

"Please, Carrie, come and sit down by me. Let me talk to you. Let us sit here a long while and talk."

The lover said this, stepping up to her side. A glance at her face—a single momentary glance—revealed it with quivering lip and flushed cheeks. He stood close to her shoulder, and without speaking bent forward and took her hand. It was yielded. Pressing a little nearer, he bent down his head close to her ear.

"Carrie!"

"George!"

The word was either whispered in the air, or he fancied it so.

"Did you speak?" he whispered. Am I right? Is my hope?"

She broke hastily from him, and running a few steps forward, fell upon her knees, and began searching among some grasses and meadow flowers. George, now wild with the dawning of his new joy, uttered eager words of gratitude and expostulation. Still silent, she rose and came back to him with three or four blossoms.

"Are these for me?"

"Yes."

"And they mean?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing? No matter. I will accept them. Please fasten them in my button-hole."

She complied, standing before him and arranging the blossoms in the lapel of his coat.

"I thank you," he whispered, and allowed his hand to rest upon her shoulder. "But tell me what they mean. Tell me all. Tell me, Carrie, what I so long to hear."

How the lover eagerly pressed, and the lass blushing confessed; what vehement words, tender words, wild words, gentle words, passed between them; what rapture they experienced and acted, I shall not relate. Nor will I describe the lovers' walk homeward, for if my reader is not a lover he will have no sympathy for these sugared sentiments, and if a lover, I hand over the scene to his imagination, certain that it cannot suffer under the touch of his fancy and his recollections. Lovers' walks are all alike—sometimes made of a mellow silence, sometimes graced with a playful levity, but always, in eyes, in cheeks, in pressed hands, in the rich glow at the heart, identical since Adam first walked and chatted with Eve.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE had very little of that art which conceals emotions. His face was a dial upon which all men looked and comprehended the signs. Carrie, on the contrary, possessed a singular power over her features, and could

shroud them in an impenetrable blankness. When they entered the house and Ellen saw them, George could not conceal from that observant lady that something unusual had happened. She stopped short in the middle of a sentence and eyed him with curious surprise. Then she shot a scrutinizing glance at Carrie, who, entirely calm, walked away to a window. As Ellen's eyes came back from Carrie to George there was a frown in them.

"I thought you had returned," she said to George, severely.

"No," replied he, awkwardly.

"Well," she continued sharply, "Carrie and I both have so many things to look after, you must excuse us. If you choose to ride over this afternoon, we shall be glad to see you."

There was nothing to do but obey this hint. George, ill at ease, said that he would try and return before night, and, looking over at Carrie, who did not raise her eyes from a book she had opened and was reading, bowed and withdrew.

"Carrie!" exclaimed Ellen, as George's step ceased in the hall.

"Aunt?"

"Has George been with you? Did he join you in your walk?"

"Yes."

"And what then?"

"We came back together."

"Don't be alone together again. It is not proper. Do you mark? I do not permit it. George, at best, is a thoughtless, foolish fellow, and I should not be doing my duty to you if I tolerated any intimacy. Your father would condemn it."

"Is my father a very severe man?"

"No."

"Then, it is strange. You quote him every day as saying, or sanctioning some harsh thing."

The frown in Ellen's eyes darkened.

"And why?" persisted Carrie, in whose cheeks a color was rising, "do you say what you do of George? You do not talk that way when he is by."

"I tell him he's a fool a dozen times a-day," replied Ellen with great sharpness.

Carrie did not reply, but bent her face over her book.

Ellen watched her keenly for several seconds, and then, with the same intense but repressed passion in her eyes which George had observed, went about her household cares.

George rode homeward like a lover—his heart floating in a delicious sense of hopes won and bliss secured. The rein dropped on Tony's neck, and his imagination rocked his whole nature in the pleasant dream. He thought of his courtship, law studies, and the delightful reunions once a-week, of the calm walks along the river path; and the busy fancy led him on to the moment when, all completed, he should be lover merely no more.

There is fantastic madness in the lover. He paints pictures of life that might well witch the angels. The colors glow, and the rich prospective spreads out, leading far away, through calm, mellow tints, into the ethereal blue. But even as he paints, flinging his rose-hues over all, suddenly, in a novel caprice, he casts a dark, deadly, destroying shadow into the heart of his glowing colors. Some skeleton rattles itself somewhere; some perverse or whimsical apprehension occurs; some morbid fear or jealousy thrusts itself into his fancy, and straightway the picture is stained and blackened. It was so with George, our lover. Into the midst of his blissful musings came not only one, but many shadows—Ellen's opposition—Harold's madness—his father's suspicion of Mr. Sanford's character; and the canvas, so glowingly begun, faded dun and cold ere Tony's hoofs struck the sods of "Cleftside."

But the dream renewed itself, with its splendors and its shadows, later in the day, when again, mounted on Tony, our hero rode briskly back toward the cottage.

As he neared it, he saw the looked-for comers had arrived. Trunks were piled upon the piazza, against which lazily leaned a mulatto, well curled and spruce. George dismounted, and walked up to the house with a heaviness and sense of apprehension he could not shake off. His arrival appeared unheeded, and as the hall door stood open he entered, according to his custom, unannounced.

Voices were in the drawing-room, and he went in, where he found Ellen, Carrie, Mr. Sanford, and Harold all assembled. Mr. Sanford was standing looking out of one of the windows, and did not stir or give the slightest attention to his entrance. The ladies were seated, but Harold stood by the mantel, with an easy grace in his attitude, one

hand resting upon a small table near him. He was slender and small, but shapely and exquisitely proportioned. His complexion was dark, but of that nut-brown tint always so celebrated and admired; features regularly cut; brow somewhat receding, and eyes of an intense blackness. His dress was scrupulously neat, and yet negligently worn, rather loose and flowing in its make; collar turned widely over, showing the round, well-turned neck; wristbands laid back upon the coat-cuffs in snowy whiteness; a coat of dark blue, and buttons of glittering brass; hair worn in ample curls, tossed freely back from the brow; entire make up, in fact, fresh, graceful, and bordering on the picturesque.

As Ellen presented George, he bowed, smiled, with a persuasive blandness, and then, addressing the ladies, resumed the subject he had been discussing. His bearing to Ellen and Carrie was a thing to study, so studiously courteous, so blandly winning, so smooth, deferential, and at the same time so enlivened with a vivacious and capricious lightness. George felt his own manner, by contrast, so clumsy, harsh, and angular, that he blushed, and was stung with secret shame. He crossed the floor noiselessly, and glided into a chair, content to disappear as speedily as possible into an oblivious listener.

"I am inexpressibly glad," Ellen was saying, "to hear you say that you like the country, Harold."

"At this season I like it, certainly; but the winters I have yet to test. Ours, you know, are mild and soft."

"And ours bitter, and to the southron terrible."

"Oh, I like them," exclaimed Carrie, briefly.

"I will not quarrel with your taste, Carrie, but confess that I cannot understand it. The cold winds that occasionally blow down upon us from the north startle us with the possibilities of what your winters must be. What I now admire is the glorious greenness of everything; your grass by the side of our parched sods, seems really delicious. The air, too, is so elastic—so glad."

"If you stay with us a winter you'll find that even snow and ice have their attractions. Mr. Bensley, too, will help us to amuse you."

"We have plenty of out-door enjoyments," responded George, thus appealed to, "which, I fear, might not gratify one unused to our searching north-westerns. But, then, there are ways to cheer the season, and to render home pleasant, let the weather do its worst."

"Firesides!" exclaimed Harold, with a shrug, and, gliding from the blandness of manner with which he had addressed the ladies to one sharp and even a little biting. "Fireside comforts amuse old men and women. I have no liking for tame blood."

"Sometimes," said Carrie, "we are merry. Firesides are not always tame."

Again the smooth acquiescence.

"I mean to like your climate if I can—and your home employments, too."

All this while the elder Sanford stood motionless at the window, with his stern, implacable, immovable back and shoulders seeming to frown down upon them, as apparently insensible to their little sallies as any figure of stone. Angular, harsh, uncompromising, rigid as any cast-iron in the world, one might wonder in what corner of his imperturbable nature the seat of sensation lay. Thrust thus sternly and severely upon the scene, and so oppressive to the spirits of Ellen and Carrie and George, to his son he appeared a relief and necessity. Toward him Harold's eyes constantly wandered; under the shadow of his presence he seemed to repose secure and at ease.

"Now, tell us," said Ellen, glancing with a scarcely concealed shudder at the figure by the window, "where would you like to live best of all the places you have seen?"

"Not on the land at all. I have the nature of the corsair. My blood is Red Rover. I like the sea."

"The sea!"

The back still remained unmoved in its sullen attitude, but the head turned slightly as if to bring the ear easier within reach of the speakers.

"Yes, the sea. The sea has always a heart that beats for you. But I love water anywhere. I love its flow and murmur; delight to see it leaping, dancing, playing, foaming; like to be always sailing upon it—like to put my ear down to it—like to feel myself rocked on its surface. Land is dead. Water lives. Not in the cold vapor of the sky, but in the warm, rich bosom of the sea is heaven."

"Harold!" sternly called a voice from the window—a calm, resolute voice. Harold laughed, snapped his fingers lightly in the air, and walked over to Carrie.

"I don't flatter you, Carrie," said he, taking her hand, "when I tell you you've grown decidedly handsome. And

as for you, aunt"—turning quickly toward Ellen—"you are as sparkling and pleasant as ever."

"As humdrum as ever, Harold. I think the same old thoughts, dress in the same old dull way, tread down sorrow and pleasure in the old beaten path which we call duty. I shall always be aunt Ellen, and a plain old maid."

"Oh, you'll marry."

"Never, Harold."

"Brilliant women always do. And you must. Carrie will marry; I shall be a traveller, and then you would have to shut yourself up in an attic and eat your heart in your loneliness and neglect. Take my advice, aunt, marry—marry soon—marry wealth and forty-five; it is the prime, noble age."

"Send me such a gentleman, and I will try what can be done."

"Try," said Harold, taking both her hands in his, and, swinging them to and fro, "try;" why, you have only to smile, Ellen, and the thing is done. You, whom I used to admire when I was only table high: you, the best talker for a woman I ever met; you, with your big heart and big brain, talk of trying! Ah, Ellen, it is because you tried not to, because you wouldn't, because, when you were a chit not older than Carrie, a pleasant knight rode by one day, and ever since you've dreamed and dreamed—ah, Ellen, the knight has rode by forever!"

"Yes, Harold, he has," said Ellen, steadily.

"Knights are riding by ladies' windows daily. They bend their heads, prance their steeds, shake their feathers, and hearts come down to them as they ride. No matter! That is the world—that's life—heart's everywhere on a lost search, and brains——"

"Harold!" interrupted Mr. Sanford, warningly.

With that peculiar snap of the fingers in the air, he abruptly walked over to his father, who turned toward him as he approached. George, curious to see the features of one whose sullen temper was so marked, eagerly looked into his face. In spite of himself, it made him shudder. It was broad and heavily featured; browned and seamed by sun and wind; rugged in the wear of the elements and the passions. The brow was low, shaded darkly by thick, black locks, that fell in curling masses almost to the eyebrows; while two or three of the organs of the brain that range on the lower line of the brow, stood out like little

hillocks. The eyes were small and sunken, the chin square, the mouth curved downward in lines of sullen distaste. George, eager enough to propitiate and like the man for the sake of his hopes in Carrie, would have soon conquered any ordinary dislike, but felt at once that there was a great gulf between them. He could not have overcome his repugnance to him at that moment if the loss of Carrie had been the price of his prejudice. He bowed as Ellen gave his name, but as Mr. Sanford did not address or notice him, there was no temptation to evince a respect or deference he did not feel. He had only to remain silent to allow his real feelings to escape detection. But with all his strong dislike, he did not fail to observe that Mr. Sanford's manner softened toward Harold; his eye followed him with a restlessness that was peculiar; and the rugged lines of his face appeared to soften whenever Harold in turn looked at him.

Harold stood by the side of his father, momentarily subdued and hushed by the nearness of his father, and by an influence both subtle and remarkable, which he maintained with great supremacy over him. Carrie, at her father's command, also went up to him, and took his hand, which he extended toward her. She held it in one hand passively, and placed the other upon it. This was a childish, affectionate act, and such as any daughter would do; but it was not well done by Carrie. Behind Carrie's reserve there was usually a certain steadiness of manner—something serene, collected, complete. Toward her father, however, there was disorder and constraint. She appeared to take his hand as if prompted by duty and not by affection, and to be impelled to the act by a necessity which controlled her while she resisted it.

George, watching Carrie with her father intently, did not observe that he, too, was watched, until a word from Harold, causing his eyes to wander from Carrie, he encountered Ellen's gaze fixed sharply upon his face. He felt the blood tingling in his cheek; but already resolved to conceal his new relation to Carrie from her no longer, he crossed the room, and, busying himself with handling the books that lay upon the table near her, whispered that he wished to see her alone.

"Don't go, then, till I see you," she said, with that curious frown settling into her eyes that he had noticed before. "You will not mind a late ride home."

He nodded assent, and took the opportunity to utter his excuses and leave the room, glad to escape the formidable and oppressive presence of the senior Sanford. He sauntered down to the river's edge, and seating himself upon a rustic bench, fell into a reverie, looking dreamily down into the little stream that chafed the pebbles close to his feet. Presently a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

"Don't move," cried Harold, as George started slightly at the unexpected appearance—"don't move, and don't lose one of the fine gossamers you are spinning. Now I'll wager you are a lover. I can tell a lover as far as I can see or smell one."

"Sit down here," said George, catching the light humor of his companion, "and tell me what a lover is. I've heard of the species."

"Heard of them! They are as thick as maggots, and stun you with their buzzing. It used to be honey, but now it is printing-ink they deal in; and they smear the compound everywhere. Read what or where you will, love is sure to dance a revel through the types."

"Think how many millions are marrying, or desiring marriage, and do not wonder."

"Those that marry have love and love-making, and are contented. It is the millions who cannot marry that fly to this love in literature and eagerly suck it up. But in thirty years a whole generation—say a thousand millions—will mostly fall in love and marry. Think of that, and tell me which of the gods is so busy as little Cupid."

"None."

"Let the plodding, busy fellow, send no shafts my way. I wear a buckler over my heart. I am proof, believe me. But no matter. How glorious the river is! That is my love! See it run on, leaping up to catch the sun-sparkles. It is life—it glides on swift and sure into the great sea, as life runs on into eternity."

He got up, and walking down to the rock, one side of which was washed by the stream, flung himself upon his elbow, and, leaning over the stone, dipped one hand into the water, playing and toying with the beady current as one sees a child delight to do.

"Hear it sing, George. It's fine music. I should like to lie and have it sing in my bosom forever as now it sings."

There seemed such a fascination in the river, that he

jumped from his position on the rock, and walking down let the current ripple over his feet.

"Is there a boat, do you suppose?" he inquired.

"Ellen has none, I believe. I, however, am the fortunate owner of one."

"Excellent. We'll sail, we'll fish, we'll sleep, we'll rock all day on the water. George, I'm glad I know you. We are going to be friends, and will find some royal ways to be happy. We can talk, too, how we will talk!"

"On what subjects, Harold?"

"We'll set up subjects in rows, and begin at the top. We'll have all opinions, all history, all books before us, and run them through and through with our wit."

"Who is Quixote? and who is Sancho?" said a voice near them.

"Does that mean," said Harold, turning quickly to Ellen, "that the subjects we attack are windmills?"

"It means that two such splendid champions show more courage than discretion in the battle they make."

"George and I," replied Harold, "are undoubtedly the two good fellows you name, and will bear down full tilt upon all windy themes. You shall see us unhorse false logic many an hour."

"Well," laughed Ellen, "I did not come to see you break lances, but to invite you in to a cup of tea. Will you come?"

"It is a wrong," said Harold, leaping from the rock to the side of Ellen, and offering his arm, "to bribe us in from out-of-doors. I hate houses, Ellen. I hate walls, roofs, household atmosphere—everything in-doors, in fact, but a cup of tea with my admirable aunt."

"Which is a compliment with so barefaced a falsehood behind it, that I have no thanks, and will now insist upon the tea as a penance."

Harold patted her hand, and laughingly launched into an extravagant tide of compliments. So talking, they entered the house, George a few steps behind them. Harold led Ellen to the tea-room, and to her seat at the table, with a grace and style that were really superb.

CHAPTER VII.

THE tea was dull. Mr. Sanford was present, and projected upon the scene in such harsh, cold lines, that everybody was silenced but Harold, who, indeed, talked but little, but was affected from some other cause than the rest. After tea matters were pleasanter, for a walk was proposed, and Mr. Sanford remained behind. It proved a happy hour for our hero, for he had an opportunity to walk with Carrie, and although conscious of Ellen's puzzling eyes upon him, he did not refrain from whispering a few lovers' nothings in Carrie's ears.

Harold, throwing off the temporary depression of spirits, talked with greater vivacity and spirit than ever. So far he had exhibited little of what could be suspected as from an unsound mind. His talk was fluent, and marked by bold flights of fancy. But there was not only method in his imagination, but coherence and singular discernment. It evinced capable observation, sympathetic reading, and a humorous readiness to seize upon opposites and group together the incongruous in fanciful combinations. It was the fancy of a man of the world, who gave poetic sensibility a kind of scornful play, laughing while he soared, and sneering at his own conceits. He appeared to express continually a disdain of himself. His talk was dual, in which one party shot arrows at the other. If he said a pleasing, a pretty, or a poetic thing, he was sure to turn round and stain it with some biting epithet. There was a bitter will in him, to which his fancy was chained, and which never began to soar but something in him plucked it back again, and his heel struck it into the earth. These were the only peculiarities noticeable; and with the exception of his strange fascination for the river, he appeared nothing more than an eccentric and brilliant man of society and travel.

When they returned, they found Mr. Sanford in the parlor reading. His eyes glanced over the top of the book at them as they entered, and then fell sullenly back upon the page. George slipped quietly into a corner, and remained curiously watching him, and speculating upon his character and history. At last, impatient for the promised interview with Ellen, and finding her in no apparent haste

to grant it, he rose and walked out upon the piazza. In five minutes Ellen joined him.

"Come into the dining-room," said she, "and let me know what you have to say."

They went in, and Ellen closed the door. There was a light upon the table, which she took and placed in a corner upon the floor, so that they both stood in semi-shadow.

"Ellen," said George, speaking with huskiness, notwithstanding all his efforts to keep calm—"Ellen, I am almost ashamed to make a confession to you now, which you ought to have known a long time since."

They were partly in shadow, as we have said, and the lamp being placed upon the floor, it gave that distorted cast to the features which all have noticed when the light is below the line of the face. Looking into Ellen's face as it stood out of the shadow in painful reversal of light and shade, George was startled by the expression which swept over it—an expression he could not read, and which appeared to transfigure and convulse the features.

"Well?" said she, after a moment's pause, and speaking in a tone so low it was almost a whisper.

It was difficult to proceed. George hesitated, hemmed, and looked uneasily down upon the floor.

"I am listening, George," said Ellen, and seated herself.

"It appears to me unaccountable," began the embarrassed youth, "that this confession is necessary. I know I ought to have told you, but I shrunk from offending you, and I did not know until to-day how well-founded my hopes are."

"Ellen slightly moved in her chair, and George paused, expecting her to speak. But, as if determined that he should proceed without her aid, she folded her hands in her lap, and continued to look at him inquiringly.

"For a long time," said he, finding relief by pacing the floor, "I have admired and loved Carrie."

He did not look at Ellen when he had succeeded in uttering this sentence, but halted with tingling cheeks by the window, and stared out into the darkness. There was a quick movement, and a blow, as if with a hand upon a table, and then a silence so complete, that the youth, in surprise and apprehension, turned toward his companion; she was standing upright, one hand clinched and resting upon the table, and with a look in her eyes that George could not meet.

"Do you mean this?" she said, after a long pause.

"I do, Ellen."

"Then you are a fool!"

"Ellen!"

"A fool that I hate!" she exclaimed, with explosive anger. "This is your pretty ambition, is it? This is your big heart, your grand brain? You must fall in love with a wax doll—a ridiculous, silly school-girl. I thought you were a man. I thought so, indeed, but you are not."

"Hear me, Ellen."

"I thought you had a large, grand nature—one that could plan great things and do great things. But I was in error. You are like men everywhere, and must get in love with a simpleton, because she looks pretty."

"This language is unpardonable, Ellen."

"I am not trying to please you with it, that is certain."

"Condemn me as you may, but do not be so unjust to Carrie."

"George, you are such a fool I could strike you," exclaimed the passionate woman, with a violence that amazed her listener.

"Will you listen to me?" he asked.

"I *have* been listening to you," was the hot reply. "Why, you were the biggest talker I ever met; and I, like an idiot, because you talked grandly, thought you could act grandly. I meant to lead you into a noble career, and now this is the way you spoil everything. I had planned your marriage a thousand times—you know I have. It was to be with some woman who could march with you up your heroic path—who owned a place in the world—or who could, at least, fill a place in the world—a woman who could work with you, aspire with you, glory in you, just as I might work, think, aspire with you."

"But, Ellen"—

"Oh, what a fool! what a fool! I mean myself, not you. You, of course act out your nature. I ought to have known that the qualities with which I endowed you were in my imagination, and not in you. What a fool! I say."

She walked the floor, beating her hands together, and pouring out her sentences with scorching passion and emphasis. George did not know how to stem her passion—did not understand it even; and, although prepared for opposition, and perhaps a little indignation, was utterly confounded by this outbreak of unconquerable rage and

derision. He had known very well that she would not listen with complacency to the idea of his marriage with Carrie; he knew that she had always delighted in arranging for him a marriage with a woman of position and acquirements. This seemed to have been her pet purpose. She lost no occasion and failed in no effort to dazzle his imagination with the splendor of an ambitious match. For Carrie she had always evinced great indifference, with some little contempt. These strong, large-brained women can rarely tolerate girlhood; they have, indeed, but little sympathy for their own sex at all, and can imagine the lofty heroic kind as alone likely to awaken the interest of strong men. There are, perhaps, few things so distasteful to a mature worldly-wise woman of thirty-five, as an amiable green girl of eighteen.

"What is the use of going into a profession?" said she, still walking the floor, "Take my advice. Abandon it. Marry Carrie; get a cottage; raise vegetables; have children, and so die. That is the career you like. Give up law with all the rest, I advise you. Oh, George Bensley, I ought to have been a man! Men have the great opportunities, but they never have the soul to make use of them. Had I been a man, how I would have outstripped you puny fellows!—what things I would have done! But, being a woman, and compelled to be ambitious for another rather than for myself, why, all is lost. Men never can withstand a pretty face—never! In love, brains, hearts, souls, character, do not weigh; nothing but simpers, and curls, and mincing talk, and a little red in the cheeks. I say again, George Bensley, what a race of fools you are!"

"Carrie," replied George, with warmth, "is beautiful."

"You think so!"

"She is sensible, too, and of a warm heart. You do not like her, because you do not understand her."

"You know her best, I suppose. You live with her, and see her follies! Be with her night and day, as I have been, and you'll find that she hasn't an idea; that she is cross in the morning, petulant when alone, snarlish at all times if contradicted, and as surly by nature as her father. And you think she is pretty! Her arms are like two sticks; her skin is sallow; she is as straight and flat as a board. It is as easy for a man to be taken in, in love affairs, as it is to mislead the blind. Every woman knows how to cheat you. If you could see Carrie night and day,

sleeping and eating, you would fall in love with a sick kitten as soon."

"I will not listen to you," exclaimed George, with indignation. "Carrie is a noble girl, and you wrong her."

"I do not."

"You do. You bitterly wrong her."

"This to me!"

"Yes, to you, Ellen, if you force me to it. Carrie deserves your affection, not your disdain. I love her, have told her so, and know that she returns my affection. I will not listen to another word of this unjust depreciation."

The lover's indignation was princely. The cheek flushed, and the eye flashed with a superb spirit.

"I have known you longer than Carrie," said Ellen, bursting into tears. "When she was a little school-girl, and you didn't speak a word to her once a month, nor she to you, I had your friendship, your affection. We were happy together, and pledged each other to be friends forever. I was proud of you, and looked forward eagerly to the time when I might be the adviser, friend, counsellor of a great man, whose greatness and glory I might share. Here is a boy, thought I, with noble qualities. I will bring them out, foster them. The dull people around him do not detect them; I do detect them. I will show him that I do, and will bind him to me by the most enduring ties of friendship. I thought this—and now this timid, shallow girl comes between me and my hopes, and ruins all."

"But why?" exclaimed George, persuasively. "My friendship for you is not less than it was. Indeed, in wedding Carrie I am brought nearer to you; I am your relation then, and we shall be enabled to carry out our plans the more fully. Ellen, do not be unreasonable. It is strange to me that you are not rather pleased than displeased with my affection for Carrie, when the result will be that we three can always be united by friendship, by interests, and by ties of relationship."

"Oh, go! go!" exclaimed Ellen, flinging herself on a chair, and burying her face in her hands upon the table; "oh, go! You do not understand me. You do not understand what I hoped for in you—how much I prized our friendship—what dreams I had! You do not know what it is to have the friendship of a woman like me. You cannot realize it—you cannot measure—you cannot fathom it."

"But Ellen, do explain this grief and passion. I felt sure you would approve my marriage with Carrie, but how does such an event affect your friendship and mine?"

"Go, go!" replied she; "if your heart cannot explain, my words shall not. Go!"

George obeyed, although desperately perplexed as well as distressed. He walked up and down the hall several times in great agitation; went into the parlor and found it empty; and then silently let himself out of the house. In a few moments he was riding swiftly homeward.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning Harold, up long before light, found his way, by Ellen's directions, over to the Bensleys', and dragged George from an uneasy slumber on a jaunt to a celebrated rock, to see the sun rise. So fine was the view from the rock, and so noble a sweep of country to the eastward did it command, that it was known throughout the valley as Sunrise Rock. From this point, Harold, by persuasions, by commands, and by a little deception, brought George home with him to breakfast—reluctantly, on the part of George, for many reasons, and not unwillingly for many others.

They arrived dusty and heated, and found breakfast waiting. Harold led George to his room for a hasty brushing, and in five minutes they joined the family at the table.

Carrie was not present. Ellen greeted George steadily, and with a look so fixed it was almost a stare. There was a marked change in her face. Her hair was brushed smoothly over her temples, and indicated by its dark, glistening surface the application of some cooling and allaying wash to her brow. Her eyes sparkled with an intense and peculiar light, while under them lay deep, purple shadows. Her face was not pale, but had a burnished look, as if some active friction had been applied to the skin; and while her lips smiled and wore a constrained cheerfulness, at moments they appeared drawn tightly together with an expression of suppressed pain.

Harold, animated by his morning walk, and apparently heedless of that sullen negativeness on the part of his father,

which so repressed the rest, soon allowed his fancy its customary playful freedom. But George, surprised at Carrie's absence, kept watching the door; and to his great chagrin several times caught Ellen's eye upon him as his gaze wandered back from the door to the table.

"Where is Carrie?" asked Harold, who appeared for the first time to notice her absence.

"I cannot tell," said Ellen, with a tone which appeared to express something hopeless of Carrie, as if in some mysterious household way she was quite incorrigible. Some such thought occurred to Harold, as he replied:

"Young ladies the world over are the same, I see, given to pouts and headaches in the corner."

Ellen made no reply, but slowly turned over her spoon in her coffee.

"There is some other reason for Carrie's absence," said George, blushing, but with boldness, "and Ellen, no doubt, will confirm me."

"There are various reasons for everything," said Ellen, and touched a little bell by her side.

The servant entered.

"Will you ask Miss Carrie to come to breakfast? Shall I say her father requests it?" continued Ellen, turning to Mr. Sanford.

"Yes." He spoke with unusual pleasantness.

A silence ensued the dismissal of the servant which was rather awkward, until Harold broke into it abruptly.

"Your Sunrise Rock is a failure, Ellen."

"Why, Harold?"

"One must see the sun rise along the line of the sea if he wants nature in one of her best art moods. When I think of the world ornamentally—and I am not sure but so far in her history the ornamental has been the part in which she has appeared to best advantage—I consider sunlight and water her two most brilliant conceptions. Put them together anywhere and how the canvas speaks! Look at the sun rising over the sea, and if you have the true sensibility in you, you'll go mad."

George thought this speech a fine bit of strategic courtesy when he observed how Carrie, under its cover, slipped unnoticed by the rest into the room and to the table. She glanced timidly around, very slightly returned George's salutation, and looking down into her plate, slowly crumbled a bit of bread on the table-cloth. Her face was pale, and

her eyes looked full, as if the tears were quivering at the brim ready to overflow. There had been a scene between Ellen and Carrie, George saw, and for the first time since he had known Ellen he felt his blood heating with indignation against her. He raised his eyes from Carrie's face to hers with a look of reproachful inquiry. The blood deepened in her cheek, a vein across the forehead stood out swollen and heated, and her eyes encountered his with that former darkling frown in them.

He was answered, and the answer was defiance. He shrunk back as if he had been stabbed. Ellen's enmity! It was like losing the world—like losing the better part of himself. A thousand fond hopes lay bound up in Ellen's friendship. It had been his delight to picture the triumphs which she was to aid him in winning and applaud him in wearing. To lose her friendship seemed so much that only one price could compensate for it—the price of Carrie's love. But George did not know Ellen yet. The look she shot back to him was defiance, but not alienation. He could not see in what form that defiance was to come, nor could he appreciate that it was the prologue to a drama in which love and friendship were each to tug at his heart, and each to invoke many passions to vehement parts.

"Carrie," said Ellen, as their eyes interchanged these passage-at-arms, "Carrie, your father is not pleased at your want of respect. He sent for you before."

Ellen did not mean to let her purpose cool. Carrie's eyes, already on the verge of tears, filled with water, and her lips, in attempting to reply, only trembled.

"Your aunt is strict," said Mr. Sanford, unbending still more, and moving his hand toward Carrie, as if to touch her. "Why didn't you come?"

"This tenderness of manner was felt by his daughter. Perhaps for the first since his arrival had she really warmed toward him.

"I could not," she murmured, but her countenance brightened as if with some relief and pleasure.

"It is no matter," said Ellen, lightly. "Carrie's spirits are easily affected. I wish, Harold, she had some of your cheerfulness."

"My cheerfulness," replied Harold, "is in as fair trim as a March wind; it plays tricks; it blows hot and cold as many times an hour as you can count. Don't depend on my cheerfulness."

"I've seen you in no other mood since you've been here, which has surprised me."

"Why?"

"I shall not tell you. I can only say that if your temper prove as uniform in the long wear, I should like to live and die with you."

All of which meant, as plain as accents and emphasis could make it, that evenness of temper was something inexpressibly gratifying in a companion. It meant to say, how much I wish your sister possessed so desirable a virtue.

"With new friends," said Harold, "my breeding is glossy for a day or two, after which the real material begins to show. So put no trust in me, for I warn you I've got my best leg foremost. I'm now in handsome gear—I smell holiday—but wait till I get in my every-day temper. Then, if the toast is not done to a turn, I may smash your crockery; or, if the coffee is cold, swear out a circle of oaths. Never believe in a man, Ellen, until you can see him on the wrong side."

"Nor a woman, either," said Ellen, decisively.

Mr. Sanford at this moment arose from the table and walked to his customary position by the window. It was an opportunity George did not lose, and he rose from the table also. Ellen's eyes never left him, and she, too, rose, but only pushed back her chair. George, leaning against the mantel, spoke to Harold.

"If you mean by that, Harold, that you must know one a long time before you find out his real character, I must confirm your remark by saying, I never knew until this morning how true the sentiment is."

George addressed Harold, but looked at Ellen. Again the color deepened in her cheeks, and the vein stood out upon her brow.

"I can only say," she replied, with a smoothness and steadiness that evinced how thoroughly she was mistress of the situation "that for my part I should have been glad to have concealed the disagreeable knowledge from you."

She bent her eyes upon Carrie reproachfully, and Carrie understood her. She started, uttered an irrepressible sob, jumped from the table, and ran from the room.

This unexpected construction of his language was too much for George's endurance. Although prone to justify and defend all things in Ellen, he was completely aroused

and angry. With an impetuous stamp of the foot, he turned upon his heel and stalked to the door. He heard Ellen rise quickly as he did so, but he would not look back, and went out, not only from the room, but from the house. The first impulse to leave the place altogether was repressed by the hope of finding Carrie in the garden—in which direction he hastened. Rapidly and with indignant heart he traced the walks, and finding them vacant, turned backward to the house, and passing the door without looking toward it, walked off with impetuous haste. He had not reached the gate ere he heard a fluttering of robes behind him, and his name called. It was Ellen, and although instinctively restrained, but sullenly disdaining to look backward, he stood still until she reached his side.

"I never expected to see George Bensley angry with me," said she, putting her hand on his arm.

"Your harshness to Carrie is really unbearable," said George, flushing deeper than ever with renewed anger.

"Unbearable! My harshness! Can I help it if she is not in a pleasant mood this morning?"

"Who put her in an unhappy mood by injustice, by unkindness, by persecution? Ellen, I have never been so surprised in my life."

"Then you believe me capable of these meannesses—you believe it? I see how it is. Our friendship is at an end. I might have known it. When a man is fascinated by a pretty face, there is no hope for any friendship but that flexible, sycophant kind which belongs to the flatterer. George, you make my blood boil when you accuse me of such things."

"It makes mine boil, Ellen, to know that you can be guilty of them."

"I will be patient, George, while I demand an explanation."

"You know very well what I mean. Where you should have soothed, you stung; when a word of kindness would have been worth so much, you could be cruel and harsh."

"I am trying," said Ellen, patting her foot upon the ground, "to recall the circumstances to which you refer, but cannot—at least, the most I can accuse myself of is a want of patience. But you do not know how much that had been tried already; and a want of patience is a fault, but no great sin."

"What should try your patience?" said George, chafing

under the accusation against Carrie, implied in Ellen's words.

"I will not tell you."

"That is abrupt."

"If I did tell you, you would accuse me again of injustice. You would believe anything rather than believe your friend to be right."

"You are not fair to me. I have always trusted in you."

"Then for another reason I will not tell you—for the sake of your peace of mind."

"Why, what *do* you mean, Ellen?"

"I am determined," said Ellen, looking him steadily in the eyes with an expression that filled him with a dozen vague fears and distrusts—"I am determined to be no further a cause of unhappiness. Women, it is said, are always unjust judges of women, and what my judgments are I must keep to myself. The woman is always a great fool who attempts to make a lover open his eyes before marriage, and simply burns her fingers for her pains. So I will tell you nothing, and I request you not to press me. Good-morning, and remember this. No matter what happens, I am your friend. You may distrust me; you may forget all about what has passed between us in these long years; you may come to care for nothing but a foolish child—well, don't frown! Shake hands now, and perhaps we will meet next time as firm friends as before. Half friends, George, are always pleasantly compliant. The choosing of your wife is almost choosing your destiny—think of that, and don't wonder that true friendship is startled. You are frowning still; lovers are always so exasperated if all the world does not think as they do." She bent forward and whispered in his ear, "If you were offended now with any one else than me, I should be proud of you, you always look so noble when you are angry. Ah, George, you do not know your own nature; you do not see as I see, that you were not born for a tame, domestic life—not born to live with those who could not understand you."

Almost before the sentence was finished she had turned and was running swiftly back to the house.

George walked homeward, through the dusty road, perturbed, chafed, gloomy.

Ellen, with a look of sharp eagerness, hurried into the

house and went into the rooms searching for Carrie. It was fortunate they did not meet. The poor girl would have fluttered then if Ellen had swept upon her in the hot temper, which the occurrences of the morning had aroused. But, unexpectedly, Ellen met that which conquered, but, at the same time, wildly aroused her. As she was swiftly passing through the entry, Mr. Sanford came from the dining-room and called her to return with him.

"Don't touch her," said he, when they had entered the room.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Ellen, the blood rushing in an angry flush to her face.

"I can see, I know women. The old are mousers, the young are mice. You would like to torment her."

"William!"

"Never mind! Neither of us will get angry. But don't touch her."

"Touch her?" Ellen gasped and choked with rage too great for words.

"Not with your hands, of course," said Mr. Sanford; but with your tongue. I know how it is done—it hurts worse than blows."

"I ask you what you mean?"

"My dear, there are men who can take in a game at a glance. Your young friend is not so young that he cannot please two ladies at once."

"Mr. Sanford," broke out Ellen, in a hot tumult, "you and the world are so mean as always to judge a woman by the paltriest standard you can think of. You insult her, traduce her, wrong her every day you live. You think every woman would sell her dearest birthright to get a husband; that she schemes, works, and hopes only for a husband. It is a shame—and it is a lie!"

"Tut, Ellen! It is no shame and no lie. I've seen women rivals before, and they were ready to stab each other. Carrie is helpless—she shall not be whipped by your angry tongue."

"William, what you say makes me so angry I can hardly speak. I tell you a woman can have a friend as well as a man can. Because I like George Bensley, knew him when a boy, and think of him still as a boy, how dare you imply that I have a thought but of friendship! I give up the charge of Carrie—I'll have nothing more to do with her. I'll not put myself where you or any other can insult me so!"

"Then why are you angry with Carrie?"

"I am not."

"Why, you have been hunting her with an eye like a tiger's—such an eye that only jealousy puts into a woman."

"Are you indifferent to Carrie's fate—indifferent whom she marries?"

"No."

"Then why not think of *her*? If I am jealous, I am not jealous without a cause."

"Confound it!" exclaimed Sanford, his face setting darkly.

"I *am* angry at Carrie," said Ellen, hastening to her advantage, "because she has forgot her duty to us all. She likes this Bensley—evinces it too clearly; she is, in fact, I fear, secretly in love with him."

Sanford's face grew dark, and he began pacing the floor.

"Never mind," said he, after a pause: "don't worry her. Leave Carrie to me, and make what fool of the boy you please."

"I'll not bear this!" said Ellen, vehemently, "I'll not bear it I say! You know you insult me—you know your insinuations are scoundrelly?"

"Scoundrelly?"

"Of course I don't choose pleasant words. You insult me in a way no woman could tolerate. I like George Bensley—would like him well enough to be his wife if I didn't like him well enough to know much better. And I am old enough to gratify my likes. The world is always mighty nice and virtuous and scrupulous about women. Let us alone. If I see an able, ambitious lad, and know I can help him along, the world shall not interfere."

"Does the world interfere?"

"Yes, in you this moment. Cruelly interferes. I am wise enough to know that others can be as unhandsomely suspicious as you; but I defy them and you."

Mr. Sanford smiled sardonically and shook his head.

"This is a digression," said he. "The world through me does not interfere. Only don't persecute Carrie. You began this morning, please end at once."

Whereupon, wrapping himself in his reserve, he turned his back upon her and walked toward the window.

Ellen watched him several moments in silence, with

plenty of bitter words crowding for utterance, and then, conscious of her inability to cope with a spirit so impetuous, burst into passionate tears.

William Sanford, I'll never call you brother again—never! never!"

With these words she fled blindly from the room.

CHAPTER IX.

"I'm thinking," exclaimed Mr. Anthony Bensley, from the centre of a great cloud of smoke, as he puffed his post-breakfast pipe, "I'm thinking, George, if you'll ever be a judge. Don't expect me to forgive you for being a lawyer until you come and say you are up for the bench."

It is the day when Master George is to present himself to Minturn Twitt, Esq., and under the wings of that gentleman begin the process of incubation which shall hatch him out a full-fledged attorney, with the privilege of hanging out his gilt sign, and abandoning himself to all lengths of red tape. Nettie is drawn up before the door ready for the jaunt to town, and the young ladies are gathered anxiously about the adventurer, repeating their numberless good-byes.

"Be an honest lawyer," says Emma, in response to her father's remark, "and it is all we have a right to expect."

"Don't be a slow, plodding, dull old lawyer, like some of them are," exclaims Betsy emphatically. "I never could understand law!—never! It's horrible!—just horrible!—dry, musty, and such a snarl! But men must always be puzzling themselves over tangles, and queerologies, and law is the worst of them. But George must go to Congress, and make a splendid speech."

"Then it is arranged, is it," said Mr. Bensley, "that George is to be a statesman—somebody great?"

"Yes," said Betsy, with simplicity and emphasis.

"Now, who first started that notion?"

"Why, we all started it; we all think George ought to be a great man."

"Not I," said Mr. Bensley, decisively. "I don't know that he ought, or that he will, or that he can. If you, or that Ellen Sanford, have put ambitious wishes in his

head, let him keep them under bonds. Ambition, you see, is a capital thing, if it teaches a man to work; but if it teaches him to cry for the moon and suck his fingers, ambition is a vagrant, and ought to be put in the house of correction."

"Nettie is ready," said George, "and it is nine o'clock."

"The pipe is finished," said Mr. Bensley. "Come, girls, out with your good-byes."

"Remember," said Emma, "you are to come out every Saturday."

"Oh, I must come home once a-week, to watch over my sisters. Somebody may be falling in love with Betsy."

"Somebody has," roared Mr. Bensley.

"Pshaw!" said Betsy; and with busy fingers twirled a button on her father's coat.

"It's not Shaw—it's Harry Elton."

"Now, father! Nonsense! I don't care a bit for Harry!"

"Who said you did, minx? But Harry may care for you, eh?"

"How can you talk so, father?" mildly remonstrates Emma.

"Well, come, George. Even the patient Nettie is getting restless, and pricks up her ears because the hour is past."

"Good-bye, girls."

"Oh, George, it will be so very lonesome!" exclaims Betsy; and her eyes redden so suddenly that she quickly hides her face, hunting for a handkerchief.

"Come," calls Mr. Bensley from without, through the window, with no little exertion of breath and strength clambering into the buggy. "Come! And you, girls, keep your eyes tight. Betsy, there, looks as if she would run over at the next word."

This was said as all three followed him to the piazza.

"Good-bye, again;" and the lad takes a sister's hand in each of his.

"You'll send word, if you are sick," urges Emma.

"I like your good nursing too well to fail to do that."

"And when you come, on Saturdays, you can't spend the whole time at the Sanfords," says Betsy.

"We'll arrange all that; and remember, no lovers without my consent."

"How ridiculous!"

"Do jump in, George," from Mr. Bensley. "One would think you were on a voyage to the Sandwich Islands."

The youth blushes; it appears so unmanly to make an ado about a journey of ten miles. He does not realize that miles do not make the journey, and that in fact he begins a voyage longer than twice the leagues to the Sandwich Islands—a voyage which leads through life, extending among untold vicissitudes and fortunes.

The youth blushes, and, breaking away from the hands of his sisters, springs into the vehicle by the side of his father.

"Now," he cries, with a cheer, "hurra for law!"

"Get up!" exclaims Mr. Bensley, jerking vigorously at the reins.

"Hurra for the lawyer!" laughs Betsy, through tears that sparkle in her eyes.

"Ha, Nettie!" cries the senior. But Nettie looked wise and very well contented where she was. "Go-long, Nettie! go-long!" repeated the old gentleman, with loud emphasis.

Nettie, at last, well jerked, pricked, and roundly urged, put down her ears, put out her legs, and away they went.

"Good-bye!" from Betsy, hearty and earnest.

"Good-bye!" from Emma, gentle and tender.

"Good-bye!" back again from George, very brisk and cheery.

Brisk and cheery! and yet, when the old house disappeared, the youth, with a strange oppression upon the heart, sank down in silence by the side of his father; for there was no shutting out, even to the spirit and hopefulness of the boy, that one path was closed forever, and that now he entered upon a new stage of the life-journey, and travelled a broader and unknown road.

The life of our hero had, so far, been a home scene. Indulgence had rendered him indolent and luxurious, soft of heart, sensitive, weak, tender, with an abundance of manly impulses, but little of the self-reliance and hardihood which come from discipline and the sharp ways of life. His faculties were like the rank untrimmed growths of a wilderness, in which there is little order, no subordination, method or purpose. He had a generous nature, quick perceptions, lively sensibilities. He possessed the egotism that arises from ignorance and elastic faith; the pride that springs from the love of the high and beautiful;

the ambition that comes from the belief of youth that success is the dazzling glory of life; and he possessed in ripe abundance the virtues of a splendid imagination and a true heart. But for his sake, and the sake of the world, too, how little system, how little of the discipline and talent which crystalizes, hardens, invigorates, completes!

One is both pained and surprised to see that adolescent, green, innocent youth fling himself into the world with so much hope, ignorant of those trials, endurances, terrible tests, by which alone the temper of the steel is to be hardened. If we knew, at the beginning, all—the attrition, abrasion, filing, sharpening—which life puts us through, how many of us would sing our light songs and look with calm eyes into the future? If youth saw himself as those old men who are beyond and above the path he travels see him, his heart would sink down in despair; the end would appear the impossible; no human courage could attempt dangers and difficulties so formidable. So let him hug his fancies, his conceits, his proud, untried self faith; let him dash at his Goliaths; let him dance along, gay of heart and brisk with courage, whipping down his gauntlet to the old skill, the wary strength, the tough muscle of age!

The ride to the county town of Hareton was eventless. The good old gentleman was an easy driver, and so freely talkative, that it was nearly two hours and a half from the time they left their own door to the moment Bensley drew rein before one of the three posts that stood before the office of Minturn Twitt, Esq.

The county town of Hareton was a bustling market village of some four or five thousand inhabitants, owning one wide and dirty avenue, lined with rows of soiled, melancholy, half-filled shops, and traversed by numerous farm and business vehicles. It was a railway station, and the station houses, with the *débris* of broken cars, unapplied fragments of machinery, etc., which always appertain to a railway "depot," as the term is, while giving evidence of the business activity of Hareton, were neither sightly nor picturesque. The village also had a church for each of the sects in the orthodox calendar, and chapels for a good many that were not. There was a Catholic, an Episcopal, a Unitarian, a Presbyterian, a Congregational, a Baptist, a Methodist church, or meeting-house, not to speak of Seventh-day Baptists, Campbellites, Spiritualists, Swedenborgians, Universalists, and even Free-Thinkers—for of

such *bizarre* complexion is the theological aspect of every true, free, and independent American town.

Mr. Minturn Twitt's office was in a low, one-story building erected for the purpose, standing within the triangle of three trees, a little apart from other structures, and graced by a sign that announces the name and profession of the occupant in the faded splendor of tarnished gold. The exterior was pleasant, shaded by the three trees, but not so the interior. There were two rooms, connecting by wide doors, coldly furnished with an oil-cloth on the floor, the patterns and colors of which had long been trodden out, and with desks and bookcases that frowned upon our comers as they entered, with all the gloom and mystery of mahogany a century old. The desks, the ample, well-used chairs, the bookcases, from the tops of which chillily gleamed worthies of the law in plaster of Paris—all seemed to cut into the atmosphere of the room with a harsh, cold angularity that sent a numb distaste and repulsion not only into the heart of the young student, but into his very finger ends. There were such piles of books, too. The cases were full to their utmost function; behind the plaster busts were piles of books that loomed up ragged and dusty to the very ceiling; while by the sides of the cases, against the walls, under the desks, and in the corners, were other piles of books, all ragged, torn, dusty, and terrible to behold.

Mr. Twitt—gray-haired, thin, dry-looking, sharp-featured—swung around in his chair, pulled down his wristbands in a defiant, business, let-me-get-at-him sort of way, buried his chin in a relentless, implacable air between his shirt collar, hemmed a horrible hem, and said he was glad to see them.

George, put on oath, would have declared he was not sensible on that fair day in July of having committed any crime, but that no criminal dragged before the stern officers of the law, could experience sensations so hopelessly guilty, so wretchedly culpable, as those which overwhelmed him at that moment. He felt like a prisoner; he felt like one condemned; he felt like one for whom there was no mercy and plenty of sharp justice. Mr. Twitt's eyes were before him; all this terrible law was around him; Mr. Twitt's snapping sentences were in his ears; doors, and bolts, and bars seemed to ring together behind him; he felt thrust in guilty ignorance and vacancy upon enormous proficiency;

he felt swung suddenly from the life and air of freedom into an atmosphere of innumerable restraints, of severe exactings, of harsh trials and judgment. He stood there helpless as a child, and guilty as a culprit.

"You've come," said Mr. Twitt. "That's good. I hope you'll like it. If you don't, it will never like you. But law, young man, means study. I am a worker myself. Are you?"

"I do not know, sir."

"Humph! Well! Non-committal? There's sense to begin with. But make up your mind to work. I don't believe a man can build a house until he lays bricks. I don't think fortunes are mushrooms, and come up while we are sleeping. I don't think a man can slip into success through the cabin window. Don't be afraid of shirt sleeves. Don't be afraid of soiled fingers. There's my doctrine, sir. It's good doctrine, whether you like it or not."

Our hero, who had expected to ride up the steeps of fame in some gay and glittering style, could scarcely conceal his disgust. The promise of drudgery, this picture of plodding, unhandsome coarse labor, chilled him to the heart. It was with difficulty that he could muster courage to say that he was prepared for all the severities and requirements of the profession.

"Law," said the lawyer, "is dull work for a fool, but delightful to a man of brains. It is the perfection of common sense—but common sense is always a sublime difficulty."

This sentiment appeared so amusingly audacious to Mr. Bensley, that he burst into a laughter which convulsed not only his portly frame, but shook the very walls. A dozen times he tried to find voice, and just as the words hovered upon his lips the subject assumed some freshly amusing aspect, and the laughter, which begun at his stomach and rolled upward in strong undulations, would explode with renewed violence from his lips.

"The perfection of common sense!" at last exclaimed he; "why, common sense and it are sworn enemies. Common sense, Mr. Twitt, is a turnpike; law is a cow path in the woods."

"I know law," snapped Mr. Twitt, "don't I? Can I be taught? I should say not. Understand it, and it is admirable. Well! when will the young man begin?"

"As soon as he is settled," replied the senior. "He

must get lodgings, etc., and then may he find the law more palatable than I do, common sense or what not. But there is too much juice in me for law—eh, Twitt? It takes a dry brain and a thin stomach for these legal cobwebs. However, come, George, hadn't you better go back, after all, and take to the farm?" asked Mr. Bensley, who, with his hand on the door knob, with irrepressible solicitude precipitated this question upon his son, as if with the hope of surprising his real feelings out of him.

"No, sir," said George. "It is too late."

"Well! well! Every man to his liking. Mine is cabbages—and the biggest in the county. Come."

And Mr. Bensley, muttering his unextinguishable dislike of the movement, breathed freer as he emerged from the lawyer's closet into the sunshine.

CHAPTER X.

THERE is everywhere an inevitable widow with lodgings to let. The search lasted scarcely ten minutes ere the widow was found. She was gracious and ungrammatical, and ushered the Bensleys at once to the spare room, which she had been induced to offer to a stranger with the sole desire of adding to her lonely family.

The spare room, with its brazen, uncurtained window, its bald and fearfully white walls, its one slip of rag-carpet, its dark, narrow bed, in a motley-colored quilt, born from the remnants of generations of marvellous gowns, its ewer and pitcher nipped, cracked and blackened, was most wofully different from the cheer and broad comfort that pervaded the household of the Bensleys, and took what little heart was left in George out of him. The widow, however, was loud in praise, and showed them that the window looked down into the dusty, untidy street and into rows of melancholy, fly-soiled, cob-webbed shops opposite. It was the most lively part of the town, she explained; all day long carriages drove past; the tavern was on the next square; the lecture-hall was equally convenient; and the Rev. Wyndmake, three doors the other way, temporarily dispensed precious aliment in the hall over the baker's.

"Will it do?" asked Mr. Bensley.

"You won't find nothing better," said the widow, who

called herself Mrs. Tilman. "No, sirs, there be'ent a nicer room nowhere."

"I'll make the best of it," said George. "Two nights a week, at least, will be spent at home."

"Rather dull, eh, George?" said Mr. Bensley, jingling his keys in his pocket, and eyeing his son with a compassionate look.

"Not inviting, I must confess."

"Clean and tidy, I'm sure," broke in the widow.

"I'll take it," said George, turning upon his heel abruptly, and hastening down into the street.

"Now, George," said Mr. Bensley, overtaking him, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, "it's confounded uncomfortable, eh? Cleftside is up, I say. This law is taking life in the raw, isn't it? What do you say to cabbages?"

"Nothing."

"But Twitt's office was a cold bath, and this is dipping a man in the very arctic sea of discomfort. Look at me! Would I weigh a hundred and ninety, with nothing pleasanter to look at than a mountain of musty law papers—nothing better to live in than a cupboard."

"You've liked your comfort, sir."

"To be sure. Such is my enjoyment of comfort that I multiply inches, and broaden the surface whereby to take it in. Imitate me, George."

"Not by fifty pounds or so, if you please."

"Ha! ha! Well! It's fifty pounds more of solid comfort, take my word for it. You still stick to your notion, eh?"

"You would despise me if I yielded."

"I'm afraid I would. You're right, my lad. Still I wish it was agriculture. However, it's all settled. Twitt has got you—take care the widow doesn't get you—and good-bye—and all I can say is, don't fail to make the winning post."

Mr. Bensley vigorously shook the hand of his son, and after blurting out a good many hurried axioms, started with earnest intentness after the patient Nettie, who still stood before Twitt's office door.

And, with a heart chilled and oppressed, our hero crossed the threshold, and entered upon his new life.

That terrible first day in the office of Minturn Twitt, lawyer, and in the town of Hareton!

Twitt was summoned away, and the young aspirant was left to his own devices. He wandered about the gloomy office, oppressed with the bald newness of his surroundings, discontented he knew not why, and strangely lacking every spark of that glow and fire with which he was wont to dream of the longed-for career. The books looked so formidable, the papers crammed into numberless pigeon-holes, appeared so mysterious in their dust and yellow, time-eaten edges; hard, dry, passionless labor seemed stamped on everything within the old lawyer's precincts.

He hunted up a volume of Blackstone, opened it on the desk, and put to work at it. The first page was scarcely managed ere he jumped up in disgust, and shivering at the dead blankness of the scene, began pacing the floor, trying to think of Carrie. It was of no use. Our fine heroic knight, our gallant chief, all armed *cap-a-pie*, and big with the desire of worlds to conquer, was as cruelly put down by a perverse imagination as any weak, home-sick young gentleman who never thought of being a hero at all. Up and down the office he paced, from chair to chair, from bookcase to bookcase, from wall to wall, as listless and blank as a ghost. A second and a third time he essayed to read, but his senses grew numbed and chilled in the uncongenial atmosphere. He dragged his desk to the window, and threw the blinds wide open, but there was no cheer in the air, and even the sun penetrated the room in bars of yellow, dingy, dusty light, inviting the cobwebs from their dark corners into sharper view, and rendering vivid the stains upon the yellow wall, and the heavy dust that clung to every "coigne of vantage" on cornice, bust or bookcase. The sun was worse than the half-shadows, and he quickly closed the blinds again. In fact our hero was not only depressed by the strangeness of his new life, but by the clouds that hung over his friendship and his love. It seemed to him that he but stepped into the lists at the moment when those eyes were averted, those hands withheld, whose applause and sympathy had been the stimulants, and were now the necessary supporters, of his resolution.

At last Mr. Twitt returned. He came briskly into the office, and shot life into it at once. He was full of talk and emphasis, in which italics and small caps, and capitals abounded. He was nervous, fidgety, angular, abrupt, wi-

a thousand things to do, and a headlong, precipitate way of doing them, that took George's breath away.

"How have you busied yourself?" he inquired. "Found Blackstone pleasant? A splendid style—recreation to read Blackstone! Mere play! Always read him when I'm dull—he clears me up so. Been after an important witness to day—got him—wormed a secret out of him that wins. Bless me! Hem—here it is! Now, Mr. Bensley—"

In an instant there was a shower of things to do. George was bewildered by the multitude and their complications. It seemed as if work was laid out for a month—harsh, dry, technical labor, needing patient fingers and patient attention. George shook himself, brought what little courage he could summon to the task, and tried to cool his rebellious impulses in the philosophy of necessity. His utter ignorance of law, business, or the world, added embarrassments to the task, and Twitt disdained explanations.

"A man who needs explanations is only fit for cobbling shoes. Find out. Is there a snarl? The end of the string is somewhere—search for it."

And Mr. Twitt, as he snapped these words out, gave a twitch to his collar, and a malignant pull at his wristbands. Mr. Twitt's nervous habit of always pulling, twisting, and adjusting his garments, stamping with his feet, shifting his chair, soon became as wearisome to young Bensley as the former idleness; and when at last he was enabled to escape from the office altogether for the day, there was a feeling of relief, but also a sense of shame, disquiet, and thorough dissatisfaction. The day had not only been distasteful but humiliating. His dignity was wounded, his vanity shamed; he felt both guilty and incapable, and his big expectations seemed so absurd by the side of this childish, weak, unworthy beginning, that he stamped his foot upon the ground in passionate shame and vexation.

His dull chamber scarcely put him in a better tone. At an early hour he went to his pillow moodily resolved either to bury his disquiet in sleep, or to coax up some of the old dreams that had so often proved his solace and delight. Perhaps he found relief in both, for in the morning he awoke freshly, and presented himself at the office in a hopeful and cheerful spirit. The day was not so intolerably tedious as the yesterday, but bad enough. The third day was full of activity in the morning, but in the afternoon he was alone again—again pacing the gloomy scene,

again essaying his task at Blackstone. As before, he drew his desk close to the window, let in a bit of sunlight upon the page, thrust his face into his hands, and his elbows upon the desk, and stared fully at the page.

Suddenly a shadow fell upon the volume. He looked up hastily. Harold was standing with his arms upon the window-sill, looking in.

"May stars, fates, and fairies be blessed!" he exclaimed, without moving; "I've found you at last. I couldn't stand it. Everybody has been pouting. I have been nine-tenths dead with *ennui*, and have brought the other tenth to find you."

"Then, come in and let me thank you," said George opening the door.

"Let me see how you look," said Harold, as he entered and flung himself into a chair. "Has the law phlebotomized you, and sucked your heart dry? The vampire will, take a philosopher's word for it. You'll shrink up like parchment—you'll scorch, shrivel, wither, turn yellow, and sell your liver for a fee."

"Your prophecy is not your belief, Harold."

"What if it is not? I have always an assortment of opinions at hand, and choose as I like."

"Diplomatic, eh? How are Ellen and Carrie?"

"With headaches, of course—given to bay-rum and naps. There is one thing I'd stipulate for in a wife—she shall be no invalid, or its no bargain. With her first headache, I'd express her home to her friends. But, come, must we stay here?"

"How did you come?"

"In Ellen's rockaway. I could outwalk the mare's best trotting, in my solemn conviction. However, a horse of some sort is supposed to be a necessity—it was Carrie, you see, who sent me off."

"Carrie?"

The blood darted to the cheek, the eye danced with light.

"Yes, Carrie, who has acted the depressed damsel ever since you've been here. I'm glad you like her, George. Don't blush. Pretty girls will charm the wits out of young gentlemen the world over. I am like the rest, and have got an adventure to tell you. Come! This place is as gloomy as death. Ugh! I should die here in five minutes, or go mad."

George threw the shutters wide, and opened the door.

"It won't do," said Harold, still shuddering, "let us sit on the door-step. Here it is delicious. The light comes down through the leaves of the trees gloriously."

"Let us sit here, then," said George, "and now about the adventure."

"I wonder if I am in love," exclaimed Harold abruptly.

"There is a lady in the adventure, then."

"I am fascinated; there is a lady; and I repeat, I wonder if I am in love. Yesterday—no, the day before—I went down along the river path, and came suddenly upon a lady seated upon a rock, under a tree, reading aloud—reading deliciously aloud, too—a bit from one of the old dramatists. I did not catch enough to detect the author, but I knew it was one of the old fellows by the nutty, ripe, burry flavor of the lines. They were so delightful that I walked up and asked their repetition."

"The deuce."

"Oh, she liked it. There are some women who get so worn out with hum-drum things they will leap out of their gaiters at a bit of fresh, unconventional audacity. She would not repeat the lines though, but smiled, and said the neatest thing I've heard in a month. Then I fell pop in love. For, when a woman can turn off her tongue one of these rounded, well-trimmed sentences, which mingle courtesy and compliment so nicely, I'm won at once. Style in books is a bore—but style spoken—cadence, modulation, inflection, all added to the balanced and fine adjustment of the words—why, it is as luxurious as good music."

"Pon my word, Harold, come to the point."

"I fell in love—that's the whole of it. Of course more was said; but it was that first sentence that did it. And what a clever woman she proved—up in everything—knew everything—had seen everything—one of the few who get out of the bands and the gussets, and the stays that society attempts to bind us in, and swings clear into the great ocean of life and thought."

"Do tell me of the adventure, Harold."

"I like people, and I am one of them, who are born outside of the grooves of society; the morally unhoused; the vagabonds of fancy. The winds get at us, the sun shines upon us, the rain spatters us. We think outside of parlors, and outside of the church porch. Some call us mad. Ho! I wake up at night sometimes to laugh at that."

"Again I ask you, tell me of the lady," said George, whose suspicions and fears transported him with impatience.

"Well, we chatted. Then she got up to walk, and I went with her. What a walk it was—and the talk was delightful enough to have stepped out of one of Shakespeare's comedies. We came to her cottage; we went in; and in an hour's time I parted from the lady, up to the eyes in love."

"Was she not very free for a casual meeting?"

"To be sure. What proper, dull lady would have done it! It took an active, fine imagination to prompt it—a bold, calm courage to do it. It took a woman of the world who could snap her fingers at those flimsy proprieties with which society attempts to hem in and tie up the sex. Oh, I thought of all that, and it was a delight to see her tread down the dull, freezing dictations of the world. That is the reason, if you will have it, why I am in love with her."

"What is her name?"

"I do not know."

"Tell me something more about her. Describe her."

"A splendid woman—how can I describe her more? You must have seen her, although I believe her residence here is only temporary."

"It must be she," exclaimed George. "Harold, did you ever see her before? At any time?"

"Never! But who is she? You are so excited, may I ask if you, too, have been smitten with the literally 'in-expressive she?'"

Here is new proof, thought George, that the story of his father and Sanford's daughters was in some way an error; for it was clear enough that Harold's adventure had been with the mysterious and showy lady of the carriage.

"Harold," said he, "let me warn you against this woman. Her disregard of those proprieties which you scorn so much, show that she is a woman to be avoided."

"I didn't come for a warning," cried Harold, with a hot flush in his cheek. "Anxious, wise saws and virtuous head-shakings are abominations. I like her, I tell you. She is witty—of course very dangerous. She is wise—the unpardonable sin. She is beautiful and fascinating—every fool in the world throws stones at her. Confound the world, George! A thousand times confound it! Here is

a woman who sets imagination on fire; who makes the blood run swiftly; who stirs up thoughts and fancies; who talks to you and illuminates every part of your brain; who looks into your eyes and fills every corner of your heart with delight—and what then? This confounded world gets in a spasm of virtue about it. This fellow, George Bensley, only three days inoculated with the law, turns up as musty as an octogenarian, and whimpers out his second-hand threadbare moralities. Every man is tied down by a thousand Liliputian habits and laws. Break them! snap them! In South America they bind the children's heads between boards to flatten them. So do we. We force them into set shapes, set thoughts, set habits, by our accursed social bandages; and when here and there one escapes flattening, there is terrible consternation. We set the dogs upon him; we stone him to death. By Jupiter, I fall in love with the woman I like, in spite of the world—or George Bensley—or"—

"Yourself," interrupted George, "the most obstinate censor, after all, one has to deal with."

"A lawyer already! Only three days, and given to quirks and quibbles. I'll go home and tell Carrie, that in a year you'll make as fine a husband as any other sheep-skin. Good-bye."

"To-morrow," said George, "I go home, and on Sunday will talk the matter over further."

"Would you like to see her?"

"Yes."

"We'll go together. But you must take your oath not to attempt to trip me up."

"I do."

"No forestalling! No lawyer-like tricks."

"I promise you."

"Then I shake off your law-dust. Farewell! Come like a man, and sink the office a thousand fathoms."

As abruptly as he came, the eccentric youth walked away, turning every little distance to send back good-byes with his hand.

CHAPTER XI.

THE delicious sense of freedom with which young Hopeful bent his steps homeward on the Saturday is almost more than describable. To snuff air that hadn't been tainted with red tape since its free life begun; to inhale sunlight fairly; to feel once more the full richness of out-of-doors—the sun, the sky, the waving tree-tops, the dotted light and shade, the crisp, green, beautiful grass; to realize all these things once more was a delight, after those pent-up office days. The pleasure compensated largely for the restraints and denials his duties imposed, and gave him a new insight into the meaning and value of labor.

And how far there mingled with these enjoyments the reveries and raptures of a lover, let those answer who are younger than I. There are moments, no doubt, when the divine passion breathes an ecstasy through the heart of the lover; when it gets near the eyes, and waters them with sudden dew; when it gets into the throat, and strangles every word there; when it flings itself into the blood, and sends hot gushes to the cheeks; when it seizes upon the youth entire, and breaks out upon every inch of him—in smiles upon his lips, sparkles in his eyes, red heat in his cheeks, flutterings in his heart, and a passionate glow from top to toe. So hastening homeward, riding—hastening homeward, walking—love, my masters, seized hopefully upon the tenement, where law and things were lately dispossessed, and had a joyous time.

Dusk when he reached home; and the tea-table pleasant and cheery; and Emma solicitous about the warm rolls, and the tea that simmered on the hearth; and Betsy fluttering in and out with more than one impatient stamp upon the floor; and father Bensley buried forty fathoms behind a blanket newspaper. It was Betsy who heard him first. Everybody has sung of welcomes home; and George wondered that, if the parting was so extravagant, what could justify the welcome-back. Clearly, nothing. Of course, again it was not distance nor time; it was the great fact that brother George was launched into an ocean wider than the Pacific—the ocean of life and the world.

Betsy followed him about, and kept close to his side. She had always been his little confidante—the sprightly

and affectionate companion of all his home hours—but now appeared to have urgent matter, waiting for a moment to unfold. After tea, she got him in the parlor alone.

"Oh, George!" she cried—and her voice became truly piteous at once—"I've been over to the Sanfords', and Carrie looks so unhappy."

Whereupon George looked unhappy, too, and sat down to listen.

"As for Mr. Sanford," said Betsy, with a sudden bolt from Carrie, "he's a monster, if he is Carrie's father. He frightens me out of my wits; and so does Harold. Mr. Sanford is so fearfully sullen, and Harold says such odd things, that no wonder Carrie is unhappy. Though, I think they are not the cause."

"What is, then?"

"I don't want to think it is Ellen; but, I declare, I hardly knew her, she looked so sharp and strange, and spoke so differently."

"Harshly?"

"No, but excessively polite—studied—and yet, it seemed to me, so severe and bitter. And her eyes, too, had so strange a look."

"How about Carrie?"

"Carrie looked frightened. She hardly dare speak, even to me; and looked as if she wanted to cry, and kept such a distance off, and—and—really was so melancholy—looking prettier, though, than ever."

"There's one consolation, at least," said the brother, and laughed evasively.

"George!" exclaimed Betsy quickly, "you know—I see you do. So, tell me."

"My dear, you have often told me that Ellen does not like Carrie."

"Yes."

"That is all I know about it."

"Then, George, don't be Ellen's friend another day. It is abominable! abominable!"

The emphasis was enforced by her foot upon the floor.

"I don't know what to make of it," said George; "perhaps to-morrow will reveal; I hope so."

On the morrow, in the ample rockaway, George drove them all to church. While in the pew he saw the Sanfords enter—all, father and son, Ellen and Carrie. Harold looked across the church, and nodded pleasantly. Neither

Ellen nor Carrie gave a look. As for Mr. Sanford, he remained wrapped, silent, sullen, apparently unconscious of everything around him.

After church, as usual, there was a family interchange of greetings. It was constrained, however, for a cloud seemed to hang over all the Sanfords but Harold, who was polite to the ladies, but in two minutes was sauntering off and talking with Mr. Bensley. Sanford and Bensley did not meet, but the latter watched the mysterious gentleman at a little distance. George offered to accompany the ladies to their carriage. He fell easily by the side of Carrie, and Ellen walked two feet apart.

"Carrie," he whispered, "I hope you are well. You do not look so."

"Yes," she replied, but kept her face averted. Nothing else was said. Mr. Sanford came up, but George helped them into the carriage.

"Will you come this afternoon?" said Ellen, and placed her hand heavily upon his arm.

"I ask Carrie's permission also," said George.

"Please do," she responded very low, but glancing at him quickly and earnestly.

He bowed and stepped back; Mr. Sanford took the reins, only nodding to him; and Harold cried out, at a little distance, that he should walk. As the carriage whirled away, Mr. Bensley put his hand upon George's shoulder:

"The man, George."

"That you saw in Mobile?"

"Yes."

"But you are wrong about the other daughter," said George quickly; "I think I can convince you."

Mr. Bensley put his thumbs in his waistcoat-pockets and twirled his fingers, but he kept his thought resolutely to himself.

The ride home appeared long, and the dinner was impatiently waited for. In ten minutes after the cloth, George was at the stable; in three more he went dashing into the road, while Betsy on the piazza waved good-bye with her handkerchief.

It was a rapid ride, and our lover dismounted at the Sanford gate in fresher spirits than he had known since the shadow of the law came down upon him.

Ellen, Carrie, and Harold were in the garden. Ellen put out her hand to him with a little of her usual cordial

heartiness, quite different from her manner of the morning, but Carrie, unchanged, shrunk back a little, glancing furtively at Ellen. George, animated by the ride, and inspired with his customary frankness and lightness of heart, caught her hand playfully, and, still holding it, extended the other to Ellen.

"A week," said he, "has been a long separation for me. I have imagined a thousand changes, but find all the same. Do I look judicial Ellen? Do I smell of law, and tape, and parchment?"

George was beating with great dash up against the gloom which still in part hovered over them. They could not entirely resist his manner, and Ellen, although in her eyes rested that same peculiar frown, tried to be animated too.

"Let us ask," she said, "if you begin to scent greatness yet?"

"More likely," said Harold, who had been gathering a bouquet, "he is comprehending the difficulties. Fame is a pretty doll, but one gets well toughened before he wins the toy. What a fool a man is who lies in the grass and aspires to mount the clouds."

"But George," said Ellen, "is not lying in the grass; he is up, and trying the ascent."

"A thousand times more a fool. When one gets there, what then? Climb up any of these hills around us, and what will you find? Why, bigger hills on the other side. Come, George, hang law, and come here and live with us. Carrie mopes, Ellen scolds, and I flash in and out of temper every thirty seconds."

"Then I am desired—a pleasant compliment, Harold."

"Pshaw!" cried Harold, "who was it that Lear most asked for when his cheerful daughters turned him out of doors? His fool, to be sure."

"He was mad," said George, and fools, perhaps, are naturally the best companions for madmen."

Harold, who was stooping to pluck a flower, flung the bouquet in his hand from him with sudden violence, whirled around in the path before George, frowning and flushed, and then breaking across the flower beds, left them without a word.

"What have I done?" exclaimed George, intensely distressed at this unlooked-for explosion.

"His humors are unaccountable," said Ellen. "It is impossible to foresee or prevent them. It is terrible."

She shuddered, and covered her face with her hands. They had walked several steps forward, and then observed that Carrie remained behind, looking back after her brother.

"Excuse me," she said, in response to George, "I must go and see what has become of Harold."

George ran up to her side, and proposed to accompany her; but she muttered something about Ellen being left alone, and hurried away, pulling her straw flap over her face as she did so.

"What is the matter?" said the youth, turning to Ellen, with irritation.

"Don't be impatient, George," was the imperative reply. "It is enough for me to manage all these humors and petulances, without being responsible for them. I cannot help Harold's mind being out of balance; nor can I help it if Carrie——"

"What do you mean?"

"Carrie is a singular girl. That's all."

"I do not hesitate to say to you, Ellen, that I love Carrie with all my heart. And if you were the friend you profess to be, you would not attempt to come between us."

"Now I ask *you* what you mean?"

"I can see that you would like to separate Carrie from me."

"George Bensley," exclaimed Ellen, passionately striking one hand into the other, "if my strength were equal to my friendship I would drag you out of this wretched folly—I would! And I know you would live to thank me for it."

"You are prejudiced, unfair; you do not see as I see. If I marry at all, it must be as my heart dictates."

"So every youth thinks; but you will learn it is as easy to love one woman as another. In society you'd find forty more worthy of you than Carrie—better suited to your future than Carrie."

"I wish you would not say so. Carrie is all to me; and your dislike to her is unaccountable, especially in view of your near relation to her."

"I do not dislike her; I think only of your welfare. I am Carrie's guardian, and absolutely that is my whole tie to her or to her father. I've seen my brother too little, know him and his life too slightly, to feel for him or his, half the interest I do for my friend. You, George, are nearer to me than any relative I have. I want to see

you happy, successful, great. It is plain to me that Carrie will not help you to either of those three things."

"She would make me happy."

"For the honeymoon," said Ellen contemptuously. "But come, I must talk to you more about this—a great deal more. Let us walk down to the river and sit under the walnuts. It is your favorite spot."

The youth complied, but went frowning and silent. They walked down through the garden paths and the orchard to the river bank. There was a rustic bench under the walnuts, and Ellen seated herself, making room for her companion. The moody gentleman, however, only bowed his thanks, and remained standing.

"Don't be sullen, George. Sit down here like old times. Think of our friendship, and hold fast to it."

"I do think of it—with pain and wonder," answered George reproachfully.

"George! George!" cried Ellen, "can't I make you see all that I mean, think, hope, plan for you? Can't I make you believe in a friendship like mine? At this moment I would sacrifice more for you than twenty lovers would. When I first saw you, a modest, bright-eyed, blushing, handsome boy, I perceived the fine material you were made of. My heart warmed to you, for I love great destinies. I dreamed about you. It was delightful to think of all you were to achieve—all I could aid you to achieve; and of the splendid friendship, the noble, frank, undying friendship you and I were to feel. And now I am afraid I was a fool. Undying? It is dying now."

"The fault is not mine."

"It is dying at this moment because I am faithful to that friendship—faithful when faith is sternly trying me. Compliance is always easy. The most honest opposition makes contention and bitterness. If I only considered my own ease and peace of mind, or if I were young, inexperienced, and incapable of seeing your danger, I should in the one case be silent through policy, and in the other silent through ignorance. But I am neither politic nor ignorant. I know, and I am frank. I have experience to guide me; precedents to guide me; knowledge of the world and human nature—knowledge of love and matrimony—knowledge of a young man's fancies—all these to guide me. And my friendship will not let me rest until my knowledge serves you. I could not hold my tongue, if I knew

that after to-day I should never look in your face again."

George, still silent, with his shoulder half turned toward Ellen, sat down irresolutely upon the seat, but with his face averted, his elbow upon his knee, and his brow upon his hand.

"But with all this I know and feel," resumed Ellen, after intently watching him for some moments, "that I have been too impatient and impulsive. Now, with more calmness, but not with less interest, I ask you to take time. I ask you to think well—to know yourself and Carrie—to be sure your heart demands this sacrifice."

"Sacrifice!" said George, looking up quickly; "I insist that you shall not use that word. I owe so much to you, and I am so young, I do not hesitate to promise to wait. But do not call a marriage with Carrie a sacrifice."

"If I were prudent and wise now," replied Ellen, impetuously, "I would hold my tongue. But how can I? Not a sacrifice? George, it breaks my heart to think what a sacrifice it is. I meant you to marry so splendidly—worthy of your talents, your gifts for society, your career. I hoped to see you united to a woman who could fitly fill the social rank you will attain—whom you would be proud to show to your great compeers. Carrie, is not this. She is no match for you in any form."

Again the youth bent forward and leaned his brow upon his hand. As he did so a movement behind caught the ear of Ellen, and quickly, while a hot flash mounted in her cheeks, and her lips grew nervously compressed, she cast one glance backward, and spoke hurriedly:

"Carrie's unfitness is indeed apparent. Do not blame me if I point it out, *when you see it as well as I do.*"

There was a cry, smothered but abrupt, and both jumped to their feet. Not ten yards distant was Carrie, leaning almost breathless against a tree. George sprang forward as if to catch her, but she hastily recovered herself, and before he reached her, was running swiftly up the orchard slope.

"Ellen," exclaimed the distracted lover.

"It's done," said Ellen, steadying herself against the back of the bench.

"What's done?"

"Carrie never forgives."

"What do you mean? he exclaimed, grinding his heel in the sod; "what must she forgive?"

"She doubts your belief in her fitness for this marriage—she doubts her fitness, now, herself."

"But I do not doubt it. And you have been tampering with her. By Heaven, Ellen, if you ever whispered such a word to her I'll never speak to you again."

"I tell you," said Ellen, pallid, but sternly, "through all things I am your friend."

"My friend!"

"Such a friend," said Ellen, with passionate intensity, "as will save you from tumbling down a precipice."

"You cannot be my friend unless you love Carrie. I will never hear another whisper against her! Never! never! You hate her and you wrong her. You do not understand her."

"Where are you going?"

"To find Carrie."

He rushed angrily away heedless of the cry that followed him.

CHAPTER XII.

CARRIE, locked in her chamber, struck dumb and white before her great sorrow, lies stretched upon the floor, with her face upon her arms in a chair. Who can measure, what can express, her turbulent and passionate flow of grief? To be accounted beneath her hero—to be esteemed by him unworthy that bright destiny and lofty happiness she had dreamed of, was pain too acute and exquisite for thought. Unworthy! That was the word. Ellen had spoken it, but he assented; henceforward, then, her hero was lost—her own peace and happiness lost too; the great joy in her heart must be extinguished; she must cease to aspire, to hope, to love. And yet how she had worshipped him afar. To her imagination he had been all compact and aglow with grace and spirit. Her fancy had fed upon his bright smiles, his fine, graceful ways, his shapely figure, his air of freshness, youth, and nobleness; his frank, open, infectious beauty. His eyes had haunted her to sleep many times. His looks and words followed her always, and at all silent times made food for revery.

And yet so little had ever been said. The love had grown up in the young girl's heart through her imagination; she had listened to his noble talk with Ellen; she, too, better even than Ellen, perhaps, had entered into his aspirations and listened with thrilled heart to those eloquent picturings of his great to-come. Listening only, though. Not like Ellen with a hundred pat and excellent things to say; with rich combs of praise in her bosom, not a word of the honey could come to the lips. She wished sometimes that she, too, could win those eloquent thanks of his eyes; and yet his eyes—she knew it with fluttering and great depths of disturbed pleasure—did flash upon her eager, searching, admiring, and courting admiration. Perhaps, she thought, he understands me, even if I cannot speak; and one day—that recent day—she discovered, indeed, how well he understood her. Although her daily companion, he had always been a far-off star. He was a hero—she could not get near him; light, gay, pleasant, familiar to Ellen, he had never been so to her. He was as silent as she if they came together alone. The hero blushed, and talked such stray, bald, disjointed nothings! He could not even smile then, and the inmost heart of girlhood, embarrassed, too, did not know the reason why. Her imagination had been filled with the presence, the color, and the tone of this splendid youth; and it had seemed as if her future must blend with the tints and take up some of the glories of his. It had been a vague but rich sweetness about the heart; a silent, nameless content. Then came his words on that memorable day—then she knew a thousand dazzling, brilliant hopes—too great for measurement, too complete for words.

But scarcely felt—scarcely done hearing his words in her ear—not done repeating them, when a great dread and bitterness and shame came upon her. Ellen's sharp words and angry eyes made guilt out of her innocent rapture; in the very midst and fullness of her new joy an arrow came like lightning out of sunshine, and she stood pierced and in anguish. Whence came the blow she could scarcely tell. It was in something that Ellen said, but more in what Ellen looked. It struck home to her conscience and her peace; it filled her with a sense of guilt and offence; it stained her joy; it stamped this long history of secret pleasure with sin. Ellen made it to appear so. An imagination, even, that could occupy itself at all with the graces

or fascinations of a lad, looked monstrous. It excited Ellen's indignation, who stung her with reproachful words, and shamed her with cruel accusations.

"In my time," she said, "girls were modest, and did not dare to love in secret. But you, under my care, must be guilty of the shameful thing. Such a child, too. Beginning so young—with eyes upon the first man you meet. I trusted you. I believed in you. I never forbade your intimacy with George, because I never suspected you——"

"Don't! don't!" cried Carrie, whose face was white with pallid shame.

And so more; hinting, too, at the poor girl's unworthiness, and at her little fitness for the ambitious youth; mingling much counsel with her censure; acting the stern, virtuous, implacable Mentor; making nature itself look dark by giving virtue its severest aspect; and causing her epithets to tingle and sting the more by magnanimously descending to tender reproaches and pathetic appeals.

Those words from Ellen to George appalled her, because it was her lover who listened, and seemed to sanction them. She had heard them before. "George," Ellen had said, "may admire your youth and beauty, but he can never live happily with any but a brilliant woman. You are not for him. It is a fancy of his that will not last."

It was true, then, she thought. Not only Ellen said so, but George thought so. He was on the hill-tops, far above her, and her path lay along the vale. That great joy she had known for a few short hours was gone, never to return. She must yield him up. She must not consent to marry a man who half dreaded her inferiority, and half suspected its effect upon his happiness. Life now seemed harsh, bitter, and full of suffering. Had she but known this stern truth before they met there by the river, he to speak his rare words and she to listen to the hopeful music, then the half-acknowledged hope, never lifted up to see the glory before it, would have sunk slowly and silently away into the depths of her nature, toning and coloring it somewhat, but doing no violent wrong to her heart. But now, when the sun had shone and she had felt its warmth, to sink back again into the shade was bitter. Unworthy of this gay, pleasant, bright-eyed, noble youth! This so stung her with speechless but passionate grief, that she shivered and wildly struck at her bosom.

There were no words and but little show of passion.

Earnest and silent always, her heart took up its happiness and its sorrows, and held them in depths so great one could rarely see or read them. But now she lay with her face buried in her arms, while from her eyes, shut and screened, welled hot tears. She lay for many long hushed minutes, and only arose at a knock upon the door.

She unlocked the door, and quickly put up her hands before her face, as if to avert something as Ellen entered. But to her surprise, her aunt put her hands affectionately upon her shoulder, and then drew her in a close embrace.

"Have courage," she whispered.

But Carrie gently freed herself, and stood up firmly and calmly.

"Ellen," said she, "what have you done?"

"Nothing, Carrie. I would have prevented this unhappy termination to your unwise dream if I had had the power. I cannot control circumstances; I cannot make things fall orderly and properly. You have both been foolish; you both will be happy again."

"How?"

"Forgetfulness—time—new scenes and hopes. These will do it."

"Then——"

Ellen opened her eyes upon her in a wide, reproachful stare.

"It cannot be that you still think of him."

"Ellen," exclaimed Carrie, breaking through her reserve, "does he think me beneath him? Am I beneath him? Am I, indeed, so unfit to be his—so entirely unlike the one a man like him should marry?"

"It would never do—never, Carrie. He could not understand you—is as unsuited to you as you to him. Domestic life is not for him—it is everything for you. He must be in the world where all is struggle, effort, the life of strong faculties, where the bond between man and woman must be of the intellect and the aspirations."

Carrie struck her hands upon her breast, and struggled with the intense but speechless passion. How could she make clear all her emotions stirred by Ellen's language! how reveal the one desire to be absorbed in his career. It seemed to her simple mind that she might ascend or go anywhere with him. She asked only room at his feet to kneel. Great men needed those to follow, to watch, to praise; her heart went out to a career like this. When

girlhood loves, she lays down her life to be taken up by the lover and carried onward. What more could she yield? In what was she unequal?

"It is pitiful to see you so," said Ellen, watching this passion in her face.

Carrie, stung by this, flushed, and then grew painfully pale.

"I ask," she exclaimed, grasping Ellen's hands, "are your suspicions true? Is he shaken because I'm childish, weak, inferior?"

"Carrie, there should be a better match for each of you. He cannot fail to know it. And you have pride, I know."

"You denied it before. You said so many cruel things about my boldness, my immodesty."

"Forgive me, Carrie," said Ellen, tenderly folding the girl to her bosom. "I was irritated and unjust. But you have pride. You will not let him keep his word against his secret wishes."

"No," said the girl, and pressed her hand hard upon her heart.

"And, besides——" Ellen hesitated, walked across the floor and back, flushed and frowning, and then came up to Carrie again, taking her hands.

"Carrie, you are Harold's sister."

The poor girl did not understand. She looked up at Ellen, expecting further explanation, and partially read the horror of her meaning in her eyes.

"It would be so wrong," whispered Ellen.

Carrie still shrunk from her meaning, and tried to battle it away.

"Because Harold——" said she, looking into Ellen's face with a desperate hope that her suspicion of Ellen's meaning was not true. But Ellen answered with a look, and a deadly sickness came into Carrie's heart.

"Help!" shrieked Ellen, catching the falling girl, and, resting her head upon the floor, rushed to the stair. Mr. Sanford came rapidly up.

"What does it mean?" said he, sternly, as he lifted his senseless daughter in his arms.

"It is a fright," said Ellen, and hastened for restoratives.

Carrie revived quickly, and when recovered, Ellen left her with her father and went to her own chamber. Within the room, she locked the door, drew the curtains, looked stealthily around as if fearing some curious, intru-

sive eyes, and then stood looking at her face in the mirror—stood looking at it calmly for many seconds, when suddenly the great inward, upheaving passion leaped up, rampant, frantic, overbearing all restraint, turbulent and vehement as the sea. She struck her fingers in her palm, struck her hand upon her brow, lashed herself with blows and words, heaping hot, scorching epithets upon herself without stint or mercy.

"I am not myself," she cried. "I was honest once, and true, and just, and merciful. I don't know what it means. I don't know my own deeds. I cannot believe my own thoughts."

Up and down the floor, round the room like some wild thing in its lair; before the mirror, bitter and stinging and scornful; at last, with spent passion, in a chair, rocking to and fro.

But suddenly, while hissing contempt and bitterness on herself she pauses—gasps—shrinks—and feverishly sweeps the hair back from her brow. Then up and down the floor again, with another expression in her face—a puzzled, curious, wondering, half mirthful look. "I am a fool," she says, and drops into a chair, rocking again to and fro, rocking with a restless, fevered motion, half pleased, shrinking from her thought, but following her thought, in part subdued, and in part subduing her thought, until at last breaking into an involuntary hum, brooding and humming, frowning and smiling, the thought, startling at the beginning, grows more plausible and pleasing every moment under the swift, subtle logic of a woman's heart and will.

Tremble, Carrie! Tremble, George! Carrie, now, must be strong indeed in her youth, her beauty, and her love, for her charms have henceforward an unthought of rival.

CHAPTER XIII.

GEORGE, unable to find Carrie, rode homeward, and as soon as he arrived, shut himself up in moody silence in his room. But Betsy saw it all, and, full of anxiety, soon coaxed admission, and nestled at his side, to soothe, encourage, and comfort him.

"You may depend upon Carrie," said the hopeful girl; "she is true; she loves you; she will be yours if you only are true to her. Time will work it right."

The lover hoped, of course; but lovers like melancholy, and will sometimes hug a doubt as fondly as they hug their hopes. Betsy insisted he should not mope there alone, and promised him to see Carrie very shortly and invite the girl's confidence.

"No man," said she, with emphasis, "need have the least fear if he has only a sensible sister. A sister is the best manager in the world."

With this comforting assurance, she led him down to the piazza, where Mr. Bensley and Emma were enjoying the summer twilight. Mr. Bensley, in his commodious chair, luxuriously stretched his legs upon another, while his thoughts simmered over his pipe.

"Ah, there he comes," said he, as George approached; "these lovers always like to get over head and ears in the blues."

"What do you know about lovers, father?" retorted Betsy, pertly.

"Can I not be a lover? I'm only waiting for a chance to enter the lists. I'm not so old, and everybody knows I'm sprightly and sentimental."

"Sentimental!" cried both the daughters, with a burst of musical laughter.

And besides, if I am a little too old, I can throw in a little extra weight, and so make it even. I ought to be successful, for there is enough of me to make a dozen lovers like your Georges and your Harrys."

"Enough in years as well as in weight," said George.

"Don't scorn my years. What is fifty, pray? It is a nimble age, and a prudent time for a man to think of a young girl for a wife. Why, fifty just turns manhood. I am young, so I maintain, and now deliberately make up my mind to do it. I'll go to the first ball I hear of, and lead off the dances. And if there's a lass young and pretty enough for so sprightly a lad as"—

The sentence was unfinished in the general mirth.

"You ought not to talk so, father," said Emma, looking at him with smiling reproachfulness.

"There is a place in Africa, so they tell me," said Mr. Bensley, "where only the fat women are marketable—where love is expressed in cubic feet, and she is the pret-

tiest whose waist is the biggest. Who knows but fat men will come in fashion here? I hope for it at least. Don't we have fairs to show our biggest oxen? It wouldn't be bad to have an exhibition of our biggest lovers—the fattest prize to be decked in ribbons and rosettes, and led by the nose through the streets for all the girls to see him."

"Do be sensible, papa."

"If it is good sense to be a lover at twenty-five, it is twice as good sense to be a lover at fifty. I declare I'll send for a curling-tongs and pomatum, and begin. Keep your ringlets right and you can ring in a lass with the greatest ease. But perhaps I had better advertise:—'FOR SALE.—A young gentleman, lively in disposition, well broken to the harness, about fifteen stone in weight: can be seen for three days at the Hareton tavern.'"

Family wit is sometimes only wit in the family. The word that will set the house in a roar will often fall flatly on the general ear. Amid the merriment excited by Papa Bensley's humor, which was mirthful more from manner than matter, a step was heard upon the ground.

"It is Harry Elton," said George, and went down to meet him.

If Betsy, given to blushing, blushed now with a vividness the deepening shadows of the twilight partially concealed, we who can peer through all spaces, all substances, and all lights, can see the secret witness of her cheeks, and read by its brilliant tint a chapter in the volume she calls her heart. The blush rushed from cheek to brow, as the step comes nearer, and a light as brilliant burns in her eyes.

Harry Elton is a light-hearted, frank, blooming youth; the son of a neighboring farmer; educated above his class, and skilled not only in all the mysteries of the farm, but in all rural sports and healthful exercises. Dashing, brave, hearty, he is the best rider, the best shot, the best swimmer in the county; and Betsy may be excused if she thinks him, with the exception of her brother, the handsomest and the most agreeable of any in the county. He is a general favorite; and in that hearty love of open, active practical life, as opposed to sentiment, abstraction and ideas, he is well suited for Betsy.

New subjects arose with the new comer. Harry was no better talker than young men usually are who make animal spirits supply wit and idea. But Betsy liked to hear

his manly voice, and found abundance of pith in his sentences. In the midst of that gay chattering, Mr. Bensley glided into silence, from silence into sleep, and from sleep into a sonorous snoring, that brought Betsy to his ears. As he awoke and shook himself, Harry attempted to interest him in the county news.

"We are all curious, Mr. Bensley," said he, "about this strange lady in the valley. Have you seen her? She is a very strange, showy creature."

George pricked up his ears; Mr. Bensley scattered right and left the remains of sleep and listened.

"First she was here alone," resumed Harry; "but yesterday three or four gentlemen came up from the city, and such a gay time of it as they are having. Odd-looking chaps they are, too. I saw them all out riding this afternoon. A gay set, Mr. Bensley. I wonder who they are?"

"What is the lady's name?"

"No one seems to know," said Harry. "But the whole valley is talking about her, and like our people usually, getting mightily outraged. For my part I see no harm. She has got money, and lives a gay life. Who wouldn't?"

"We all know that Harry thinks differently from that," said Emma.

"For my part, I like gay people," retorted Betsy.

The talk ran on trippingly for some moments about this mysterious lady, and was just glancing off upon other subjects, when a distant clattering noise was heard. While all remained hushed to listen, it increased rapidly, and soon the rapid stroke of hoofs upon the ground, with the rushing clatter of a vehicle impelled at a frightful speed, indicated the nature of the interruption.

"There is a runaway!" burst from almost every mouth simultaneously; and, with the word and thought, both George and Harry rushed from the piazza, toward the road. The vehicle was now approaching with a speed that was appalling! Hoofs and wheels became mingled into one frantic and deafening whirl! The ladies, almost breathless, held their hearts with their hands. Mr. Bensley, with a speed nearly equal that of the younger men, dashed after them, and all three were in the road by the time the vehicle came up. There was a span of horses rushing on with a fury and maddened speed no human power could check. The carriage, at every leap of the horses, seemed to bound

into the air; on a rougher road it would have been dashed to pieces long before. There was nothing that could be done, yet all made a desperate effort to render their aid. They threw themselves into the road with unavailing resolution. The frantic steeds swept by them like the wind; and, as the carriage whirled by in dust and smoke, they could see it was occupied by figures crouching in the bottom.

George and Harry saw this, and with a common impulse darted after the carriage. Aid, it was too certain, would soon be needed, and the young men involuntarily uttered a prayer for those in this terrible peril. A short distance from the house the road made a steep and rather long ascent, and by the time they were half-way up, the partially spent horses began to abate something of their frenzied speed. The road near the top of the ascent made an abrupt curve; and, before the carriage reached this spot, George foresaw the moment of the catastrophe. It proved as he surmised, and the climax came at a fortunate moment. The curve was reached with a speed essentially lessened, but the horses dashed around it at a sharp angle; the carriage flew wide; the wheels struck against a rock on the opposite side; there was a crash; the carriage was shattered, and the inmates flung violently upon the ground. The horses dashed on, with only a remnant of the carriage at their heels; and in three minutes George and Harry were by the sufferers' sides.

There were two of them, a lady and a gentleman, and both lay senseless. As George lifted the lady in his arms, he saw it was the stranger of the road. Her face was cut and bleeding; and, as there was danger of broken limbs, it was necessary to lift her with the greatest care. He threw off his coat, spread it on the grass by the side of the road, gently placed her upon it, and with a few hastily gathered leaves made a pillow for her head. Scarcely was this accomplished, when he was startled by a voice of peculiar sharpness. It came from Harry's patient, whom that young gentleman, having satisfactorily discovered that no limbs were broken, had seated against a tree, and was vigorously rubbing into animation.

"Confound it!" said the voice. "Blast it! Hang it! What, the devil! Infernal furies! Where am I? Smashed in the traps? Tumbled out of the flies? Halloo! Blast those carpenters! Ecod!"

"Are you hurt, sir!"

"Hurt! Not a limb left! nor a bone! nor a muscle! nor a nerve! nor a cartilage! Where the dence am I? Where's Lucie? Did those confounded beasts run away? Take care! Ecod! don't do that! Your hand is a nutmeg grater! Where's Lucie, eh? Blast it, I'm a jelly! I've been forty years in an apothecary's mortar!"

"Are any of your bones broken?" inquired Harry.

"Any broken? Any sound, you mean. Not one. I'm a fagot of splinters. My five senses are knocked into my boots. My tongue is so big I shall have to swallow it for room. Shall I lean on you? Where's Lucie? Dead or alive? Gad! I see you are a gentleman."

"The lady is seriously injured, I'm afraid," said Harry, offering his shoulder to the sufferer.

"Seriously!" exclaimed the stranger, stamping with one foot, then with the other, shaking his legs, feeling his arms, and otherwise testing the soundness and condition of his body; "of course! Did you ever have the earth give you a hit from the shoulder? Let her try, and you'll think it serious. Gad! never had such a stunner in my life before. Never! Mother Earth hits hard, believe it. She gives the prettiest box on the ears a man might wish to have. Great Heaven!" said he, suddenly seeing his companion stretched lifeless upon the ground, "she's dead! It can't be!"

He staggered, with weakness and pain, over to her side. George had brought water in the hollow of his hands and applied it to her brow, and was busy then chafing her temples and hands. But even while the stranger spoke there was a movement of her lips, and her bosom rose and fell.

"She lives!" cried all three at once.

The cry was echoed at a little distance; and Mr. Bensley, with Emma and Betsy, came hurriedly toward them.

"Ladies," said the stranger, and made an attempt to lift his hat. He was greatly disconcerted to find no hat to lift. He went about, limping and muttering, in search of it, while the young ladies hastened to the other sufferer. She was reviving, but there was fear of broken limbs. The ladies soon declared that, although badly bruised and cut, no bones appeared to be broken. But she could not walk, and the young men prepared to carry her. They

lifted her up carefully, each arm was placed upon their shoulders, and, with Betsy and Emma to aid and guide them, they started off.

The stranger having found his hat, which was rent with a wide, cruel rent, followed them, groaning and swearing, by Mr. Bensley's side. He was a slightly-built man, with a very nervous manner, a pleasing face, a high, glittering, white brow, bald head, keen, restless, gray eyes, and a manner sharp and impulsive.

"Where can the horses be?" said Mr. Bensley, with natural solicitude.

"Confound them," was the vehement rejoinder. "May they run out of their own carcasses! May they run themselves into nothing but tails!"

This comical climax set Mr. Bensley's sides shaking.

"But you had a driver?" said he.

"Yes. May the fellow have the fate of Mazeppa! May he whisk at the end of the devil's tail for ever. The dunce must drop his whip. Down from his box, of course, to get his whip. Then the incorrigible ass snaps his whip at a bird in the bush. The horses are spirited. Oats, I'm told, are inspiriting. A good-for-nothing beast that is frightened at every shadow; a malignant brute that whips you over his head; a confounded donkey, that tumbles you over a precipice at a puff of wind, is sure to be called spirited. Hang such spirit. Spirit means stand to your colors! So I think. Well, the quadrupeds start, jump, run—ye gods! We beat the comet; we outran the north wind. And here I am with every bit of my anatomy shaken into the wrong place. Every bone is wrong end up. Every muscle is wrong side out."

"After all, it was a fortunate escape."

"I suppose so. But I never could relish one hurt because it wasn't two. Is this your house, sir? 'Pon my soul, a pretty place. But never could abide the country. Don't know what it's for. Nice in the ballet—country girls in the ballet have pretty ankles—and look demnition nice, as Mantalini would say. Your pardon, sir. Broom is my name. John Broom. Jack Broom—perhaps you know me, sir."

Mr. Bensley protested he did not. "Ten years ago," said he, "I knew the town, but now I vegetate, and never get above cabbages."

"Don't know the Brooms, eh? Ah, we are nothing but

whisks, sir. It took the old ones for a clean piece of business. Ah, the palmy days!"

They had reached the gate with the still partly insensible sufferer, when a man came running breathlessly along the road. With a cry of apprehension, he hurried up to the group.

"Is she dead?" he asked, in accents full of horror.

"Halloa!" exclaimed Mr. Broom. "There you are, William, eh? Bad luck to you, William! Scamper for a doctor, you villain, as fast as you can. And look! Stop on your way back and inquire for a hangman. Tell him your friends bestow a fancy tie upon you as a reward of merit."

"Let us see," said Mr. Bensley, "whether a doctor is needed. This is the coachman, is it? I think, William, if you hunt up the horses we can take care of the wounded."

"Find the horses," roared Mr. Broom after Master William, who was hastening to obey the suggestion of Mr. Bensley, "and then all hang together! or drown together! or smash up somehow together! Oblige us, now, will you, William?"

They entered the house, Mr. Broom muttering maledictions on William and the horses. George and Harry carried the wounded lady to an apartment, and leaving her with the ladies, returned to the parlor, where Mr. Broom had ensconced himself in a chair before the mirror, and was pathetically bewailing the condition of his physiognomy.

"Slashed like new livery," said he, mournfully. "What shall I do? I do believe my nose is safe. Thank Heaven for my nose. But look at those cheek bones! and that lip! There are four-and-forty walnuts on my head. And look at my eyes: I hang my colors on the outward walls, eh? They'll swear somebody stood me up for a tenpin, and bowled at me. No comedy now for a month. I can't laugh, excepting with a horrid twist, like a corkscrew. I might take to sour uncles."

"Mr. Broom," said Mr. Bensley, interrupting him, "of course you'll stay with us to-night. You are too much injured to return before morning. But will your friends feel uneasy?"

"Gad! I suppose they will. But I thank you, and wish telegraphs were a portable article."

George offered to ride over and acquaint the household with the disaster.

"'Pon my soul," said he, "I oughtn't to ask it; but what shall I do? Unless, indeed, that scoundrel William reports himself here before he returns. Perhaps he will. Jupiter!"

He stopped abruptly, and with effort gained his feet, as Betsy came into the room.

"Your daughter, sir?" said he to Mr. Bensley.

"My daughter, Betsy."

"Not Miss ——" said he, inquiringly.

Mr. Bensley saw he had neglected to give his own name, and hastened to do so.

"Miss Delville is doing well, I hope," said Mr. Broom, to Betsy.

Betsy replied that Miss Delville was now entirely conscious, and apparently not seriously injured.

Mr. Broom bowed, smiled, showing very white teeth, and thanked her with a great flourish of manner. At the same moment, there was a knock at the hall-door. It proved to be the coachman. He came to report he had found the horses about a mile distant, having dashed themselves into a farmer's wagon that stood by the roadside. The carriage was entirely destroyed, the road being strewn for a long distance with the fragments. The horses were lamed and much cut.

Mr. Bensley offered his stables for the night, which the coachman appeared glad to accept. This being done, he was despatched to the lady's cottage.

"Tell Lockley and Black," said Mr. Broom, "that we are smashed and up for new parts. And my compliments to Mr. Lockley, if he is in good condition, would he give the bearer two dozen on my behalf?"

"It was an accident, Mr. Broom," said William, apologetically.

"An accident! Premeditated crime is respectable by the side of accidents. It looks like brains. But an accident—ruin a man out of sheer stupidity—spoil fame and fortune for a man from mere neglect—confound it, I say! I have no patience with accidents. I've had two compound fractures from accidents. I've been punched, tumbled, squeezed, dropped, flattened, battered, all from accidents—and never had a pin-prick from downright malice in my life! My respects to downright malice! Just cure yourself, my man, from these mere accidents, before the law

accidentally goes to breaking necks. Now, get out, will you! And come to-morrow—and be hanged!"

William bowed himself out with zealous alacrity, but Mr. Broom hurled epithets after him as long as he was within hearing. Then with a bland smile he begged the pardon of all present, and declared he was the most irritable and excitable man alive, and hoped his infirmity would be forgiven. Betsy withdrawing to join her sister, George offered to show Mr. Broom to an apartment. He went limping and muttering up the stairs after him, while Mr. Bensley, getting into his roomy chair, began vigorously to rub his ear.

"George," said he, when his son returned, "can you guess what odd fish these are?"

"I am puzzled, I confess," replied George.

Mr. Bensley put his finger by the side of his nose, puffed out his cheeks, gesticulated with considerable violence, and looked as comically wise as he could.

"Do you understand?" he asked.

The young man shook his head. Whereupon Mr. Bensley began laughing a long, low, silent laugh to himself, and made no further explanation.

CHAPTER XIV.

GEORGE departed for Hareton next morning too early to see his father's guests. He rode Tony over, explaining to Betsy that he would stable him in town, and ride him back some afternoon early in the week.

"I shall want to learn," he said, "how Miss Delville recovers from her accident; and I should like to see more of that eccentric Mr. Broom."

The eccentric Mr. Broom presented himself at the breakfast table pretty well court-plastered about the face, but otherwise in good condition, and in capital spirits. He was very profuse in his morning compliments to the ladies, and politely solicitous about Miss Delville. He rattled off at once about the accident, and kept his auditors in continual merriment by his comic delineations of the incident. His humor was very peculiar, and, to our country-bred ladies, both charming and fresh. He had an odd way of

patting and hugging himself; he continually alluded to "Jack Broom" with an affectionate familiarity that was delightful.

"I am glad, Mr. Broom," said Emma, "to find you are not seriously injured."

"There's nothing serious after all but a coffin," said Mr. Broom, applying himself with relish to his buttered roll and coffee. "As I have kept out of that I shall indulge in no tears. But, absolutely, it wasn't the most delectable thing. I feel as if I had been fired out of a cannon like a Sepoy. Confounded scoundrels were those Sepoys. Confounded cruel, that, making small grape of them. I feel, in fact, as if I had been put through a course of washboards, wringings, and the like, like any other foul linen. Poor Miss Delville, though. Teeth all right, I hope."

"I believe so, sir."

"Deuced lucky, that. Clever girl, Miss Delville. Confounded pity if she should be marred. Spoil her business dreadfully. Nothing internal, eh?"

"We think not."

"Plagued queer those internals. Beg your pardon, ladies. Always something wrong about them. Infernal rebels, always planning gunpowder plots, and in the end blowing us all up. Always something going on to blow people up. Confounded treacherous world. Who would have thought those horses would have run away? Most respectable looking beasts. But horse-flesh is always treacherous; it kicks, it runs, it bites, it whips you over its head, it tumbles you into the gutter."

"Perhaps horse-flesh," said Mr. Bensley, who took in the stranger's humor thoroughly at all points, "may complain of treachery. It puts faith in good drivers and guides."

"The greater fool. It might go off on a mad scamper on account of its misplaced confidence; but why must it kick, why must it bite? Historically speaking, however, it kicks by universal example. Kicking is the general employment. I'm told the brats kick at the first bit of daylight they get into—we all end by kicking the bucket—and keep alive and kicking just as long as we can manage it. What a delicious place!" he exclaimed, abruptly, rising and walking to the window. "Charming, noble, a perfect dream! Gad, the country isn't so bad, after all. Hang Broadway!"

He stood watching the scene for several seconds, through his eye-glasses, and then turned to the inmates, always speaking with a smile, and scattering bows and glances, and courtesies right and left.

"Beg your pardon, but this is really fine. Always thought rural felicity an invention of those d— fellows, the poets. Beg your pardon, but swearing is so natural. Don't think I could keep up my spirits if I didn't swear. Keeps off the blues wonderfully. Ladies, though, never swear. Wonderful! They are the only creatures who manage to be interesting without it."

"Have I not seen Miss Delville before?" inquired Mr. Bensley, who, although heartily enjoying his guest's odd and quizzical sayings, was exceedingly anxious to probe him as to the lady's history.

"Quite likely," said Mr. Broom, who had returned to his coffee and rolls. "Quite likely. She's a splendid creature. There has been nothing like her these many years."

"It was in Mobile, I think."

"Don't know. Never heard she had been south."

"You are Miss Delville's relative perhaps."

"Exceedingly close consanguinity. One of her ancestors married mine. His name was Adam."

"Only a friend, then."

"Beg your pardon. Only? In this world, where relations always fight, the word friend should not be stuck through with an *only*. But we all like Lucie; and so some of us came down to make a merry day of it."

"I hope I will not appear importunate," said Mr. Bensley, "if I inquire if you know anything of her early history?"

"Not a page. She came like a meteor. She dazzles and delights us all—history enough for any woman. As for early histories, they are apt to be birth, measles, whooping-cough, bread and butter, pantalets, long-frocks, and story-books."

"I'm sure that, ten years ago, I saw Miss Delville in Mobile," said Mr. Bensley, musingly.

"Are there so many years? Can anybody remember so long? I swear no further back than yesterday. If time and other imps conspire to make me old, they shall do it without my help. I shut eyes and ears to long memories. Confound the past! Let it hang up its fiddle. To-day is

the be-all. D——it—I beg your pardon—must swear to get an appetite—resolutely forget how to count, and you'll never find out you're old. Holloa!" said he, as voices from without reached, "may I miss my cues, but there is Lockley and Black. Going to town, of course, and, sweet creatures, have come to count our broken bones."

He limped briskly to the door; he was still a trifle lame from the accident; and went upon the piazza. In a farmer's wagon by the gate were his two friends, William acting as driver.

"Holloa!" exclaimed Mr. Broom, "to town, eh? Take my tears with you, will you? and tell the 'Institution' I'm shelved, and must stay out of the bill."

"One of Jack's lucky accidents," said one to the other, and both found cause for merriment in the remark. The speaker was very "loudly" dressed, in a showy scarf, a great flow of collar, a brown coat, a colored waistcoat of the most liberal figure, green gloves, and a white hat, low-crowned, wide-rimmed, jauntily set on one side of a great mass of curly and well pomatumed locks. His complexion was a dead sallow, his manner obtrusive, defiant, self-possessed. The other was garbed with similar independence, but in a faded, second-hand way, as if his splendors were worn in their wane only. Both looked harsh and ill in the sunlight. Mr. Jack Broom, dressed in better taste, and with a fresh look, appeared to possess some types in common with these men, but of a removed and higher character.

"Much hurt, Jack?" inquired the first speaker, intimating by a gesture that he referred to the lady.

"Never fear, Lockley," said Mr. Broom, who had walked down to the gate. "A little shaken, but she'll come out all the brighter as soon as she finds her bones again. Don't let the fire-flies buzz. She'll extinguish their wretched flames in good time. But you are off, eh? My love to them. And look out for those horses—their race is a nuisance. It ought to be suppressed by act of Congress."

"Now, don't be jealous, Jack. You hate horse-flesh because it draws so well."

"There," exclaimed Mr. Broom, apparently in a great rage, "at it again! Your old jokes. Confound you, I say. Blast it, Lockley, you pump the stalest beer. Such stupid old jokes that have been in every man's mouth. Mend your ways will you. Good-bye, though you don't

deserve it. As soon as my flesh is human, and my face gets out of court-plaster ——"

"Don't object to your face, Jack. It is in true court-dress."

"Confound you," exclaimed Mr. Broom, and flung his hat at the offending jester. With a boisterous laugh, the two gentlemen, for they claimed, if they were not entitled to, that title, shouted a good-bye, and were driven off, leaving their friend limping into the road after the impromptu missile.

Mr. Broom went humming back to the breakfast-room, and jocosely declared as he entered, that the accident was the most fortunate affair of his life, as it enabled him to exchange a prosy jaunt to the city with two troublesome fellows, for the most delightful society he had ever met.

After breakfast he wandered about the rooms, peering at the prints, the books, the papers, shooting out bright remarks right and left, breaking into childish petulances every moment, getting pleased and vexed by turns with the utmost unreserve. At one instant he smiled summer, at another he blew December. Not that his feelings, in fact, underwent these rapid changes. His imagination was of that quick, and his emotions of that irrepressible order, that what his intellect conceived his feelings responded to. He could not retort or indulge in any intellectual fence without all his passions volunteering a part in the controversy. This peculiarity gave pungency and heartiness to all he said, and sometimes was in danger of causing offence.

Emma and Betsy, little used to the oddities that are thrown up on the surface of city life, liked the stranger, although Emma shook her head, and was a little troubled about the propriety of the thing. Betsy never got so far as to moralize about it, and simply liked him without knowing why, or caring why.

Miss Delville, though much injured, declared to the young ladies that she could not consent to intrude upon their hospitality a single day. She begged her attendant, Julia, might be sent for, and insisted that she and William could manage to convey her to her cottage. The "girls," as Papa Bensley called them, remonstrated, and called in their father to join his protest to theirs.

"Mr. Bensley," said the lady, "your daughters are so very kind it would be a pleasure to me to accept their hos-

pitality, but it is evidently proper for me to return to my own house."

"My dear madam, it cannot now be done with comfort or safety. We ought to stipulate for three days, and I see by the young ladies' eyes they would like it longer. We humdrum people in the country get as much pleasure out of an accident as people in the city out of a play."

"I thank you, sir," said the lady, who was bolstered up in a large chair by the window; "but I have no right to impose on your goodness."

"Let me beg of you to postpone the thought of it, at least until to-morrow. A single day may do wonders for you."

"Let it be until to-morrow then; but Mr. Broom must not stay and trouble you. Would you be good enough to let him come in and see me?"

"Is Mr. Broom a relative, ma'am?" asked Mr. Bensley, very bluntly.

"No," said the lady, with unconcern; "a friend whom I like tolerably well. He is lively, and mirth is what we all want."

She spoke a little gloomily, and looked away out of the window. Betsy summoned Mr. Broom, and the rest withdrew. In ten minutes he came stamping and muttering out of the room.

"Devilish pretty upshot to a visit! Hang the country! A banged up face, and three days in solitude. That's the whole of it. Can't go to town—and nobody here, con-found it, to take cold julep with."

"Bless me," said Mr. Bensley, who, standing in the entry, heard these muttered sentences, "just be good enough to think of me as a capital fellow to take a julep with—in fact several of them. Never mind, Miss Delville—I specially invite you to stay with us."

"By St. George and the Dragon, I will! And you like juleps, know juleps; can mix juleps! EUREKA! I'm converted! Blessed is the country!"

The juleps did the business; and although Miss Delville frowned a little when she heard it, yet Betsy having assured her how well they all liked him, she made no further opposition.

Mr. Bensley relished his guest more and more as he obtained further glimpses into his character, and more varied evidence of his power to please. But Mr. Bensley, at the

same time, was bent upon knowing something about this mysterious Miss Delville. Jack Broom, the childish and impulsive, was good at fence, and skillfully thwarted all his host's attempts to pump him, and would tell nothing. The old gentleman, however, was determined to know more, if not through her friend, Jack Broom, then from the lady herself. That day he allowed to pass, but the next morning he found an excuse for entering the presence of the lady.

She received him with a splendid air. She had so far recovered from her accident that her fascinations and airs set upon her with their old power and grace.

Mr. Bensley, who was burly and bluff, and only knew how to walk directly up to a subject, hemmed a good deal in his guest's presence. But the lady talked very smilingly, and on every possible subject. She even surprised him by evincing no little knowledge of agriculture, and a decided taste for its many details.

"Bless me, Miss Delville," said he, "your knowledge is quite remarkable. You think like a man, and I can't quite make out—that is—will you pardon me if I refer a little to your early history?"

The lady slightly flushed, and leaned forward to reach her fan—an article by which the skillful woman advances, under cover of which she recedes, by which she directs, surveys, and coquettishly controls the situation—with her fan in hand the strange lady, watching her *vis-a-vis* over the top of it, nodded her readiness to listen.

"Ten years ago," said Mr. Bensley, after peering at the floor a moment—"ten years ago, Miss Delville, I was in Mobile."

"You!"

Mr. Bensley started, the accent was so sharp, and rung so suddenly upon his ear.

"I had been in the practice of spending every winter in the South," he resumed; "I was in mercantile life—member of a New York firm."

"Not always a farmer then," interrupted the lady, blandly, but still keeping her face perfectly screened by her fan. "I am not surprised. I should have judged from your manner that you had seen something of the world."

"Brown and rough enough now," Miss Delville. Well, I like it. When a man carries something over two hun-

dred avoirdupois, he likes his ease—and mine must be under my own fig-tree. But when I was in Mobile, ten years ago," continued Mr. Bensley, darting at his uppermost theme again, "I, as well as everybody, knew Mr. William Sanford."

The eyes flashed over the fan; the fan trembled even, but was determinedly held before the face. She did not speak, but looked at Mr. Bensley, expecting him to continue.

"Mr. Sanford was a good deal the talk of the town—a good deal—and so were his daughters."

"Daughters!" said the lady, breathlessly.

"I have a very good memory, Miss Delville, and recollect a face a long time when I have seen it under peculiar circumstances. Ten years has made a great difference in you, but"—

The fan was hurled with sudden violence across the room, and a white, frowning face confronted him.

"In me!" she passionately exclaimed; "it is not possible you knew me?"

He bowed an assent.

"Be sure!" she exclaimed. "It cannot be that my face, voice, manner, look, bear any resemblance to what they were ten years ago. I say they cannot. Between now and then rolls not ten years, but eternity."

"Ten years to the young are long, I know—to me they are so brief."

"To me a hundred. I deny nothing you say, yet I would if I dared. I do deny that past to myself daily—drive it from me—expel it, refuse my belief in it—why cannot I deny it to you? I do not know what your knowledge is; if it were complete, it would extenuate me, but being necessarily rumor, it, of course, condemns me."

"There is nothing in my knowledge that condemns—nothing, indeed, but the singular fact that Mr. Sanford's daughter then is not known as his daughter now."

"Do you mean me?"

"You were called his daughter."

"Impossible."

"I have not forgotten your face, Miss Delville, neither have I forgotten the facts."

"His daughter!" she cried, striking her hand frantically upon the arm of her chair—"his daughter! Go on. Tell the rest."

"There is nothing else to tell. Carrie Sanford is now said to be the gentleman's only daughter; and Carrie my son George affects, and it seems desirable that the honor of the family"—

He was interrupted by an outburst of laughter, loud, not merry—a laugh of bitter and sardonic humor. It was brief, and, recovering her calmness, the lady declared her nerves would not allow her to continue the subject to-day. Mr. Bensley rubbed his ear, and pursed his lips, and screwed up his eye-brows, and jingled the change in his pocket, and looked important, shrewd, knowing, perplexed, and in this complex state of mind bowed himself out.

"His daughter!" almost shrieked the lady when he had withdrawn, striking repeatedly and passionately the arm of her chair—"his daughter? I could tear him, beat him, kill him!"

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER the interview with Mr. Bensley, just related, Miss Delville insisted upon withdrawing at once to her own house. She imperatively silenced all remonstrances, and at the same time, politely expressed her regrets. But living there was now living with her early history, and that it was the business of her life to extinguish. Jack Broom muttered and swore and stamped, and had a thousand quaint regrets, but at last consented to go.

"I shall die, Solitude is the unbearable."

"I shall be there," said the lady.

"A brilliant woman, my dear. Very. When you are in spirits. But now you are out of spirits, and there will be nothing for me to do but hunt up John and whittle. John is a genius. John is a marvellous whittler. But shavings are neither good dinners, nor beauty, nor wit, nor wine, nor juleps—in fact, madam, they are dry and preposterously uninteresting."

"John is not so bad," said Miss Delville.

"John is my man," said Mr. Broom, in explanation to Mr. Bensley. "John is an astonishing youth. Strike a line perpendicularly from John's nose through the centre of his body. On the North side John is Yankee. On the

south side John is Irish. On all sides John is shrewd. On one side only John is honest, and that side it's deuced hard to get on. But farewell!" The demoiselle will have it—and I break my heart cheerfully."

Soon after Mr. Bensley's rockaway was brought up, and that gentleman himself drove his guests homeward. As they drove off and Mr. Broom stood up to wave adieu with his handkerchief, the young ladies were fain to confess a feeling of loneliness at their departure. Mr. Broom eccentric, and a little startling at times to their prejudices, was so impulsive and good-hearted, so child-like and amusing, that he had quite won their good wishes. Upon Mr. Bensley's return he rallied them into better spirits, and what loneliness remained was dissipated the next day by George Bensley, who had galloped over on Tony from Hareton.

George's surprise at finding the guests gone led to questions which resulted in Mr. Bensley's relation of his interview with Miss Delville.

"She cannot be his daughter, after all, George; but there is some villainous mystery somewhere. I never saw so much fury in a human face as there was in hers when I called her Mr. Sanford's daughter."

"I wish you would give me the particulars about that Mobile story," said George.

"It is short. I was in Mobile in December, 18—, when a man by the name of Sanford was conspicuous, speculating boldly with money somewhat mysteriously obtained. He was well known to the people there as an adventurer; his credit always poor and his purse empty; and the great dash he was suddenly making surprised them and aroused their distrust. He had once commanded a coasting vessel of some kind, but in recent years had shifted from one pursuit to another, sometimes going on trading voyages along the South American coast, and up the Mediterranean. He was not only suddenly possessed of large means, but was accompanied by two daughters, of whom no one before had heard. That, however, was not strange in an adventurer like him, who might have kept a family in any quarter of the globe he liked. He had formerly always been accompanied by a boy, half insane, but who, at that time, was away—at an asylum or at school. One of the daughters was a young woman singularly beautiful, who was often pointed out to me in public places. She was the

town talk. The other was a very little girl. The most absurd and extravagant stories prevailed about these girls—especially the elder, around whom was thrown enough mystery and romance to make a dozen novels. Suddenly, in the very midst of the general speculation, the elder daughter disappeared—abducted, eloped, murdered, or what not—everybody had his surmise and his suspicion. The whole affair was pretty well fixed in my mind, and now the mysterious young woman turns up. That she is the woman who passed for Mr. Sanford's daughter, she does not deny. More than that I did not learn."

"How is it, sir, that you never told this story before?"

"In the first place," said Mr. Bensley, "I wasn't quite sure of the parties; and, in the second place, the affair didn't seem relevant, as I thought it was the old maid, and not Carrie, Master George."

"Pshaw!" said George.

"Absurd!" said Betsy.

"Well," retorted Mr. Bensley, "I'll bet one of my white heifers the old maid knows a nice young man when she sees one."

And Mr. Bensley leaned back in his chair to enjoy this little bit of philosophy. Leaving him to chuckle over his wit, George went apart with Betsy to explain how he had squeezed a day out of old Twitt, and meant to ride over to the Sanfords to-morrow. He declared he was so tormented he could neither eat nor sleep, and until he saw Carrie and explained everything, Betsy might rest content in his being the most miserable mortal on earth. But if Ellen, he said, would only think reasonably of the matter and give her concurrence to his purpose, his happiness would be complete; and Twitt's law office would cease to be slow, and the widow Tilman's grammar and "pick-up-dinners" quite endurable. As for this Miss Delville she was a puzzle all round, but as she and Harold had met only recently for the first time, it was quite clear she was neither his sister nor any relative.

The result of all their talk was to put the lover in a hopeful mood, notwithstanding his declarations of misery; and he managed to sleep so soundly that night, that the sun was shining broadly in his window when he awoke.

After breakfast out came Tony, and he was soon galloping rapidly on his peace-making errand.

He found Ellen, as usual, in the sitting-room employed

in some light needle-work. Her back was toward the door, and as she heard and recognised his step her form quivered a little, and she folded herself tightly as if stung with pain. For a moment she took no notice of his presence.

"May I ask you where Carrie is?" said George, in a stately manner, for he was chilled by her silence.

"Of course, you may," replied she, lightly, affecting a laugh; "but I think you might first have thrown a word to Carrie's aunt."

"I am glad to see you, Miss Sanford."

"Throw away your stilts, George—throw them away. These airs are really not justified. I am your friend—you know I am. So be yourself. Carrie has gone to ride with her father."

"I must see her, and explain that scene of Sunday evening. Tell me, Ellen, has it made her unhappy?"

Ellen shrunk a little, and looked down closely into her work.

"Come and sit down by me, George."

He did so.

"Must it really be accepted that you love Carrie?"

"With all the strength of my heart."

"Of course, a young lover would say that. In the name of the future, your happiness, your hopes—do not—at least, try not."

"Is this why you ask me to come and sit by you?"

"No."

"Then why?"

"I will use no more entreaties. I will only speak facts. I will give you good and sound reasons."

"I do not want to hear them."

"Don't be so sharp with me, George. I tell you I cannot bear it. My friendship is as tender as love; it cannot bear your harshness. Now listen; think it is your mother that speaks, or your sister; think me old, dull, ignorant, but believe me sincere, and listen."

"I will try."

"Thank you for that much. I *must* speak, because there is one thing which to leave unsaid would be guilt; a terrible thing for you to hear—a painful one for me to utter."

"Go on, you hesitate."

"I do, but I must go on. There is danger, George, in marrying Harold's sister."

"Is she Harold's sister by the same mother? You did not know when we spoke of it before."

"I went to my brother and distinctly asked him, which I had never done before. You who have seen him can easily understand how that might be; a question of my brother's history is a bold thing to ask; although, as you are aware, I am not of the timid kind."

"Did he answer?"

"He did."

"I see the worst," the lover uttered with a blanched face. "But there is no good reason for fearing Harold's infirmity in Carrie. Even with Harold it is only an eccentricity."

Ellen shook her head.

"It is graver than you suppose. He cannot be trusted. In some way he will yet terrify us all."

The youth rose and walked the floor in great but silent agitation. Ellen watched him furtively, and at last, as with quivering lip he leaned his brow against the window-pane, she went up and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"The fear startles me, Ellen," said he, "but I go on. I tremble, but must go on. I cannot believe the horror to be possible; but if Carrie should become like her brother, I must defend, cherish, protect her."

"But not marry her."

"Yes."

"It would be a sin—a great sin."

"I try not to think so, for I must go on, and hope for the best."

"Even if my fears are unfounded you should not go on, George. Think! Let me sketch your future: you will perceive that you condemn yourself to wretchedness even if Carrie prove as sound in mind and body as we can hope. Sit down and listen."

"You will only repeat what you said before."

"I will risk the repetition, then. George, you are in love with Carrie's beauty. With nothing else. It is natural in youth—natural with men, perhaps, at all times. But beauty, especially in America, is so frail. When a woman is thirty-five, the fascinations which lurk in the round, glowing cheek, in the delicate figure, in the tender clear eyes—are gone. If she has a mind and soul, they will grow with time and more than compensate for the loss of beauty. Think, let me urge you, of your future;

think of those successes which must be yours, and what a friendship like mine could do for you then—animating you, applauding you, aiding you, walking by your side, understanding your genius, your powers, knowing what success is and what intellect is; think of a friendship like this which I offer you, and am capable of offering you, and then reflect upon a wife with beauty decayed, with spirits low, with intellect dull, tamely acquiescing in your successes—not a wife nor friend, in fact, but a cold looker-on while you are in the white-heat of struggle and triumph! George, yours is not a temperament that could tolerate a wife like that; as soon as the beauty was gone you would loathe her. You, with your fine impulses, your genius, your noble aspirations, must have a woman for your companion who could enter into your heart of hearts. Am I not right? If I can convince you that Carrie is”——

“Stop, Ellen,” exclaimed George, with profound feeling; “I love her. I am sure that if she lacks any of these things she will grow up to them; indeed, I think her nature is deeper than you give her credit for.”

“Women, George, never grow. Household cares keep them down. Even ambition before marriage often succumbs after it to the irksome duties, the dull, deadening responsibilities of the house. What I say I know.”

It is almost impossible to describe the peculiar influence Ellen always maintained over our hero. He had looked up to her; delighted in her; her praises had always been sweet, her companionship desirable. Between them had grown a unity of thought, purpose, tastes, inclinations, ambition, that to oppose or thwart her seemed to him almost treachery—seemed something false, dishonorable, unmanly. Those whom she liked, Ellen liked warmly. She had the tact to enter into their purposes; to make their wishes and aspirations her own. She wound herself thoroughly into all the net-work and meshes of their ambitions and hopes; she made others live in her because she possessed a sympathy which lived so largely in them.

But while friendship was perhaps enough for the woman of thirty-five, it was not enough for the youth of twenty-two. Beauty will assert its power; grace, girlish charms, guilelessness, fresh lips and cheeks—these have a mystery to boyhood; it is struck dumb before them. Ellen’s friendship might appear complete, yet the youth’s heart throbbed if Carrie’s voice fell upon his ear, or even if the hem of

her garment touched him. There is a magnetism in young womanhood which, by the eye, by the presence, by the voice, makes captive a young man’s fancy, and reaches down to great depths of passion which logic may battle against for all time and cannot subdue. One touch of fire in the blood will consume a ton of the best and soundest reasoning.

But unfortunately for George it was not all love against logic, or there would have been no struggle; love would have been victorious at the beginning. On the side of logic were marshalled many passions, weaknesses, vanities, self-loves; and when Ellen pricked and urged on these factions against Carrie, sketched a picture of that great future which he was to enjoy, and which a wife of a poor or ordinary character would endanger, the youth bent to the charge; love yielded and shook before the clamor and heat of passion so skillfully brought against it. A man whose self-love had been so industriously fanned as George Bensley’s, could scarcely fail to be under its dominion. Self had been the theme, and self-glory the hope, of his life. There was naturally a good deal of hearty and honest blood in him, or his training would have destroyed everything robust or manly in his nature. As it was, it filled his imagination with dreams, but his heart remained pure and honest. Fame and applause became necessary to his peace, and he was led to contemplate with aversion all lines of policy that did not lead to the fullness of his all-important hereafter. Hence Ellen’s whisperings alarmed his ambition, and struck through his selfish passions at the integrity of his love. A suspicion at moments arose that the silent, reserved, undemonstrative Carrie might fail to supply that hearty appreciation and sympathy which Ellen had taught him how to enjoy and how to expect. It was pleasant, sometimes, to think of a wife as Ellen pictured one; or rather to think of Carrie in such a light—the woman of sensibility who could labor with him, study with him, follow with him the paths which were to lead to those splendid heights where success was to mark and crown him.

The thought of a woman so complete could not fail to inspire and attract him; and yet, in his better moments, he perceived that such a marriage, however brilliant, lacked all the tenderness, all the subtle, delicate essences which surrounded and hallowed his love for Carrie. One

of his dreams was of the intellect, the other of feeling; in one was involved all the vanity, egotism, self-love, of one pampered and worshipped; the other leaped from the pure impulses of a heart at bottom sound and good.

Ellen's influence, always so great, he could not entirely escape. She labored to set vanity, his worst fault and a powerful passion, in opposition to his love. She was clear-headed; she read hearts, penetrated into motives, and could understand human nature, even in the guise of a lover. Love could never be talked out of him, she knew; even a fancy, however silly, would be more likely to be strengthened than destroyed, by mere argument. The only hope, therefore, was to kill one passion by another passion. She must inflame his ambition, and make self-love stronger than love. Every man likes to think himself a St. George—a hero and triumphant—likes to see himself in the lists, while plaudits ring and admiration speaks in the lusty cheers and lavished smiles. This passion for praise and success was intense in George; and to make him believe that the price of Carrie's hand were these same hopes and ambitions, seemed to promise to her a solution to her problem.

Not only to his passions, but to his principles, she appealed. Carrie, she showed him, might not only fail to be a wife suitable to his ambition, but a wife in whom there lurked a danger to himself and his children.

She had all the boldness and all the address to play out her game, and played it now with an ulterior purpose that every day assumed a more plausible and hopeful form. Up to the hour when George confessed his affection for Carrie, Ellen had never thought of him in any other way than as a promising youth, whom it was her pleasure to know and befriend. But now another thought was in the brain, which would not out. The intensity of her dislike to his marriage with Carrie was a surprise to herself. The busy brain of the woman, in planning his grand future, in dwelling with real delight upon his promised successes, had never taken full counsel of her heart, and never guessed some of her own secrets. As for loving George, in any proper sense of the word, she did not. She admired him with all the force of a vivid fancy; she gave up her imagination to him; she made him her pet and special property. Why she liked him, she neither inquired nor cared to inquire. If his marriage had been planned with

one she could sanction—for she honestly doubted Carrie's fitness for him—it would never have alarmed nor abated her friendship. But she liked him so well she could not tolerate the thought of being excluded from his sympathies; and to a woman like her the capital crime was to marry, or even love, without her concurrence. Hence, there now grew upon her, day by day, and hour by hour, a thought leading to an act which should unite his interests and sympathies with hers more closely than friendship—a thought which startled as much as it pleased her—repelled as well as attracted—stung into bitterness and rage at times, and at others allured and softened. It was an outgrowth of her disappointment, she knew—an offspring of the antagonisms excited by George's purpose. While she admired George Bensley, and at heart desired his welfare, it seemed as if some inner, unconscious bent, some latent, unconquerable desire, was forcing her into a current in which she had no purpose to flow. She was like one impelled by a force foreign to her own will; to be irresistibly swept by blind and unaccountable passions to say and do things which the better part of her nature abhorred.

So, during that long talk with George, she led him swiftly on, working toward the end which she had not yet fairly looked upon with open eyes, destroying his peace and breaking up foundations with no clear view, and yet with a vague hope, of what was to succeed. She talked with a nervous force that thrilled him; her eyes and tongue were on fire; he was led as much by the magnetism of her manner as by her matter. But her weapons were formidable. She beat down his love at all points; she depicted his obscurity and shame with a woman of sentiment only, and his glories with a woman of intellect; she filled him with a passionate zeal, by showing that life was only in what we win, and not in what we tamely enjoy. In fact, George, attacked many times before, was never so systematically besieged; and, at the end of the interview, we are ashamed to say, his love was overshadowed by passions which had been so stung and pricked into activity.

"Think better of it," said she. "Listen to your friend. Do not sell yourself to a childish dream."

His reply was a dishonorable pressure of the hand. Ellen knew that the pressure meant concession; and

scarcely had the door closed upon him, than she struck her hands together in an ecstasy of triumph.

And George, too, knew that it was concession. He walked through the hall, ashamed and guilty, with his head upon his breast.

As he reached the hall door, he heard steps without. He stepped back hastily as the door opened, admitting Mr. Sanford and Carrie. Mr. Sanford was agitated for some cause, and walked hastily past him with a slight nod of recognition. George, his face in a flame, stepped toward Carrie, and put out his hand. To his dismay, she only coldly bowed, and glided swiftly by him without a word or look. He stood stunned and silent for many seconds, and then blindly rushed from the house. All Ellen's arguments, all her appeals, her passion, her words, even, were driven utterly from his heart—his mind tumultuously busy only with the inexplicable mystery of Carrie's conduct.

As for the girl herself, she sped up the stairs more deadly white than any ghost. She flew frantically to her own room, but had scarcely entered ere Ellen followed.

"It was bravely done, dear Carrie," said she, tenderly folding her in her arms. "I saw it. It was necessary. You did nobly."

"Let me alone, please," cried Carrie wildly, forcing herself away from Ellen. "Don't touch me. Let me go—let me go!"

And hurrying again from her own room, she fled with passionate haste to another, and locked herself in. There nothing but the dead, blank walls, heard or saw her grief.

CHAPTER XVI.

SEVERAL days after the incident of the last chapter, George was wandering among the hills feverish and restless enough, clambering the rocks, leaping down wild gorges, rushing up precipitous ascents; running, leaping, walking, and urging himself into a physical excitement which would serve to overcome the intense depression of his spirits. In the very heart of the woods, and near a little mountain torrent that tumbled down through wildly picturesque clefts to the valley, he came suddenly upon

Harold. He was heated and breathless, and as young Bensley saw him he snapped his fingers in the air.

"Shadows," he exclaimed, abruptly, "that either pursue you like devils, or fly from you like angels. 'Pon my soul I do not know which."

"I don't understand you, Harold."

"Of course not. I get in clouds. Directness is a virtue the politicians are buying up for the millenium. There is none in the market for you or me."

"I can say what I mean," said George.

"Ten to one you can't."

"Done."

"Do you love Carrie Sanford?"

"I—I——"

"Now, I'm in luck. You cannot answer. But let me tell you something's wrong. All the women have taken to crying. Ellen frowns and Carrie weeps; then Ellen weeps and Carrie frowns. There is perpetually whimperings in the corner, and one or the other is sure to be in a headache or out of an appetite. I suppose it means love. George, get them right, if you can. Jupiter! I'm now a lover myself. See Benedick! See Orlando! See Romeo!"

"All in you?"

"Every part of them—and much more. I'm a lover with a sigh for every grain in my composition. I was in a fidget when you came up about a rhyme for a sonnet."

"Who is the lady?"

"Why, the lady of the adventure; and, by Jove! by an accident she was three days in your house. Think of it. But go with me to her. It is near. She is a woman to fascinate; her eye will transfix you on the spot defenceless. Come."

"Your account clearly proves it not to be safe," laughed George.

"Dangerous, boy, but only for me. She glitters, she coils, she plays her lambent colors, and I am the object. I see she wants to fascinate me, and I let her do it. I laugh and say the sensation is delicious, and I consent to be charmed—would consent to be charmed if I knew the fairy would flash into a witch before my very eyes. Why not? I am that mortal crushed among men to whom there is no hope. Any wild, cruel, bitter caprice of fortune can take nothing from a man who has already lost

everything. Therefore I am proof against evil; therefore I let my passions out like hounds, and they go scampering where they list. Lucifer can drop no lower than Lucifer."

The passionate despair with which these words were uttered thrilled the heart of their listener. It was the first time George had heard Harold allude to his infirmity, and awakened in him fresh pity by evincing the unhappy man's knowledge of his own condition.

"Come," continued Harold, "it's not a mile. I want you to know the charmer. She is a *rara-avis*; such gay plumage that one wonders to see in your dull skies—tropical, by Jupiter, flown to the frigid."

George made no further opposition, and they walked on together.

"She lives," explained Harold, "in a cottage built by a man who turned his back upon fashion and took counsel of his taste—a cottage dropped down among the trees, and there it sits as if it cropped out and grew inch by inch with the landscape."

The cottage was as Harold described. George knew it well. It was a part of a delightful little landscape picture, and seemed something *of* rather than *upon* the scene. They walked over the grass of the lawn to the cottage door, and were admitted by a smartly dressed young woman, who declared that Miss Delville was at home.

The lady was in the little parlor, reclining in a low, ample chair, dressed much quieter and with greater elegance than upon either of the occasions before when our hero had seen her. She bore some marks yet of the accident, but a skilful *toilette* in part concealed them, and the two or three bits of court-plaster on the face only gave brilliancy to her complexion. The room where she was seated, although the cottage was but temporarily occupied, was furnished with great taste; the colors harmonious; upon the walls a few cabinet pictures, mostly subjects of quaint character; the windows richly curtained; the light mellowed; the objects about the apartment arranged with a skill that gave great finish and attractiveness to the scene.

The lady only partially rose as they entered, and then sunk back luxuriously in her chair. She had an open book in one hand, and in the other a small ivory folder, with which she had been lazily cutting the leaves as she read.

"Now, Harold," said she, in her bright, vivid, yet per-

fect manner, "this is something, indeed, to thank you for. I've met Mr. Bensley twice before, and am so indebted to him that I shall never cease to reward your kindness in bringing him to me."

"Reward me, but never think of rewarding George. I forestall everything, and will consent to your yielding him the crumbs only of your praise. Like him too much and I pledge my honor to drop him off one of the precipices on these hills. There he is; I warn you; I watch you; I'm a jealous friend, remember."

"I will not reward Mr. Bensley," said the lady, "because we women of the world like always to be in debt; it keeps our creditors near us."

"How shall I get you in debt?" said Harold.

"Let me have my own way to like Mr. Bensley or any one else I please. You see, sir, I have not yet recovered from that terrible accident. And Mr. Broom, would you believe it, limps yet. He went down to town, but hurried back, and declared his wounds wouldn't heal in a month."

"Yes, my dear," said the voice of Mr. Broom, in the door; "the doctor prescribed clover and ease—the clover is here, but there is no ease where your wicked spirits are. Mr. Bensley, I'm delighted. Mr. Sanford, I salute. Mr. Bensley, hang me, I want to call upon your charming sisters."

"Forbid him," said Miss Delville.

"Don't be so confoundedly jealous," exclaimed Mr. Broom. "I like you, Lucie, but don't be jealous, you see."

"Jealous!" retorted the lady. "I long night and day for some princess to come and whip you off. I'm tired of you, Broom. Mr. Bensley, I can't make out Harold, here, his tongue is sometimes so wild. Is he a poet?"

"I never heard him rhyme."

"Jingling and jangling," exclaimed Mr. Broom. "Confound them! Poetry is wholesale slaughter of sense nine times out of ten."

"Never mind the sense," replied Harold. "One reads poetry for the melody—for a sensuous rapture, which may linger in words that are strung together without an idea."

"Mr. Sanford is a poet, I'm sure," said Miss Delville; "but he is only fanciful—we may hunt and find no heart."

"His road is the easiest," said Harold, "whose heart is the lightest. Feeling weighs down the journey. Let every man's heart be like a coping-stone, against which all

things beat and roll off. A heart is a good thing to keep stored in lavender. For me, I carry two grains of feeling and forty of philosophy. Give me wit and words. If a man can dance the dance of talk; if he can flourish in pretty sentences; if he can run up and down the whole fantastic gamut of expression—then he is armed; he bristles; he has got the fairy's purse, and can empty alms and solace and sympathy all day long. A man who talks is better than Achilles—he is vulnerable nowhere."

"Confound it," exclaimed Mr. Broom, with great liveliness, that's all sophistry. A man who talks is always open; it is your silent donkey who has the Achilles' armor. Come, now, isn't it so? Talking, though, is capital, but none of your philosophy. Smart, quick chat, eh, Lucie, and no philosophy, hang it."

"Oh," replied the lady, "I like a good many dishes. I've heard you talk, Jack, for a year—Harold's is the new thing. Besides, you swear so, and that is horrible."

"But, confound it," interrupted Mr. Broom, "I like feeling, I do. Swearing is only a way of being sentimental. A pleasant thing always charms out an oath—that is why I swear, my dear, when you are by."

"You incorrigible flatterer. Why, you are always at your oaths."

"Because I never forget you, you see. My heart is always bubbling up to my lips. But excuse my delightful company, will you? My man John says I must take exercise. I always obey John. That's what I hire him for. 'Unless you are a despotic fellow,' said I, 'and bring me up to the mark sharply, I will discharge you on the first offence.' And he does. Hence, I go."

Shaking adieus with his hand, Mr. Broom went in search of the marvellous John.

"Mr. Broom," said the lady, bending her eyes upon Harold, "is a dear old friend. I like old friends—those whose hearts are mine because mine is theirs."

"Hearts again!" exclaimed Harold, who remained standing, leaning against the mantel; "your most gracious highness plays only the one suit. Lead something else. I cannot follow—my hand is without the article."

"Ah, Harold," sighed the lady, "this is foolish pretence. You do like hearts, and you like Jack Broom because"—

"Most positively I do not," interrupted Harold, with

some irritation. "Mr. Broom is forever getting up attitudes about feeling and heart; he rings them in every man's ear; he goes about proclaiming, with trumpet and drum, what a marvellous sensitive and feeling fellow he is. I don't believe it. He is an actor."

"Mr. Broom is pleasing and true," replied Miss Delville. "Let me convince you it is so, for I know him well. Harold—Mr. Bensley," said she, turning as if with a sudden recollection of his presence, "has been making me a great many promises he will be my friend, and seems to think I can have but one. Is he right? and can I trust him?"

"Mr. Sanford's son is, no doubt, entitled to the privilege," replied George, quietly, and with his eye fixed closely upon her face. Her lips parted in a cold white smile, as she turned an inquiring glance upon him. "Mr. Sanford is your old friend, I believe?"

"Mr. Sanford," said the lady, with an expression of awakened interest, and turning toward Harold, who had sauntered to a remote end of the room, asked, "Are you, Harold, the son of Mr. Sanford of Mobile?"

"Yes," he replied, quickly and bluntly.

"This is a new delight," said she, leaning forward, with a smile upon her lips, but with a cold shadow creeping into her eyes, which, admirable actress as she was, she could not entirely prevent. "Many years ago, Harold, I met your father," she continued, addressing him with studied care, as she had done during the entire interview, by his first name, "but I am afraid he would hardly know me now. But I should recollect him if the time were many times as long."

George was amazed at the cool duplicity of all this—the pretended discovery of Harold's relation to Mr. Sanford, the affected ignorance of his presence in the valley with Harold, and the calm pretext of friendship.

"I am really delighted," said Harold, who was unaffectedly pleased at the discovery. "I shall bring my father to you at once."

Miss Delville slowly sank back in her chair, lifted a feathered fan which lay in her lap, and fanned her cheek with an easy, delicate, graceful movement.

"I would be gratified to meet Mr. Sanford," said she, slowly, uttering a word for every movement of the fan, "but I fear his recollections of me are not as distinct as

mine of him. And although I have lived with the hope of meeting and thanking him for several services he then rendered me, yet the time is so long, I was then so young, that—you know, gentlemen, women must have their fears and their caprices—that, really, I hope you will understand—I—”

She paused and hesitated in a pleasing perplexity—in a pleasing perplexity, with a fascinating smile upon her lips, but every word seemed to George to have a latent, deadly hatred in it—the utterance was so cool, so distinct, so low, so full of compressed and hidden meaning.

“I shrink from meeting your father, Harold,” she resumed, “because a little affair which took possession of the girl’s imagination may have made no impression upon him, and I should so dislike to find I was forgotten.”

“You mean,” said Harold, that “I must not bring him”

“Not now, if you can consent to be governed by my whims; and, indeed, if for the present you will say nothing of your knowledge of me, or speak even of my presence in the valley, perhaps some day we shall meet accidentally, and, if I am not forgotten, there will be a pleasant surprise; and if forgotten, I shall not then be able to escape the disagreeable fact.”

So frankly, and candidly, and sweetly said, so softly persuasive, so delicate, and sensitive, and reserved, with such smiles, and blushes, and downcast eyes, what man born of woman could resist her? Harold was charmed, and ready to comply with anything.

“Believe me,” said he, with his graceful courtesy, “I know your caprices, as you call them, and respect them as your virtues.”

“That is so kind. Now let me put you to a little service. Please touch that bell. Thank you. I must apologise for my neglect; I should have remembered before that you are fatigued and need refreshments.”

The servant entered, and wine and biscuit were ordered.

“While the refreshments are preparing, Harold, do you go and pluck me a bouquet. Let Mr. Bensley remain; I want to say a pleasant word to him which would make you intolerably jealous to overhear.”

“Banished!” exclaimed Harold. “I go in grief, and hate George from this time forth.”

He threw up the window and leaped out upon the grass, and went to the task, humming and snapping his fingers.

“Oh, madam!” exclaimed George, impetuously, the moment Harold was gone, “think of your relation to Harold’s father”——

She stopped him with an imperative and angry “Sir!”

“Your father, Mr. Bensley,” she resumed, softening, “knows something of my history—how much or how little, how far true or how far false, I do not know nor inquire. I have no proof to offer nor statements to make, excepting this: I have been sinned against much more than I have sinned. I ask you to believe this—you and your father to believe it—and to afford me the only rescue I have from misrepresentation and calumny—oblivion. Silence on your part saves me.”

“But, madam, you are here in the vicinity of Mr. Sanford—you cultivate his son’s acquaintance”——

“To compel justice, Mr. Bensley. Mr. Sanford is the man who can right me. You should not—you must not—you shall not”—a fiery flush came to her cheek—“prevent me from obtaining that justice due, and dear to a wronged woman.”

“Is your justice to be obtained by fascinating his unhappy son?”

“I like Harold Sanford,” replied she, coldly and sternly, “but do not understand your term ‘unhappy.’ His mind is playful, fantastic, free. I like”——

“You mistake,” interrupted George, “you terribly mistake. He is”——

He was stopped by the simultaneous appearance of Harold at the window, and the servant with the wine.

“Wine and flowers,” said Harold, “put an end to your conference. Besides, I cannot bear secrets. There is nothing in this world worth concealing or worth revealing. Miss Delville taste the flowers, and invite me to the sherry.”

“Preside,” replied the lady, “and help Mr. Bensley first. I shall enjoy this bouquet awhile before the wine.”

“And after,” said Harold, “a little music. I don’t mean singing nor the piano, but that better music, a poem read in your own exquisite style. Ah, George, your sensibilities then will take fire. You shall cry, you shall laugh, you shall be filled with a delight mortals do not often catch.”

"Shall it be in Shakspeare?" asked Miss Delville.

Something wild, weird, pathetic, strange—a little comedy crossed by a tragedy—in fact anything; it is your dulcet voice I am bargaining for."

"I like that scene where Richard woos Queen Anne," said the lady.

"Let me play Richard," exclaimed Harold, with sudden and passionate vehemence; and as he spoke, with impetuous recklessness flinging his wine-glass from his hand through the open window. "Anne was never so wooed as she shall be wooed now. And I must act it, too; I cannot sit like a court-crier and say my words. Action, action, or the meaning as well as the passion eludes me."

It was a strange scene; and, as Harold said, Queen Anne was probably never so wooed. The lady read her part with perfect accent; the wooer, often utterly unartistic, more than compensated by a passionate feeling and wild vividness that gave a thrilling power and charm to his words. It seemed to George a scene more real than mock; and when finished, as Harold gave that peculiar snap of the fingers, there was a wild, intense passion burning in his eyes, and a hot flush on his cheek, which showed how far the actor had identified himself with the poet.

"More wine," said Harold, and hastily quaffed a glass.

"I must read you something quieter," said the lady.

"Pon my word, Harold, either the wine or the poetry is making you half a madman."

"Madness," exclaimed he, "is only intensity; sense is a millstone. When the nerves are bare, and thought, flashing and sparkling, sends the brain spinning, then life begins. Let us laugh; let us dance; let us sing—wisdom mummies itself in the sciences, buries itself in Greek and Latin dust, puts itself in the stocks, and calls everybody to witness its dull sedateness. It is only a man like me who can see what a charlatan it is, and dares to wear his brain in gay colors and light humors."

"I am frightened," said Miss Delville, with an expression of vague concern, "when I hear you talk, Harold; one has to strain so to follow you, and gets so dizzy."

"Shakspeare touched fire to my blood, and makes me live. It is odd that passionate life always startles people. You must be dull to be safe. Come, let us sing—let us dance." He ran up, and catching her hand and waist, whirled her upon the floor. "A dance, I say! a dance!"

"There is no music," said she, partly humoring his whim, and catching something of his fire and passion.

"There is music somewhere—in the air, or in the ear. We will dance to that. I know your race. You are the nine muses and all the sylphs. Dancing is poetry—dancing was old-time worship—dance and song come from a happy heart like fragrance from a rose."

He burst into a wild, irregular, sensuous, passionate air, which stirred even the quieter blood of the anxious George, while it fired his sympathetic and unresisting companion. In an instant, locked together by hand and waist, their feet were responding to the music, and around the little parlor they whirled in an irregular, fantastic, graceful, but sensuous dance, their lips timing their motions, and the movement as often inspiring the air.

George, a good deal startled at this *abandon*, watched them for some moments with rising color, and perceiving, in their flushed brows and flashing eyes, how swiftly they were passing beyond the bounds of decorum, with some disdain and disgust took his hat and hurried from the room.

He had not taken twenty steps from the cottage ere Harold's hand was upon his shoulder.

"Purist!" he cried, with anger, "you insult the lady. Return and apologize."

"Harold," replied George, sternly, "if I go back, I'll tell Miss Delville what you are. I shall warn her, as I now warn you. Beware, Harold, I beseech you, her fascinations, her allurements, her dangerous charms; beware!"

"Come some thunder," roared Harold, interrupting him, "to strike fools dumb or me deaf."

And clapping his hands to his ears, he ran back to the cottage.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. WILLIAM SANFORD, chafed and sour, was stamping up and down the parlor floor. His brow was black, and he kept thrusting his hand beneath his waistcoat with nervous passion.

As Ellen, in response to several angry calls at the door, entered, he hastily shut and locked the door.

"Why, what's the matter?" she inquired, in no little surprise.

He answered by a growl, and kept pacing the floor.

"Who lives in this neighborhood?" said he, sharply, after a pause, still pacing the floor.

"No one of importance; all plain folk who cannot be of interest to you. Why do you ask?"

"For an answer," snapped out the amiable gentleman. "Yesterday, for the second time, the first when I was riding with Carrie some days ago, I passed a showy woman on the road, on horseback, with a servant in attendance. Who is she?"

"There is a lady from the city who has taken a cottage for the summer—she must be the one you mean."

"Of course it is. You're a long while getting at it. Now, will you answer? Who is she?"

"I do not know."

"You must know something. Out with it. What's her name? Where did she come from?"

"Harold calls her Miss Delville," said Ellen, seating herself quietly.

"Harold!" thundered Mr. Sanford.

"Perhaps Mr. Bensley can tell you more," continued Ellen, heedless of and indifferent to his passion. "By an accident she was two days at his house."

"But what of Harold? In the name of fury, speak out. I hate a halting, mincing talker."

"I shall not speak at all unless you are respectful," replied Ellen, coolly. "I do not intend to let you offend, insult, or annoy me. I remember your conduct too well for that. I'll talk with you so long as you are moderate, because a sullen silence is simply foolish—but you must respect me, or let your questions go unanswered."

"Pshaw! As you like. But what about Harold?"

"Harold has met her—has been to her house; indeed, he talks as if she had thoroughly smitten him."

"Ten thousand devils! She's an accursed vixen."

"You know her, then?"

"I've seen her twice, I say."

"Often more than that, Mr. William Sanford."

"Don't contradict me."

"Oh, I'm quite indifferent about it. I care nothing about your history; have no wish to pry into your secrets; would rather be relieved of your affairs than take more on my shoulders."

"You mean Carrie, of course. What's the matter with her? She's so sullen and silent. She is as cold as ice; apathetic, and the deuce knows what."

"It will all blow over," said Ellen. "Young girls will have their fancies, and must be cured of them. Time will do it. She is only a child yet."

"She is a woman," exclaimed Mr. Sanford, sharply.

"She is only seventeen."

"That makes a woman. You would like to keep her in pantalets till thirty. She's a woman, I say; but this moping makes me mad. Does she like the young fool, Bensley?"

"There's no doubt of it," said Ellen, whose accents continually betrayed a cool, calm, resentment, which her listener chafed and fumed under.

"Confound him," burst from Sanford, passionately, and he violently struck his foot on the floor.

"Don't you like him?"

"Forbid him the house," roared he.

"There's no danger of anything between Carrie and him now. I've managed that."

"How?"

"Carrie has dismissed him."

"That's why she frets, then."

"Likely. But Carrie is a strong girl when she knows her duty. It was *my* duty to point out hers; I made her see that a marriage with young Bensley would be both a humiliation and a sin."

"Humph!" ejaculated Sanford moodily, but with a little curiosity. "A sin? What do you mean?"

"Would it be right for Harold's sister to marry, when too probably the same disease that afflicts him may lurk in her brain?"

A loud, fierce laugh was the response. But a second thought appeared to flash upon him. His face brightened, and he answered hastily:

"Yes, it would be a sin. Prevent it, by all means. But about this woman?"

"This stranger?"

"Yes. Learn what you can of her for me. Keep Harold from her. She's a woman to fear—a woman Harold must not know. You must help me keep them apart."

"My power is limited. I can only persuade."

"By heaven, then, I'll raise a hue and cry, and drive her out of the country. If she cross me again—if she

thwart, or attempt by her accursed machinations to injure me, I'll strike to crush."

"You fear her, then?" inquired Ellen, quietly.

"No. I hate her."

The sister shook her head.

"No matter," said she; "I am content to be ignorant. For Harold's sake, supposing that some mischief will really result from his acquaintance with her, I will do what I can to keep him away."

"What you *can*," replied the gentleman, scornfully. "I must make it sure. Where is Harold?"

He unlocked the door and went out, tramping in and out of the rooms in search of Harold. The servant referred him to the orchard; but not finding him there he continued his walk to the river. There he found him seated on a rock tossing pebbles into the current. The father walked silently to the side of his son, and placed his hand upon his shoulder.

Mr. Sanford's manner to Harold always differed from that to any other mortal. His sullenness disappeared, his features softened, his face exhibited a mingled tenderness and apprehension—a sensibility which the observant Ellen was a long time coming to understand. That a man like William Sanford should be awed or subdued by anything, was a proposition she at first rejected as utterly absurd; but long observation convinced her that Harold, through his infirmity, was a superstitious dread to this man of iron—a dread which attracted rather than repelled, bound rather than divided. It was clear that Harold reached his father's heart in a manner which nothing else human appeared to do. Wrapped in sullen gloom to all others, save, perhaps, an unaccountable and recent softening toward Carrie—to Harold his heart lived and his sympathies sprang up. For twenty years, with few intervals, Harold had been his companion, his fellow-traveller to many and remote places, his fellow-adventurer through hardships and dangers, the being of all the world who had crept up to the weaker and softer side of his nature. Harold, the wild, strange, melancholy, acute, gifted, inspired with a weird inspiration, flashing a shattered, fantastic light upon all things, animated by a wealth of knowledge, gathered from much travel and observation, that mingled oddly with the disordered flow of his imagination, seemed united to his father by a subtle, incomprehensible affinity.

Whether this sympathy lay in some undeveloped princi-

ple, some inner harmony which their apparent antagonisms and differences gave no clue of, or whether it arose from their history, their common pursuits, dangers, life, and sufferings, cannot be positively stated. Possibly, however, the father's heart was first touched by something in the history of the mother, which may have pre-disposed a tenderness for the infirmity of his son, which long companionship and a superstitious weakness strengthened, superstition so often being the characteristic of otherwise insensible men. Besides, Harold knew him as no other knew him—his crimes, his errors, his virtues, his passions; and between the innocent distraught youth and the guilty father—guilty of what crimes many suspected, but none knew—would naturally grow something of that sympathy which so often links men together by the very means of their errors and crimes. And these combined influences operating upon the father, reoperated upon the son. If the elder was softened and humanized by his affection for the youth, no other could so calm and control the turbulent brain of the unhappy Harold like his father.

Mr. Sanford placed his hand upon the shoulder of his son without speaking. Harold looked up, and then resumed his occupation.

"You have made a new acquaintance," said Mr. Sanford.

"Yes," replied Harold, "and was trying conclusions about her then. 'Pon my word, sir, she is Lamia—a serpent, I think, and charms the soul out of a man. Will you go and see her? She maddens me; she fills me with fire; she puffs me into the air. I feel at times as if I was in space, with the old world rumbling away in its worn-out ruts a thousand miles below. She's a goddess, believe me. I look in her eyes, and drink nectar."

"This is folly, Harold."

"So it is. Make me a fool, all you gods!—a brain is the devil."

"Subdue it; then it is not."

"I dare say. Keep it chained; dungeon it; paralyze it in some way, either by trade or society; load it down to the earth with cares, and that imp conjured up by civilization, called Poverty, and it will be dull enough. There is only one blessed among men—he is the fool."

"Harold, will you listen to me?"

"I always do, sir."

"I hate this woman."

"Impossible. You do not know her."

"Unfortunately, I'm afraid I do."

"Then you admire her. She is the tenth wonder, and the first complete delight."

"No," angrily replied the elder. "She is shrewd, designing, dangerous."

"We are all that much, if we dare. Principle is a rule one carries about to measure other people by. Most of us are animated by a malignant and bitter virtue, by which always to judge everybody but ourselves. I like her, sir, and am not frightened with your terms. She is charming and delicious; I ask nothing more."

"You do not mean this. It is only talk."

"I have not energy enough for this morality, sir, and that's a fact. Here is something I like—it never occurs to me to consult the decalogue to see whether I ought to like it or not. I can't stop to think about it in that way. I am charmed. That is as far as I have brains to get. By the by, sir, she says she knows you, was indebted to you, wants some day to thank you."

"Fury!" exclaimed the elder, dark with rage. "The witch! I wish we had never come here, Harold! Shan't we leave at once?"

"Why did you come?"

"To see Carrie."

"It wasn't for that," said Harold, bluntly.

"Why?"

"You don't like little girls better than I do."

"Carrie is not a little girl, now; and, believe me, my heart would be glad if you would like her."

"Ah! sir, by the side of Lucie she is as dead and colorless as a milliner's wax doll. But, please explain why you came to see Carrie."

"It is not strange for me to come and see my daughter."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harold, and flung disdainfully an entire handful of pebbles into the stream.

"Whatever my object was or is," resumed Mr. Sanford, "I now desire to return, and at once. You must yield to me, Harold."

Harold busied himself with the pebbles, and made no reply.

"Shall we go, Harold?"

"Carrie with us?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Immediately—to-morrow—the next day."

"And Ellen?"

"Remains, of course. I'll make this cottage over to her, and so make her content. We shall not want it, for we shall probably never return."

Again Harold sullenly busied himself tossing pebbles into the river.

"Well," said he, jumping up, "so be it. We should have got tired of paradise itself in three weeks. No matter. Change is glorious—all life rushes onward to something. If the current is only swift, it is enough. I'll say good-bye to Lucie. Jupiter! I hardly know how."

"In three days, say."

"I march at command, and where you please—any quarter or any corner of the globe. Nothing is far enough or big enough. I would like to travel in a sphere where journeys were something like the distances in Mahomet's dream—an eighty thousand days' journey, for instance, between the eyes of an angel he saw. Jupiter! something like. I should delight to spend my life exploring the bridge of the fellow's nose."

"It is arranged, then," said Mr. Sanford, and walked away.

Harold remained a long time on the bank of the stream, occasionally resuming, for a few moments, his occupation of throwing pebbles into the current, and then abruptly subsiding into a profound and meditative stillness. These alternations of manner continued for nearly an hour, when he sprang upon his feet, as if impelled by a new thought, and hurried along the river-bank with eager and excited speed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GEORGE, reflecting upon the scene between Harold and the mysterious Lucie Delville, determined upon one of two things—either to acquaint Mr. Sanford with all the circumstances, or to ask an interview with the lady, reveal to her Harold's infirmity, and warn her of her danger. Mr. Sanford he detested, and he was compelled to confess that that

gentleman appeared to reciprocate his antipathy with no little energy. For this reason, and possibly for others, he resolved to see and attempt to dissuade the lady from the course she was pursuing. And even if he failed, he thought, the other alternative was still open to him.

Fortunately, he soon had an opportunity to make the attempt. Mr. Twitt had requested him to prepare for a trip to New York on business with a wealthy client, Mr. Thomas Granway, whose niece and ward, a young lady of about eighteen, had for some months been a resident in Mr. Twitt's family. Mr. Granway was not only the lawyer's client, but his old college-mate and life-long friend. George begged a night at home before the journey, and came upon them all shortly after dinner, just as the old gentleman had got a little slumberous over his newspaper, by the window.

Scarcely were the greetings over, and George done explaining the cause of his unexpected visit, when Mr. Bensley declared he was glad he had come, as he now had a chance of relieving his mind.

"It is a fact," said he, "that I haven't had an appetite since I saw it."

"Saw what?"

"No appetite!" cried Betsy, with a merry laugh; "why, papa, I never saw you relish a dinner so."

"I was complimenting the Yorkshire pudding of yours, my dear."

"Your frequent demands for more was only a compliment?"

"Only a compliment; but the pudding was splendid, and if I had only had an appetite, then you would have seen!"

"Well, sir," asked George, "what destroyed your appetite?"

"Love-making between that woman and Harold. I've seen them, billing and cooing; caught them at it on the river and in the woods; and I tell you it made my blood run cold. She is setting a net for Harold, you may be sure; and she, recollect, is the girl I saw in Mobile, known there as Mr. Sanford's daughter, now making love to Mr. Sanford's son! Of course, I had no appetite after that."

"But not his daughter, though," said George.

"Perhaps not; but there's a mystery somewhere, and it made me feel decidedly uncomfortable to see them together

in that way. And take my word for it," said he, rapping his knuckles emphatically on the window-sill, "there's mischief in the wind. Supposing the Mobile affair all a mistake, she's not the woman one likes to see fascinating an unfortunate like Harold."

"I agree with you," said George, and proceeded to state what he had observed, and what he proposed.

"If the lady will not listen, I must see Mr. Sanford. Ellen will aid me. And I will ride over to Miss Delville's cottage at once, for to-morrow I must be on my way back to Hareton by sunrise."

Tony was speedily saddled, and in less than half an hour George drew rein at the gate of the cottage.

But on the doorstep he was met by the servant, who said her mistress was not to be seen. He pleaded pressing business and a long ride, but the girl declared her commands were positive.

"Not to be seen," he exclaimed, with vexation and disappointment.

"Not to be seen," echoed a voice at his elbow.

He turned, and found himself face to face with Harold.

"Not to be seen," repeated Harold, eying him closely; "and not to be wondered at. What woman does not have her whims in the morning? Are you struck, eh? Has the charmer dazzled you, like the rest of us?"

"No, Harold."

"How sublime is virtue! I mean to study it, when I'm in the humor; meanwhile, I uncover the forbidden dishes."

"Harold!"

"Oh, a storm of virtue, of course! I see your eye blows from the east. How in this world everybody puffs his indignant morality at everybody else! Look, George, it only takes a turn of the weathercock to bring about the millennium. Of course, you ask how; only let these gusts of virtue, that every man blows upon his neighbor, be turned upon himself, and the thing is done. It's easier than sinning."

"But about this lady, Harold? This charmer? This siren who is luring you to destruction?"

"Were she indeed a siren, and her voice led me to the Inferno, I'd dance after it down the steep. But that's a lie. Siren? she sings and I float upward—I see heaven—I taste bliss. Oh, I'm a lover that will out Orlando Orlando, and carve my lady's name on the moon."

"This is so extravagant. Be moderate, calm; quell this riot of passion."

"No wise talk, will you?" replied Harold, slipping his arm in George's, and leading him away from the cottage.

"I'm afraid, Harold, you are attempting something unwise," said George, persuasively and earnestly.

"How do you manage it?" laughed Harold.

"What?"

"That head of yours. It is so wise."

"Come, will you leave this banter?" said George.

"Will I? I'm only tender of old men and children; to which do you belong?"

"You are in a strange mood," said George, striving to peer into his face, which he kept purposely averted.

"So I am," replied Harold, "and it is a strange world—a strange menagerie, the whole of it."

"It is a noble world," replied George, with spirit. "I detest this misanthropy."

"So it is in the parlor. So it is when the curtains are dropped, the candles lighted, and you smooth the palm of your lover. But parlors are so few and the world is so big! For me, I stagger under it; men and women, heaven and earth, life and death, wind and water, all drive me mad. Noble! Why, it is a perpetual clash of antagonisms; it is a story of life and creation continually springing up into beautiful forms, and tramped down to death by destiny, fate, and the devils. Look where you will, on man or nature, and what do you see? Breeding, feeding, killing and dying! Nothing else by the two kings, Jupiter and Lucifer! It's all hurly-burly; all madness and pandemonium; it is every species against all other species; every self against all other self; its life consumed on all sides to make more life; the big eating the little, to be in turn eaten by the more big. The devils are not in man alone. Man, even in his evil, fits his surroundings, and if the fall of Adam be his curse, then all animals, all vegetable life, all the elements, all creation, in fact, must have eaten of the forbidden tree. Everywhere there is an incessant battle of inharmonies. Life preys on life; elements clash on elements; heat and cold scorch and freeze; gales whelm fleets into the sea; rivers flood the land, volcanoes rip open the earth, pestilences leap upon the winds, deadly vapors issue from the soil, and"—

"Stop, Harold, stop."

"Stop! The world—I mean society—conspires to keep me and others silent. I will not be silent. Speech must out, or the brain will burst. These vapors, I say, pour out from the bosom of mother earth, and poison her children, and nothing is balanced to any end or means—nothing but the stars. The world rushes on bewildered, breathless, and mad. There is nothing going on but fecundity."

"This is sheer wildness," said George, puzzled to understand the violence of Harold's outbreak, and anxious to draw him into other themes.

"It is sheer nature," replied Harold; "the maddest thing your imagination can conceive, and the most purposeless. There is nothing, so help me heaven, but a terrible chain of death transforming into life; all nature lives to breed and, dies to fatten. Why must life in one form perpetually contribute to the perpetuation of life in some other form? Isn't the fly as good as the spider?"

"We cannot understand the mysteries of nature, Harold; so we gain nothing by perplexing ourselves. But why do you tell me all this? I want to talk to you about Miss Delville."

"And I about Hamlet's supper. He shows you how the body of a king may go through the belly of a beggar."

"Which is as far-fetched as the idea of Cæsar's clay stopping the bung of a beer barrel. Come, let us change the subject."

"Back to analogy, then; and that shows plainly enough that man is only one stone in the architecture of nature, with all other stones of similar grain and texture. Disorders, irregularities, imperfections, evils, the riots of men and the riot of the elements—these pervade the whole structure, and the inharmonies are harmoniously everywhere."

"The world seems to me a noble one," said the hopeful youth and lover.

"We who have got into parlors and are blessed with civilization, talk of progress, refinement, art, manners, liberty, and the rest; but don't you see, we are only a narrow belt of the earth, and even within that limit civilization only belongs to the picked and few. We are a rivulet in the great ocean of humanity, which dark, ignorant, vicious, and wretched, tumbles and chafes around us. I tell you somebody must explain it. The churches cannot—no, nor the philosophers. What does it all mean? I beat my brain and ask in vain."

"These are problems no one can solve. The wise thing is to dismiss them."

"Tell a prisoner," replied Harold, passionately, "that sunlight is beyond his reach, and so the wise thing is for him not to think of it! Why, George, the thought of the sunlight, because he cannot see it, eats his soul out. No matter. The sermon has been long. Say amen and farewell."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed George, as Harold held out his hand to him.

"Amen to the text, and good-bye," exclaimed the eccentric youth, seizing George's hand; "to-day I am mad; to-morrow I am a fool."

As he spoke he placed his hand upon a fence near which they had been slowly walking, and, bolting lightly over it, snapped his fingers in the air, and ran rapidly, without looking backward through the meadow grass. George called loudly after him, but received no response. He then sprang over the fence with the intention of pursuit, but apprehensive of the effect upon Harold's excitable temperament, he paused in hesitation and doubt. He was, indeed, still under the spell of Harold's vehement and wild eloquence; he was filled with a doubt, fear, distrust, and even terror, such as he had never known before. Harold's manner was magnetic; his meanings struck home through his eye and voice; he reached the imaginations of his listeners, and impressed them with the feelings and passions of his own. Never before that moment did life and the world appear to George in colors so dark and formidable. He shuddered and attempted to escape the infection of Harold's language by calling up a more cheerful philosophy. But the dark, blind, terrible materialism into which Harold cast human life; its inexorable fatalism, its unblest purpose, its deadness in all functions of either spirit or heart, even while it repelled, mastered him as if by a dark and dangerous charm. George was neither speculative nor sceptical, but he had a youth's fondness for the new and startling, and the sensations excited by Harold were not easily dismissed nor subdued.

He stood for several minutes staring into the meadow grass; and gradually shook off Harold's matter to think of Harold himself. Something was unusually wrong about him, it was clear—some purpose underlay all those whirling words, which evidently sprang as much from a subtle

design as from a disordered fancy. Suspicion naturally pointed to Miss Delville as in some way the cause. He determined to make one more effort to see her; and following the direction Harold had taken, returned toward the cottage. Before reaching it he met a lad of about twenty years—a dark, shrewd, curly-headed, greasy looking fellow, not very particular about his finger ends, slovenly about the boots, ragged at the cuffs, linen by no means fresh, but with his locks well pomatumed and well curled. His manner was of that lively, impudent sort which obtains so extensively.

"John," said George, for he at once divined the identity of the personage—"John, where is Mr. Broom?"

"Gone to the city," was the sharp and curt reply. "That's so. Left me here to watch his traps, 'cause he's coming back to-morrow."

"Your master seems to like the country."

"Master!" exclaimed the youth, ejecting his tobacco saliva with great energy. "Mr. Broom, or Broom, I calls him. Take master somewhere else, will you?"

"Yes, John, if you don't like it."

"Well, I don't."

"Is Miss Delville unwell to-day?"

"I 'spose so. Shouldn't wonder."

"John, I've admired Miss Delville so much that I am quite puzzled to make her out."

"She's a knowing one. That's so."

"But I mean her history—her life. Who is she?"

"Bless me if I know."

"But where does she reside when not in the country?"

"Why, off and on; just as it happens. That's according to her engagements."

"Engagements?"

"According as the managers may want her. She don't go for no low figures, she don't. She's tip-top, she is. That's so."

"I confess, John, I'm puzzled. Who, now, is Miss Delville?—if it's proper for you to say?"

"What?" exclaimed John, with the most comical and extravagant surprise; "you don't mean to say you don't know who she is?"

"I do, John."

"Never heard of her before?"

"Never."

"Well, Jockey, ain't you green in the country!"

"I'm afraid we are."

"I should think so. And never heard of her when all the papers have been cracking her up so. Didn't never hear of her *Juliet*?"

"Her *Juliet*?" asked George eagerly; "can it be she has a daughter?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared John, with an explosion of laughter so uproarious and unaccountable that George was astounded, and began to feel a little indignant. "Ha, ha, ha! by Jockey! Her *Juliet* a daughter! Well, that's the queerest thing I've heard of. That's so. Her daughter? Ha, ha, ha! The *Juliet* she plays, sir—don't you understand? Devilish fine it is—that's so."

"The *Juliet* she plays," echoed George, with a glimmering of the truth. "Is Miss Delville an actress?"

"And you never knew it, when the whole city was a talking of her."

"You must recollect that we in the country know nothing of the gossip of the town."

"But the papers were full of her."

"I did not notice it."

"Who would have believed it?" repeated the astonished and scandalized master John; "not know the great Miss Delville—a star, sir—a star!! *Juliet* her daughter! Well, that was green! Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving this young gentleman to his mirth, George hastened to Tony and leaped into the saddle. It was imperatively necessary now to ride at once to Mr. Sanford, for this woman, perhaps unscrupulous by the nature of her profession, and prompted by some mysterious motive, was purposely, it was plain, weaving her spells around Harold, and, too, probably, was already contemplating a bold and final move. Harold's last words strengthened this suspicion, and convinced young Bensley of the necessity of immediate precautions if the unfortunate Harold was to be saved from some fatal step.

Upon arriving at the cottage, George found Mr. Sanford alone in the parlour. As he entered the room, that pleasant-tempered gentleman, with a slight recognition, walked toward the door.

"I came to see you, Mr. Sanford," said George, stepping quickly forward to explain himself.

Mr. Sanford stopped, and turned his head over his shoulder inquiringly.

"My suspicions, sir, may be idle, but I fear Harold is about doing a foolish thing."

"Well?"

"He has met a lady in this valley"—

The sullen father started, and turned his full face toward the speaker.

"What do you suspect?"

"Nothing definite—for my suspicions, though pointing that way, have hardly got so far as a runaway marriage."

A blow from Sanford upon the table rang through the room.

"The witch! the devil!" he muttered, as George proceeded to tell his story. "D—n her, if she makes a fool of him, I'll—" He only ground his teeth together without uttering the threat.

"What can be done?" inquired George.

"After them at once. Will you accompany me?"

"I will."

"I'll have the buggy ready at once, and will order your horse to be stabled."

"If you please."

He went out and George was left alone. Neither Ellen nor Carrie appeared, and in scarcely more than five minutes Sanford returned, saying the horse was ready. But, as they entered the buggy, Ellen appeared at the door, and Sanford hastily stated their business. He did not wait for Ellen to reply, and interrupted his own explanation in his impatience to start.

He drove rapidly, and remained during the drive utterly silent and sullen, and George, being indisposed to intrude upon so ungracious a companion, industriously imitated his silence.

In half an hour they were at the cottage. The windows were tightly closed, and a perfect stillness reigned around. George leaped from the wagon and knocked at the door. There was no answer, and he repeated the summons. Still no reply.

"We are too late," he said, at last, walking back to the vehicle.

"Can they have fled?"

"I fear so. Harold's extraordinary manner makes me certain that something unusual was on his mind."

"Who's that?"

Sanford pointed to John, who came sauntering around

the corner of the house, with an air of nonchalance. His hands were in his pockets; his hat was cocked with an impudent knowingness over one eye; he thrust his legs before him with a jerk; he carried his elbows at an angle; his whole manner was a consummation of don't-care-a-tiveness.

"John," said George, "where's Miss Delville?"

"Gone," was the reply, with a jerk of the leg and a shrug of the elbows, which the young gentleman fondly believed to be expressive of mirth.

"Where?" spoke up Mr. Sanford.

The question was so imperative that both the legs and the elbows were startled, and even the hat fell back upon the head to a more deferential and decent position.

"I don't know," answered John. His tones wavered a little, and he looked as if his colors were already at half-mast. Sanford sprang from the wagon, and approached him.

"That's a lie. You do."

The elbows jerked the hands out of the pockets in astonishment, while the suddenness of the charge brought the legs upright and quiet.

"You mustn't tell me that," said John, showing a little fight. "I won't take the lie from any man—that's so."

"Pshaw! Where is the woman?"

"It 'taint your business, is it?"

Sanford caught the fellow quickly by both hands, and, fairly lifting him from the ground, held him squarely before him within two feet of his face.

"Tell me, you scoundrel, or I'll break your infernal bones."

"To New-York," chattered the youth, utterly astonished out of his impudence and self-possession.

"Who with?"

"Let me go, will you?"

"Don't force me to extremes," thundered Sanford. "Who with?"

"The whole lot, except William. He and I go down to-morrow with the duds."

"Who with?" said Sanford, tightening his hold upon him.

"With young Mr. Sanford, then," replied the fellow, sullenly.

"Curse her," roared Sanford, thrusting the youth from him, and rushing back to the vehicle. "Come, will you?"

he impatiently exclaimed to George, as he gathered up the reins. George sprang in by his side.

"Where now?"

"To Hareton."

"You will be too late for the down train."

"Impossible," said Sanford, grasping the reins, and striking the horse sharply.

"It is not ten minutes to the hour. The train is express, and punctual."

"Curse it, so it is. And by heaven they will be married to-night!"

"Even if you could get to town to-night," said George, "it would be late, and they could hardly be found at an hour's notice. Can you think they will be so expeditious and marry to-night?"

"Yes, if they marry at all. The accursed witch will not lose a moment."

"You know her, probably," said George.

"Yes."

"Is her profession so objectionable?"

"Hang it, no."

"You know what she is?"

"Yes."

"My father says," said young Bensley, determined to press the subject, and penetrate the mystery of this woman's relation to Sanford, "my father says that, ten years ago, in Mobile—"

"What!"

The horse fairly bounded as if electrified by the voice of his driver. It rang out wild and vehement.

"Where," continued Bensley, "Mr. Sanford was supposed to have two daughters."

"The d—l! Then your father has been to Mobile?"

"Yes."

"Well, what if he was there? What if she did run away? I ask no counsel. I take none. It seems she has run away again—that's the present business."

This was a pretty effectual *quietus*, and George had nothing to do but hold his tongue. Of Carrie he would not speak at such a time, and for some moments the former sullen silence was resumed.

"I see you're not going to Hareton," said George, perceiving that at a fork of the road he did not take the proper direction.

"It is too late, you say."

"It is."

"I'll take the first train in the morning, then, and curses upon her. I wish she was here. I wish she was."

His accents were hot and deadly, and a black passion darkened in his face and eyes. George did not speak, and in a few moments his companion sunk into his customary moody apathy.

"I go to New York to-morrow on business," said George, after a pause, "and had intended taking the first train. I should be glad to serve you if I can."

"Perhaps you can."

"No more was said until they arrived at the cottage. Mr. Sanford stamped heavily into the parlor, followed by George, where they found Ellen and Carrie.

"You were too late," said Ellen, reading the intelligence of their failure in their faces.

"Yes," replied her brother, pacing the floor.

Carrie did not speak, but her face, already white, turned a shade whiter. Toward George she studiously did not look.

"Have they fled?" asked Ellen.

"Yes, yes!" impatiently answered Sanford. "Ask no questions, will you? They drive me mad. I leave for New York in the morning. Let me get off early."

"And Carrie?" asked Ellen.

"May remain. Stop! Can't you bring her down after me? Or I will send after her. I never want to see this cursed place again."

George, who was standing by the wall, with his hand resting upon a chair, started so suddenly that the chair was overthrown.

"What's the matter?" angrily asked Sanford.

"Does Carrie go with you?"

"Yes."

He could not help turning in a speechless appeal toward the young girl. Her eyes were upon the floor, but she seemed to be repressing the emotions that struggled in her bosom. Ellen glided near him, and as she brushed by whispered him to be silent.

"I can't be silent," he exclaimed, impatiently. "Mr. Sanford, I"—

"Hush!" cried Ellen, sharply, in his ear.

"Let him speak," said Sanford, with a ferocious and bitter sneer—"let him speak; I'm in a pleasant mood to

hear him. I'll make him understand me now. Let him speak, I say."

George, in utter amazement, looked round the room, from face to face. As his eyes rested momentarily upon the features of Carrie, she quietly raised her eyes, glancing at him with a look so beseeching and earnest that he pressed down the words rising in his heart, and went toward the door.

"I will not speak, Mr. Sanford, until another time. Indeed I had forgotten that I now have no right to speak." He said this with a mournful reproach in his tones, looking toward Carrie. White, hushed, and still, she made no motion and no sign. He turned, stung and wild, and hurried from the room and out upon the piazza. As he reached the air, he heard a light step behind him, and Ellen stepped to his side.

"Must I lose her, Ellen?" he cried. "I cannot bear it. I love her. As you are my friend, Ellen, don't oppose me—don't—don't!"

"Will nothing cure you?" said she, almost disdainfully.

"You can't see or feel as I do."

"I see and feel as a man ought. I teach you how to see and feel rightly."

"I love Carrie."

"You are a sick boy. "Oh, that I could strike you suddenly well—that by a touch I could make you see. But the delirium must and will pass. And now there is mystery, too. I am surrounded with it, and cannot make out my brother, or Harold, or even Carrie. Yesterday William suddenly declared he would depart. He went to Carrie, and something transpired—I cannot guess what, but since then the girl has wandered about the house out of her wits, as mad as Harold. All I could make out is, that she is to go with her father. I tell you, George, as one passionately your friend, there's danger in them all—mystery in them all"—

She was interrupted by a cry of pain from the parlor. In three bounds George was at the door, but found it locked. He struck it furiously with his foot, but even as he struck, the key was turned, and Mr. Sanford threw it open. He did not look at young Bensley, but catching Ellen by the arm thrust her into the room.

"Take care of her," he exclaimed, and with no further word hurried away.

Carrie's face was buried upon her arms on the table, her frame convulsively agitated, but with no cry or sound from her lips. Ellen wound her arm around her and lifted her face to her breast. She burst into tears at this act of tenderness; and at the same moment Sanford's voice was heard from the piazza, harshly summoning George from the room.

"You will understand," said he, as George approached him, "your love-play must stop. Oh! no explanations or protests. I can see—I know. I require you to cease your addresses to my daughter:" and, turning upon his heel, stalked away.

In a hushed, stunned way George went from the house.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. THOMAS GRANWAY managed to keep the name of "Tom" for nearly sixty honest years. But no one ever thought of Tom Granway's age, or asked if he was old or young. People, when they met him, carried away an impression of something very brisk and fresh, and nothing but a question to the effect would recall the fact that he was indeed on the downward plane of life. Tom Granway was an animated, lively gentleman: punctilious, excessively neat; a warm, frank, chatty, thorough-bred fellow, careless about everything but his personal appearance and the pleasures of the moment. His tastes were numerous; the close-shaved, perfectly-limbed, well-gloved gentleman, was a frequenter of the studios, a friend of the opera, a lover of the drama, a student of literature. His small, neat, bachelor's house was well filled with books, pictures, articles of *virtu*, and furnished in model taste.

Tom Granway liked lively company, if it wasn't vulgar. He had no taste for games; he was too old for the exercise of dancing, and too old, also, he was in the habit of declaring, for society and ladies. His delight was social breakfasts and dinners, and he took endless pains to gather around him a few congenial spirits. So what with new pictures to buy, or new pictures to see, new books to read, new actors and new dramas to discuss, and long chatty hours in his book-room, the life of Thomas Granway flowed pleasantly enough.

Tom Granway took his breakfast in his book-room, as he called his library. The morning light in this room was the pleasantest, he said; and here, too, were gathered innumerable objects which Tom liked to look upon, and liked to talk about. His breakfasts were always semi-literary. It was not only the morning newspaper that was first unfolded over his coffee; but this was the occasion when he first cut into the pages of the latest periodicals or the newest book; here he dipped into the essay and the gossip; here, too, even when other matters lacked, he marshalled some of the old voices, and listened to their honored speech.

But Mr. Tom Granway did not often breakfast alone. Good company was as essential to Tom's comfort as book or paper, essay or gossip, picture or poem. Nor does he breakfast alone on the morning we are looking in upon him, although he is sitting alone. The paper is in his lap unfolded, and he is just adjusting to his nose the glasses which, Tom frankly confesses fashion induces him to wear. It gives a man so much style, he says. Tom—how readily one glides into the familiar with a man whose name is Tom. Tom is friendly, home-like, familiar, and who ever heard of king or tyrant by that name? There has been no Tom the First, nor Tom the Second. Mr. Thomas Granway, then, is close shaven, with white, regular teeth; arched and flexible eyebrows; hair gray and curling; a handsome hand, perfect in polish and trim to the extremity of every finger. He is dressed in a claret-colored coat, light and gray trousers and waistcoat. His aspect is decidedly cheerful and refined; while all about him is the repose of a rich, calm, eloquent atmosphere. His table is near the window, through which come the warm tints of an eastern morning sky. The light penetrates into the room with hesitancy and grace, touching the gilded frames, falling upon the long rows of books, and lightening up their gilt titles, glancing from statuette to bust, and mingling richly with the dark purple hues of the carpet. The scene is pleasant enough even for the luxurious Mr. Thomas Granway. and before he gives his attention to the morning journals he looks about the room *tasting* the points, and enjoying, with lively relish, its rich, warm *ensemble*.

Scarcely does he open the journal ere steps are heard without.

"That's he," said Mr. Granway, aloud, and, tossing the

paper to one side went briskly forward to greet the comer. "Jack," said he, as the door was opened, "there you are you dog. You are guilty of misdemeanor, Jack. Every man is guilty of misdemeanor who keeps breakfast or dinner waiting the division of a second."

"Confound it! am I late?" said Jack, who was no other than our friend Mr. Broom; "that's because that rascally John is in the country. I can't get myself up without him. A plague on that John. May his sins confound him, and honesty find a corner wherein to tease him."

"Why do you confound him?"

"Because I left him in the country, my dear Tom. Am I so insane as to blame myself? What's the use of a John if he isn't a scape-goat? But how are you, Tom?"

"Let us have breakfast, and so shall my appetite answer you."

"Who wouldn't have an appetite?" said Jack, "in a place as delicious and cosy as this? I envy you; confound me if I don't."

"I'm glad you do, Jack," said Mr. Granway, guiding his guest, in an affectionate way, to a chair, and after seating him catching his hand to repeat the welcome grasp. "I'm glad you do, and I'm glad to see you. Of course, I'm cosy. I've spent my life studying how to be cosy—it's quite an art, Jack. Dear me! In what an angular raw way most people live—people with money, too! But this is pleasant, isn't it? I like a pleasant breakfast—it makes sunshine for all the rest of the day."

"A deuced splendid idea!" ejaculated Mr. Broom, with no little emphasis. "But what books, Tom, you've got here! What pictures! Wonder you don't get inspired among these things, and write, eh?"

Mr. Granway looked at his polished fingers as if he thought he already saw them stained with those spots which sometimes are as bad as Lady Macbeth's bloody ones, and will not out. Mr. Granway's exquisite fingers stained with ink! He shook his head with a delightful smile, and, by way of changing the theme, invited his friend up to the breakfast table.

The two friends gossipped and chatted during the meal, glancing at scores of subjects with an affectionate freedom and grace that were strangely boyish. It often happens that the very completeness of social knowledge brings men back to the simplicity and frankness of youth. Old men

sometimes step back into the heartiness of boyhood, because in the disappearance of the cares and struggles of manhood also disappear its reserves—and more especially is this true of that class whose springs of life are continually renewed and freshened at the fountains of art and literature. It was fairly touching to see between those men "Tom" and "Jack" so freely bandied; and the little compliments they interchanged might have come from the green hearts of two college chums. Jack Broom was not so old as his companion, but his bald head and crowfeet in his temples showed that middle age was well upon him. The nearly twenty years difference made no separation in their tastes or sympathies. They threw open their hearts, and were as fond of each other as boys. They talked about books, about pictures, about their friends. Mr. Granway praised Mr. Broom's last superb performance; Mr. Broom was gratified with Mr. Granway's penetration, and his latest art-purchase. They talked about old times, too, and upon this theme hung the longest.

"By the bye," said Mr. Granway, "where's the magnificent Lucie? How long must we pine for her?"

"They call it ruralising, I believe," said Mr. Broom. "She's in the country getting the fever, getting mosquitoes, getting smashed by runaway horses, getting the d—blues. I've been up. I am astonished to think how she stands it there. I hate the country. Don't understand it. It was in Eden, you know, that Satan made his first appearance. And no wonder."

"You wouldn't believe it, Jack," said Mr. Granway, "but I dream about her. I never saw so charming a piece on the boards before—and I'm old enough to have seen them all. Her Rosalind, eh? I wish, with Desdemona, that Heaven had sent me such a Rosalind—eh, Jack? I wish they wouldn't talk about her though. The stories they tell make me shiver."

"Stories!" cried Mr. Broom. "Abominations! She's a pure creature. Confound their talk. Read their talk backwards. I do. We of the profession all get the scandal. It stings at first. It begins by making us raw, and ends by making us callous."

"The thing is, my dear Broom, the profession lays itself open. You are a capital set, but you won't keep within the respectabilities."

"Tom," exclaimed Broom, pathetically, "that's con-

founded hard. Just look at it. Society puts us outside of respectability, and then multiplies all its watches to see we don't offend respectability. Hence, some of us get reckless, and all of us have elastic imaginations. People, you see, who can imagine all the passions, are quite within the reach of all the passions. Then conventionality is a great armour, and it gets rubbed off in the life we lead and the romance we imitate. We are all plagued impressible; fancy is always in a hot bath; and these quick imaginations are not only alive to the seductions of vice, but are very skillful in cheating their owners with plausible excuses. Now, Tom, it could only take me ten minutes, first, to fall in love with a pretty woman, and, secondly, to make myself believe that falling in love with a pretty woman is virtuous, magnanimous, and all that."

"I wish they wouldn't talk about Lucie Delville, though. Are the stories true?"

"Confounded lies! Hang it, Tom, don't you know that a tale cannot go up two pair of stairs and keep itself straight? Lucie is a deuced nice creature, and, by Jove, Jupiter, and the rest, I'm going some day to snuff these stories out. I am, Tom. Confound me if I don't."

"Eh? What? George Bensley?" said Mr. Granway, reading a card which a servant had brought in.

"Bensley! Bensley!" said Mr. Broom, tapping his forehead, musingly, "to be sure. In the infernal country there."

"He comes from old Twitt. I consider myself a splendidly politic man, Jack. I keep my lawyer fifty miles out of town, and so he doesn't often bother me. Fine fellow Twitt is, though—old college-mate—and dines with me every time he comes to town. He always talks to me as if I were the Bad Apprentice, and it was his duty to hold up for my example the conduct of the Good Apprentice. Ask Mr. Bensley up."

As George entered, ushered in by the servant, Mr. Broom jumped up from the table and ran forward to give his hand.

"Unexpected, of course," said he; "didn't think of finding me here. Devilish lucky, eh? No formality you see. It's my place to make you acquainted with Mr. Granway. Tom, it was Mr. Bensley who picked me up after that smash. Gad, my bones stand on end to think of it."

Mr. Granway surprised George by the warmth with which he took his hand.

"I am sorry," said he, "that I couldn't have anticipated this pleasure and had you to breakfast. Mr. Twitt, of course, is well. He always was."

"Very well, sir. I bring letters from him."

"Business, I suppose?" he said, receiving them, and laying them on the table by his side.

"Mr. Twitt said so."

"You see, gentlemen," said Mr. Granway—by the bye, Mr. Bensley, do be seated—you see, I call myself, pleasantly, The Man of Many Brothers. The noble fellows would travel, and wander off; would get married and have children; and then most of the dear fellows would die, leaving an estate, or a ward, or debt or so for me to manage. But Twitt does it all. How could I have estates, wards or debts about me here, Jack?"

"It ought to be a rule," replied Jack, "that wards should be feminine, and young, and pretty. Then its confounded pleasant business. But an ugly ward! she ought to be repealed by an act of Congress. Rascally insult to a man to send him an ugly ward."

"You've seen Miss Susan?" asked Granway of George.

"Yes."

"Ought she to be repealed by act of Congress?"

"Decidedly not."

"So it seemed to me. A dear, good girl, no doubt. But girls, my dear Jack, whose idea of literature is Godey! of art, a worsted sampler! of the stage, a moral drama at Barnum's! Better off with her country cousins—don't you think so?"

"Good for nothing, Tom, but to trip you up on the stairs. Confounded bread-and-butter creatures. Hang it, they wear pink ribbons! Ornamentation, Tom, that belongs to one other only of God's creatures—poodles!"

"My poor Harry's daughter," said Mr. Granway, cheerfully. "Harry would marry a high-spirited, but rather vulgar, farmer's daughter. I asked Twitt what to do with his daughter. Educate her, he said. And, Jack, I really tried; but Twitt soon spoiled it all. I took her to all the plays, showed her all the pictures, bought her all the books; but she didn't seem to get hold of things. She absolutely slept over Delville's *Viola*—couldn't forgive her that, Jack; and so I took Twitt's advice and sent her off with him to the country."

"How is Lucie?" asked Mr. Broom of George.

"Miss Delville? My news of her is not good."

"Good heavens! Another run-a-way?"

"Yes—but"—

"I swore it!" exclaimed Mr. Broom, jumping up from his chair in great excitement. "I pledged my honor it would happen. And now hang me if it hasn't. Confound horse-flesh. Blast me if I don't exterminate the whole species!"

"You mistake me," said George, as soon as he could get a word in. "You mistake. It's another sort of run-a-way I mean."

"Ha!"

"A terrible unfortunate one, I fear."

"Gad! Not an elopement—confound it, not that?"

"Yes, sir—an elopement."

Mr. Broom struck his palms passionately upon his brow and dropped into his chair. Then, suddenly springing up, began pacing the floor with irregular, bewildered steps, wringing his hands and breaking out at intervals into violent ejaculations.

"She is a fool," he cried, with anger.

"Come, Jack," said Mr. Granway, who looked concerned and puzzled.

"A great fool! Confounded fool! I begged her not to marry off the stage. Plenty of chances in the profession. Mr. Bensley, who is the fellow?"

"Harold Sanford—a choice in many ways unfortunate. There is some old passion in the matter: revenge and hatred of Sanford's father; and Harold is not entirely sane."

"Sanford! a madman!" exclaimed Broom, with renewed violence and consternation. "Married a fool!—married a lunatic! Hang me, Lucie, if you haven't spoiled matters nicely!"

"My dear Jack," said Mr. Granway, who had drawn a pile of books near him and was busy coquetting with the paper, the binding, and the engravings—"my dear Jack, these clever women always do spoil matters so. It will only be a few days' wonder. The public will forget, and I dare say she'll act just as well as ever."

"That's not it!" exclaimed Mr. Broom. "Confound the public! You don't see the point. There are a dozen men worthy of her ready to jump from Trinity steeple to get her."

"Are you one, Jack?"

"Confound me if I am not! I liked the girl. There you have it! Why not? Hang it, she's glorious! she's witty! she's magnificent—and Jack Broom would have been a better match—better for her a thousand ways, than a rich simpleton or a stage-struck youth off the stage."

"I'm very sorry, Jack," said Mr. Granway, a little demurely, "that you're cut out, for her sake if not for yours. But now it's done, shall we go in mourning? Ah, come, Jack Broom, you're not going to rave in that way. Of course you know better, my boy, and won't."

"Give me a glass of wine, Tom, will you? Mr. Bensley, where is Miss Delville now?"

"I would be glad to be informed of that myself. I came to town with the elder Mr. Sanford who is most intensely desirous of finding them. It would be a mercy if the marriage has not been consummated, and could be prevented."

"Oh, it's done. Lucie thinks and hits while she thinks. There's no delay in her."

"Perhaps you can aid us in finding her, notwithstanding."

"I know her town residence," answered Broom, "and she may have gone directly there. Ah, here's the wine."

He nervously seized the decanter from the servant, filled the glass, and rapidly drank it off; then filled and drank again.

"I wish it were brandy, Tom."

"You unmannerly wretch," said Mr. Granway; "here stand Mr. Bensley and I, wondering whether you intend to notice us or not."

"Let's drink again, then. Your pardon, and here's to oblivion. A plague on the wine. It's as mild as mead. Confound it, Granway, send for brandy."

"No, Jack. Your brain is on fire. Brandy will not do."

"Right for a thousand pounds. I will go with you, Mr. Bensley. Good-bye, Tom. To-morrow I shall be as bright as ever again. I'm a little shaken, am I? Well, confound it, I liked her. No matter, she's lost. It takes an hour or two to get over a check of the sort. Wait till after dinner. I shall be as merry as a boy then. Furies, Tom, don't laugh at me. A heart is an infernal awkward thing. It should be taught better than to get so easily

tickled. I'll put you on her track if I can, Mr. Bensley. By the bye, how are your sisters? Good-bye, Tom. Confound that chair. Don't keep your chairs in the way, Tom. Where the deuce is your man? I've got the wrong hat. I picked up the wrong heart, and so no more mistakes of the sort. Blast it, Granway, I wish I was fifty-five. Fifty-five must be the millennium. Then a man is on the safe side of folly. I wish I was wise and could hold my tongue. But I can't. It will wag, and be hanged to it. A plague on these gloves; they've forgotten the way on."

"I will read these letters, Mr. Bensley," said Mr. Granway, "and will be glad to see you about them at any hour. You do not return to-day?"

"Not till to-morrow."

"Come, will you," exclaimed Mr. Broom, who had reached the hall, and stamping and swearing impatiently—"come! It takes an hour to say good-day. Shall I take your arm, sir? I'm confoundedly shocked at Miss Delville's terrible error. Blast that dog," he cried, as they reached the pavement. "Dogs will run between my legs. I hate dogs. A splendid *artiste*—a grand woman. Don't walk so fast, please. Since my bones got that shaking they don't seem to know their quarters—think some of them slipped into the wrong places. Infernal marriage! Still it's done, eh? How rascally mean all the old oaths are! Can't find any tremendous enough. It's such a big shame—the finest of women marrying a crack-brain. How I'd like to beat him, and her, and mankind generally. Well, all I can say is, hope the fellow isn't mad, after all, and that she will be plaguedly happy, confound her."

Leaning heavily upon Bensley's arm, this eccentric but true-hearted man, childishly petulant, pathetic and humorous by turns, poured with boyish frankness into the ear of his companion the story of his affection for the gifted actress. They walked on together many squares, until they stopped before a large, many-windowed house in the great central avenue of the city.

"Her apartments are here," said Mr. Broom; "and now I'll leave you. I wouldn't see her this moment for a kingdom. May she repent and know better! May the rascally affair get all right again somehow!"

CHAPTER XX.

GEORGE stood for many moments on the pavement before the house, and then walked thoughtfully on. Whether the fugitives had run to cover at that point, or elsewhere, was of course uncertain, and the youth had little heart to inquire. He had appointed with Mr. Sanford to meet him at his hotel at an hour then approaching, and he determined to proceed at once to the rendezvous, reveal his information, and leave the rest to the judgment of his companion.

The ride from Hareton that morning had been a strange one. Mr. Sanford was in the car when he entered; by a window, muffled, and sullenly staring without. He did not move until George called him by name.

"You are there," he answered.

"I hope you understand, Mr. Sanford, that it is my own business which takes me to New York?"

"Yes. But I do not object. If you can aid me, I shan't refuse you."

"On Harold's account, if I can aid you I will," replied George.

"Oh," sneered Sanford, and turned his shoulder upon his companion.

George took his seat by a window, which he threw open. The train was already in motion, and rushing along its iron path, over bridges and under bridges, down into valleys, through dark gorges, by villages, amid fields and meadows, but every change of scene was unheeded by the motionless and sullen Sanford. Even the passing trains, whirling by close to his face with sudden shriek and dash, neither stirred nor affected him. Wrapped in his bitterness, he was whirled along through rare landscapes and their thousand pencilings of light and shadow, heedless and indifferent, sense and thought busy only with the dark passions within.

But young Bensley, with quick eye for the landscapes, was busy, too, with many speculations and wonders. The scenes of last night haunted him; Carrie's wild cry still rang in his ear; and he was filled with an almost unconquerable impatience to penetrate into the mysterious cause. A score of times he made a motion to address his companion, and demand an explanation; but the certainty of a harsh repulse as often restrained him. At last, when

rising to leave the car at the station, an opportunity appeared to be afforded.

"Have you determined your mode of proceeding?" he asked.

"No."

"I have letters to deliver. In two or three hours hence I will meet you, if you desire it, where you appoint."

"Well," was the cool rejoinder, "at the Metropolitan."

"If that is your direction now," we walk together a little distance."

Sanford did not reply, and they left the station together.

"Mr. Sanford," said George, after some hesitation, "I cannot repress my surprise and concern at Carrie's extraordinary agitation last night."

"I shall be obliged to you, however, if you will repress them. Whether repressed or not, you can learn nothing."

"My interest in Carrie"——

"Confusion!" interrupted Sanford, hotly; "your cooperation in my present purpose is desirable, but I do not intend to pay for it by confessions, explanations, or conciliations of any sort. As for your interest in Carrie, you've no right now to have any interest in her. I require you to remember my commands last night. You may go with me, or not, as you like; but I beg you to be silent about Carrie."

George's blood tingled, but he was fully resolved to endure all possible lengths of Sanford's temper. A man whose ill-humor was so chronic and savage, was beneath resentment, he argued; and he was determined, moreover, not to jeopardize what little of his hopes remained by any childish ebullitions of temper or impatience. They soon separated, and George walked away briskly, and with a keen sense of relief. His course was directly to Mr. Granway's, where we have already found him.

When he arrived at the hotel, after parting with Mr. Broom, he found Mr. Sanford pacing the floor.

"I have learned nothing," said he, in his short, harsh way; "have you?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I have learned Miss Delville's customary residence. They are possibly there."

"In the city?"

"Not half a mile from here."

Sanford, without a word, gathered his coat tightly around him, and walked toward the door. Bensley followed.

"You will go there?"

"At once."

"And then."

"A curse upon her! I don't know what then, except to get Harold out of her clutches. Come."

He walked with long, swift strides, sometimes striking his foot upon the pavement as if he were crushing something obnoxious and hateful beneath it. In fewer than ten minutes they were at the place. It was one of those family hotels so common in the upper part of the city. Without pause Sanford rang, and, when the door was opened, entered without a word. The servant bowed, and looked inquiringly.

"Miss Delville," said Sanford, shortly.

"Yes, sir," replied the servant.

"Ah, we are right, then! Her room?"

"I don't know if she is in town"——

"Her room!" thundered Sanford, cutting short the fellow's evidently taught reply. "Don't equivocate. Hang your instructions. She is at home, so lead up at once."

The servant was unable to resist commands so imperative, and reluctantly led the way up the stairs. George's heart beat with apprehension as they ascended, for the hour was momentous, and a scene impended fraught with all possibilities of passion, and even crime. Even Sanford, hitherto so stubborn and unbending, was not insensible, apparently, to similar emotions, for he grasped the banister, and his frame swayed as if shaken by passion or fear. Upon reaching an upper passage, the servant approached a door and knocked; but Sanford, stepping quickly forward, seized the knob and threw the door widely open. George stepped between Sanford and the servant, and, as the former entered, he followed so closely as to shut the door instantly behind them.

There was a hasty stir and a suppressed cry. Lucie Delville was seated on a low ottoman, and Harold stretched on the floor at her feet. But, as the door was thrown open, he sprang quickly from his position, and Lucie stood upright.

For full sixty seconds not a word was spoken. George could hear his watch tick in the perfect stillness, and the beating of his heart seemed to him almost audible. Harold,

standing within a few feet of the lady, had his gaze fixed solely upon his father with an anxious quiver and shrinking in the eyes. He was the first to break the silence.

"You are not bidden to the banquet, sir," he exclaimed, with a strained jocoseness, "but we mean to make you welcome. You will be surprised and gratified when I present you to my"—

He turned, while speaking, toward his wife, for that was the word upon his lips; but the instant he saw her face, he stood almost stunned and still. His face and the face of Lucie were toward Bensley, but the features of Sanford were not within his line of sight. It was the expression in Lucie's face that checked Harold so abruptly—that stopped the important word and left it unspoken. Lucie was standing with her eyes steadily, but with a smothered fierceness, fixed upon the face of Sanford. She was very pale, and a single small drop of blood stood upon her lower lip. One hand pressed back her dress, as if to clear the folds from her feet; the other was tightly clutched at her side. But it was the eyes that startled and held entranced. The orbs, utterly black, had sunk deeply in their sockets, and a dark shadow encircled them; but sunken, contracted, almost lost in the shadow, they fairly blazed with a passion that made our young hero's heart leap. Harold, perplexed and startled, stood watching her for a moment, and then looked toward his father. The expression of his face was singular—a broken, shattered, uncollected look. His lip smiled, his brow frowned, his fingers wandered nervously to his watch-chain, his eye shifted anxiously and sharply from object to object. At last his eyes, resting momentarily upon his father, the expression of wildness appeared to subside, and he laughed painfully.

"Why, father," he said, patting his foot upon the carpet, "you and Lucie appear to have met before."

"We have," said Lucie, through her teeth.

"I came to ask," said Mr. Sanford, who remained nearly in the centre of the room, with his hands in his coat pockets, "I came to ask you, Harold, why I find you here with this—lady."

Harold flushed, and answered:

"She's my wife."

"She?" cried Sanford, starting in spite of himself.

"I assure you, my dear sir," said Harold, "a delightful lady"—

"She!" repeated Sanford, and went a little way toward her.

"There is scorn in your look and in your word, Mr. Sanford," exclaimed the lady. "Why? Tell me why?" These words were launched from Lucie's lips like bolts, and struck upon the ear sharp and ringing.

Sanford swept the air before him with one hand, as if to remove some impediment, and spoke slowly with suppressed passion:

"Shall I say why here?"

"Say why anywhere," was the hot reply; say why where you will. I am past injury, past hurt, past fear. Say why, where or how you may, the shame is Harold's more than mine."

"You do not fear disgrace in your lover's eyes, then?"

"There is no disgrace for me. There is nothing but revenge. Can nothing make you understand? I am married to your son. I planned it purposely, that by disgracing him I might be revenged on you—my disgrace, which you brought on me, I swore you or yours should either lift from me or share with me."

"Lucie!" said Harold, perplexed and wonderingly.

"That is what I swore, Harold," she said, without looking toward him. "At first I meant to marry you because I hated your father; when I came to know you my purpose faltered, and then was hurried on by a new motive."

"My dear——." He came up and tried to take her hand.

"Do not touch me. Your father is to determine whether now my future is love or hatred—for it can be either."

"Harold," said Mr. Sanford, still calm, possessed, immovable, "I cannot believe you are really married; but if married I venture to presume you did not know to whom or what."

"Shall I tell him?" interrupted Lucie. Speak, William Sanford. By heaven, the words are upon my lips. I can bear anything—reflect if *you* can. Harold," said she wheeling suddenly around toward her young husband, "your father and I have met before—it was a long ten years ago. Then I was a girl of sixteen years, and your father—shall I say what you were, Sanford? Shall I say? Come, I am impatient. I have waited many years for this hour, and yet I pause because I am merciful, because my

heart is weak, because Harold here has made me human almost to forgiveness. But shall I speak?"

"This is cunningly said, Lucie Dalton."

"Not Delville?" exclaimed Harold.

"Of course an assumed name," said Mr. Sanford, with the calm, hissing contempt with which every word had been uttered.

"I care no more for names," said Harold, "than I do for bubbles. They are as easily blown or broken. Lucie is beautiful, father—there is magnificent womanhood in her. She could conquer the entire masculine race with a glance of her eye. It was a freak to run away, of course; but it is my old habit, you know, never to give a thing a thought until it is behind me. Coming events I run plump into with arms open. I am married—there is Lucie, the delightful, before you, so please think of a pretty blessing, and let us have our comedy over."

"Have done," said Sanford, sternly. "This marriage is not valid; it is a fraud; it shall not stand. You shall not marry an——"

"Actress," said Lucie, quietly. "We will, if you please, advance by degrees. The worser epithet will come by-and-by. If you were reasonably proud, this might be bad enough for you, as men think—but I swear, if you go on, not to hesitate to apply to your son's wife every name your imagination conceives."

"An actress," exclaimed Harold, with childish delight, "that accounts! that's a solution! My charming divinity; I shall not rest an hour until I see your tragedy——"

"This is folly," interrupted Sanford. "For you, madam, your threats only amuse me. You have tricked my son into a marriage; but it shall not stand. And that it shall not stand, I will not hesitate to make known your early history——"

"All my early history?"

"All."

"You dare not, Sanford. Before your son here, you dare not say that his wife—you, her guardian—you, her scheming, licentious, accursed guardian, dared to make——"

"My unprincipled enemy! An enemy whose shallow story the world will laugh at, but never think of believing."

"You are disgraced forever, Harold," cried the woman, now lashed into a fury. "I was stained, destroyed, maddened by a villain you call your father—thank him for the

woman, dishonored in the world's estimation, who calls you husband. I accept my fate—accept the shame and scorn of the world—but you must, *must* share them with me."

"Harold," said Mr. Sanford, stepping nearer his son, his voice for the first time losing its coldness and harshness, "Harold, think of me and believe me. This woman has planned this marriage as a blow at me because I am so deeply attached to you, and because that attachment teaches me to look with horror on such a union. She is a bad woman, Harold—believe the one man in the world whom you've always known and trusted."

A thousand recollections rushed upon Harold. His father's words recalled the long, united, affectionate years. They two had stood heart to heart against the world; to the strong nature of his father he had always clung; under the protection of his formidable will not only the world and enemies, but even his cruel destiny, appeared defied. The fact that his father loved him alone, plain to him as well as to others, was, to his outcast and shattered mind, an exquisite delight. This appeal, therefore, coming to him with all this weight of sympathies and affection, staggered and bewildered him. To give up his father seemed to his imagination an abandonment to the unknown horrors of a terrible destiny—to give up Lucie, a surrender of a new faith already competing in strength and fervor with the old.

"Sanford," exclaimed Lucie, passionately. "I love your son. Whatever I planned at first he has touched me. None know better than you how little in truth I have deserved the world's scorn. Give me Harold, and bury your hatred and mine."

"Never! I do not forgive."

"Sanford, I wish I could strike you dead. My God, I have the will. You to dare stand there and talk of forgiveness! I was nearly mad then with the wrong you did me. I am nearly mad with it now. Forgiveness! The word is more than I have power to endure."

"These are your trade tricks," sneered Sanford. "You act your part well."

"Sir, please don't," said Harold, whose sympathies were vibrating swiftly toward Lucie. "Lucie is mine. I worship her. I cannot live without her, and I defy what the world says. She is noble and dear to me; I glory in her,

Let us all live happily together—if we cannot, Lucie has won me——”

“Harold,” exclaimed Lucie, with great emotion, and tremblingly sat down.

Mr. Sanford reached a chair and leaned upon it. His rocky, firm, unimpressible manner seemed yielding somewhat; he spoke slowly, and in a low voice, as if Harold’s weakening affection for him was reaching and touching his obdurate heart. “This is fancy,” said he. “It will not last. As for the lady, she has a pleasant story to tell you, in which my name, no doubt, will appear—but Harold, believe in your father, whom you have known for over twenty years, in preference to one you’ve known only a few weeks. This woman has been calculating nicely upon the injury she could inflict upon me by a disagreeable marriage like this—but there is one circumstance fatal to her plan. She did not appear to know there are reasons which will render a marriage with my son utterly void.”

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Lucie, involuntarily, and grasping Harold’s arm.

“Madam, I can snap your marriage like a packthread. Harold is insane.”

Lucie shrieked and sprang from the side of her young husband, with an impulse of horror.

“It’s a lie! It’s a lie!” vehemently exclaimed Harold, and flung himself upon his knees at the feet of Lucie, clasping her waist, grasping her hands, and mingling with an outbreak of violent grief, entreaties, passionate denials, fierce denunciations. Lucie sunk upon the ottoman, half stunned, and heedless of his violent passion. Sanford’s triumph, indeed, was only momentary. The flood of indignation which he had aroused in Harold’s heart startled and alarmed him. However much master of the situation so far as regards Lucie, the reaction of his words so bitterly against himself in the wider estrangement of Harold, rendered his victory almost more than a defeat. He remained silently looking upon them, but young Bensley detected a slight quiver or movement of the lower lip, indicating that he was reached and in part subdued—subdued, however, with only a momentary tenderness. The great black tides of passion that always so sullenly chafed about his heart, soon rose and whelmed in their dark depths his brief humanity. With a ferocious oath he turned upon his heel and walked to the door. “Harold,” said he, “you have

been seduced into a marriage with a woman whose reputation is infamous. Live with her if you can, but lose me forever.”

He went out followed by a cry of indignation from Lucie. Harold, however, intent only upon her, did not heed his father’s words, but continued at Lucie’s side, striving to console and calm her.

CHAPTER XXI.

HAROLD, passionately kissing Lucie’s face and hands, kneeling by her side, showering caresses and words of tenderness upon her, did not observe the half shudder with which she turned from him.

“Try and let me see you alone,” she whispered to George. “I must. Please bring it about.”

It was difficult to withdraw Harold from her side. His tenderness was rendered touching by a certain queer fantastic air with which it was bestowed; and he was unwilling to let her hand pass from his for a single instant.

“I do not care for praise or blame, Lucie,” he whispered; “we can laugh and be happy anywhere; we shall dance and be merry; we can talk and sing; we can find amusement and happiness everywhere. Look at me, Lucie. I am capable of loving you as well as any man. I am not so mad as the world is: it’s all because I cannot be as dull as the rest, as prudent as the rest, as mild and weak as the rest; it’s all because my blood is hot, my tongue quick, and my brain full of fire, that they call me mad. The world call all mad who think and feel—sure signs of it in any man. Look at me, Lucie. If I am mad kill, but while I live do not refuse to love me.”

Lucie could not resist this appeal. She turned, he caught her cheeks between his two hands, and burst into a long peal of merriment.

“It’s all sunshine again. I defy clouds. The wind is southerly. I see in your eyes the old fascination. Smile, only smile, and we’ll charge pell-mell upon calumny, the world and the devil.”

Lucie smiled with a painful effort, and Harold, leaping to his feet, jumped about the room with ecstasy.

“Now, Harold,” said Lucie, appealing to him at once

frankly, "won't you let me have a little talk with your friend, Mr. Bensley? Not long. Come back in fifteen minutes."

"It is banishment," said Harold, running up and taking her hands; "but I'll go, because I see in your eyes you wish it. Don't let him poison your heart with abominable stories; a lover is not worth a kiss that isn't half mad. I am going, but I shall be chilled to the heart's core until my fairy whispers me to come back again. I am charmed, Lucie—caught in a trap set by your eyes: but I like the captivity. I shall wear the chains with delight. Good-bye. George, I hate you for causing me to be driven away; no matter. I'll dance and sing outside until you call me back."

Going to the door and returning again, to and fro he passed, uttering these sentences, and every time his hand touched the knob, his courage appeared to fail.

"Come, Harold, please comply," at last said George.

"Yes, yes, I know. I go. But don't believe a word he may say against me, Lucie. Not a word! What do I care for the past, or for opinions, or for the world, or for anything now except Lucie Delville? Of course Lucie Delville. That's the name we all know you by—the one the world knows you by. Well! I see you want me to go. Good-bye. I'll put my patience to what shifts I can to keep it cool and tractable."

Mustering sudden resolution, he darted through the door.

"Now, Mr. Bensley," said Miss Delville, the instant he was gone, "tell me something about Harold. Is he insane? Are his father's terrible words true?"

"Did you never suspect anything?"

"I saw only a lively fancy. My profession throws me among those whose parts are active, whose tempers are eccentric, and who exhibit insanity as much as ever Harold does."

"His friends say, that while his talk is merely fanciful, in act he is utterly without judgment."

"For instance, his marriage with an actress."

"A clandestine marriage," said George, bowing, "exposes any man's judgment to suspicion."

"So says the prudent world," replied the lady disdainfully. "For me, I meant Harold should marry an actress and an outcast as a revenge upon his father. I did not care for my own part in the drama; I was full of passion,

and a hot thirst to be revenged, and, in seeking my end, never stopped to consider what sufferings might inure to me; and so I went on, and, to my great disquiet, soon saw that, in attempting to dazzle Harold, I, too, had been fascinated; the charmer was charmed. I came to like him—to love the man I was seeking to ruin; but that love rendered my hatred of the father more intense; for it was he who had made me unworthy the love I had been too successful in winning. And now, sincerely attached to the son of my enemy, frenzied with recollection of my past, startled by this new tale of insanity, I know not what to do, how to turn, what to accept or deny. I feel like a child; I implore your aid and judgment. Tell me, first, what am I to think of Harold—is there no hope this terrible story is not true?"

"I know little of Harold's early life," replied George, or of the causes that contributed to his disordered mind. You have married him; why not cherish him, watch over and protect him? If his insanity never exhibit a worse form than it has in my presence, your lives may pass smoothly and happily."

"I thank you, Mr. Bensley," replied the lady, with fervor and feeling. "I wanted a little common-sense in my troubled brain; you have afforded it. I begin to see clearer. Harold and I are wedded; I do, in spite of myself, delight in his fanciful sportive intelligence; my life must be an odd journey at best; why not let it go on as it has begun? But——"

She stopped, and struck the palms of both hands upon her brow.

"But the past! That biting, bitter shame!"

She walked the floor rapidly and with passionate moaning. Her cries reached Harold, who came running anxiously in; and, alarmed at her renewed agitation, he flung himself before her, and caught her cheeks between his hands.

"Come, Lucie, no grief! Tell me what it means."

"Harold," said she, looking for a moment steadily and earnestly into his eyes, "I want to tell you my story. I want you to hear it, too, Mr. Bensley."

Harold, holding her two hands, led her to a chair, flung himself upon the floor at her feet, the attitude in which Sanford and George found him, and placed his head in her lap. She pushed it gently from her knee.

"Not now, Harold, I am going to tell my story first. Until you have heard it sit farther apart. And you, Mr. Bensley, are standing. Harold, will you offer Mr. Bensley a chair, and place your own near his?"

Harold, with his usual fine courtesy, complied with these directions. Lucie, seated in a roomy arm-chair, wheeled it so that only part of her face was visible.

"Let me sit this way while I talk," said she, "I know that you are listening, and I need not see you."

Harold was restless, and would have left his chair; but George quietly restrained him, imploring him in a low whisper to yield to Lucie's wishes.

"Go on, my charmer," said he, "but remember that I care nothing for it. I married your future, and not your past."

"I will tell the story, Harold, and Mr. Bensley will be witness that I conceal nothing from you. Perhaps I ought to have told you before, but your father says the marriage can be annulled. I shall not oppose the attempt after you have learned it all. Will you listen? Shall I begin?"

"Yes," said Harold.

"My father was a Frenchman, who came to Louisiana in his youth, married there, and in the city of New Orleans I was born. I was very young when some change in his affairs called him back to France. He went, carrying his wife and child with him. A few years later my mother died; and then ensued long, troubled years, which I remember indistinctly, and cannot describe. The nature of our difficulties I can only surmise. My father became concerned in politics; was identified with a vast secret organization whose principles were liberal, and in opposition to the government. There came at last exposure, disruption, and banishment of many persons. My father fled, escaping from Paris at night, with considerable wealth, which he had secreted, in gold and many valuable stones and jewels. It was a long, dangerous, hunted journey; but at last we reached a seaport on the Mediterranean. In the harbor lay an American vessel, recently from Smyrna and Egypt, and on her return to America. To my father's delight her destination proved to be the port of New Orleans, my native city, which my father, during all his years in Paris, had not failed to think of with affection and sympathy. There was no delay in making the proper arrangements. The Captain agreed to embark at once, we being secretly

smuggled on board. In four hours we were gliding out upon the waters of the Mediterranean, safe and free.

"The vessel—it was a brig—was nominally in command of one Captain Mason, but a gentleman on board was either its owner, or stood in some relation to it that rendered everything but the mere navigation of the vessel under his authority. It had been on a trading voyage up the Mediterranean, and, with a cargo of Eastern products was on its way to the western continent. The person on board whom I have mentioned was Mr. Sanford."

An involuntary movement on the part of the listeners for a moment arrested the narrative. Lucie paused until the surprise thus evinced had subsided, when she resumed.

"This Mr. Sanford became closely intimate with my father, and soon succeeded in ingratiating himself into his confidence. My father was very ill, and sinking rapidly under the mental distress which his misfortunes excited. He died in mid-ocean, and his daughter, utterly alone in the great world, was almost maddened as she saw his body cast into the sea. A long, intense grief ensued, which Sanford strove by every means to assuage. He was tender, attentive; his solicitude appeared most profound and sincere. You may well be surprised; but the end he had in view made him a painstaking actor. Ten days after the death of my father he astonished me by saying that my father had appointed him my guardian. To my incredulous questions he replied by showing me a document authorizing it, which was forged I now am sure. He allayed my suspicions and wonder by declaring that he had known my father intimately during his former residence in New Orleans. This I had no reason to doubt, and I was only too glad to surrender myself to the care of one I could trust. My father's effects he took possession of, which I did not oppose. There was with him his young daughter, a child of six years."

"Her name?" asked George, quickly.

"Carrie. We became attached to each other, but I was glad to perceive, when I found her on the Hareton road a few weeks ago, that she had no recollection of me. After a long voyage of sixty days we arrived at New Orleans; thence, after a brief interval, we went to Mobile, where I remained under the charge of Sanford scarcely more than six months, I have recently learned that he described me abroad as his daughter; and while he gave me that honored

name in public, he led me—most cruelly led me—to believe that I was known by one the most dishonored of all that can be applied to woman. The discovery of this fact, only recently made, caused me more than ever to burn for my revenge. His object was to make me that which he taught me to believe men thought me. My father's money he rigidly retained, and doled out small pittances to me. I supposed there was no redress for this, and submitted as patiently as possible; but I soon began to hate my bondage and loathe my guardian. And when at last he unmasked himself, when I saw all that he purposed, and knew that under the familiar relation of ward and guardian his designs were black and wicked, I repelled his authority, denied his guardianship, demanded my liberty and my father's property. Harold, I am talking of your father."

"You are talking to your husband," was Harold's reply; but he covered his face."

"I will go on, because I must. The end of the story is, that one night I escaped from his house—an elopement, a disappearance, it was currently reported; but it was in truth a flight from ruin and disgrace."

Harold sprang up with uncontrollable emotion.

"I understand you, Harold," said Lucie, "and two days ago would have delighted in your horror and shame. I am not a good woman, Harold; I am a passionate, vindictive one. I wanted to stab at your father's peace to the very core—I wanted to force back upon him, in a way he should feel, the woman he had cast out and sought to destroy—to heap upon him some bitter and unbearable shame. And I have failed. Perhaps under any circumstances I should have reached my own heart more than his. As it is, I have brought unspeakable sorrow upon myself. I meant to marry you out of my hatred to your name. I did marry you, loving you and devoted to you—would continue so if my past permitted it."

"Go on," said Harold, sitting down by George and grasping his hand.

"A few sentences tell the rest. Sanford stopped at nothing—entreaties, passionate appeals, violence even; he importuned and besieged me by every fair and false means his ingenuity could devise. He told me one day, and stated circumstances to prove it, that I was commonly reported through the town to be what he designed to make me. 'Reputation is already lost,' said he. 'I offered you mar-

riage and honorable love; you rejected them. I swore you should be mine; your fame is already lost; the rest shall follow.' I escaped from his house that night—escaped by a violent struggle from his arms, polluted, I feel, by his touch; not guilty, I knew, in my heart, but not innocent either—escaped burnt up with a fury and hatred I have no words to describe—escaped swearing to live only for some complete revenge. In so far as I escaped pure the merit was mine. He designed the worst, and had, so I then believed, dishonored me to the world as much as if indeed the thing he purposed to make me. That he dared attempt to make my father's daughter that thing, has been enough to fill me with the maddest hatred to him and his. I fled from the city and the state. I had talent, I supposed, and but one profession was within my reach. I went upon the stage. My life since then has been what many would call a life of pleasure, but it has been innocent pleasure. I know what the charms of home are; I know what the delicate virtues, and retiring modesty, and pure emotions that flourish in the bosom of home; and I know that all these are not mine. My life has been the gay, the worldly, the superficial, and must continue so. I am the world's victim, and school myself in the activities and excitements of a stirring profession to forget and scorn the world's injustice and condemnation."

"Calumny has no force," said Harold, "unless our friends believe it. Come, Lucie, my love shall make amends for all."

"No," said Lucie, with an effort to be firm. "Mr. Bensley, take him back. I was mad when I thought of marriage. It can be undone. Go, Harold—your peace and happiness is with your father. I will be as I was before."

"And I," replied Harold, "cannot creep away in a corner. When you are by the sun shines; if I leave you there is a cloud upon me for ever. I love you, Lucie—what do I care for the world? It and I are enemies. I hate it—defy it—stamp upon it! It thinks I am mad because my blood is not cold and villainous; it calls me mad because I see through its shams, trickeries, rottenness. It always does call men mad who can read and understand it. Lucie, my disposition may sometimes be eccentric; but love me as before, and I shall be subdued and softened in the sweet delight of that knowledge."

"Mr. Bensley," said Lucie, looking over at George, while she strove to keep Harold a little distance from her, "what shall I do?"

"Will you let me ask you," replied George, apparently occupied with his own thought rather than with the lady's question, "where Harold was during your acquaintance with Mr. Sanford?"

"At school in the north," answered Harold. "I know the time well."

"Do not think there is any deceit, Mr. Bensley," said Lucie. "I knew Sanford had a son—did not see him, and knew nothing more. Now, please answer my question."

"You should decide according to the impulse of your own heart. Nothing can be safer. For my part, I do not forget he is your husband."

"Nor I," exclaimed she, and held out her hands to Harold.

"A million blessings!" cried Harold, with tearful fervor, "a million! Go to my father, George; tell him to put a lock and key on the past. Tell him the wind is southerly, and I am mad only nor-northwest. Tell him I've found a pearl and mean to wear it. Tell him I'm lovesick, mad with passion and fondness. Tell him I dote and coo like the race of lovers, whom all the world know are fools. That's it—I'm a fool, and folly is the sure bane for madness. All the world has found it out. Good-bye. Go, leave us, and may you marry Carrie, and love her a tenth as much as I do Lucie. Now go, intruder, go!"

Thus playfully thrust from the room, George yielded with willingness. On reaching the street, he hastened at once to the hotel where he hoped to find Sanford. He was informed he had taken rooms, and was then in his apartments. He sent up his card, but to his indignation, word was returned refusing an interview.

His blood tingled a little at this gratuitous insult, but began to tingle a little more as he recalled all his part in the day's events. His assistance in the pursuit of Harold and Lucie had been marked, perhaps, by a voluntary activity; and in shifting his ground so rapidly from that of friend to the pursuer to friend of the pursued, was he justified? Lucie, even by her own story, was not the wife a man could desire. But so far as the fact of the marriage was concerned, our hero acquitted himself of any complicity. He had only given countenance when it was too

late to retrace—when it was clear that Harold's heart and mind were bound up in his bride. The marriage, it is true, as Sanford had said, could be annulled, and Harold the incompetent rescued from a schemer; but a schemer in no cold or mercenary sense. She had been wronged, was fiercely prompted to revenge, had been driven into a profession which blunted, perhaps, some of the nicer perceptions of right and wrong, and impelled by her passions and her sufferings, had swept on to her purpose heedless of herself, blind to all but the injury she might inflict. Strangely enough, her trap had sprung upon herself; hatred had led to love; what her rage and passion had proposed, fate had widely and differently disposed, and perhaps there was still hope for them both. Of all women, could she not understand Harold best? Those eccentric, strange flashings of temper and fancy, which to many would only show a disordered brain, to her imagination might appear as the erratic outbursts of genius. She was a woman who had got away from the tyranny of the commonplace; there was a freedom about her which would correspond with Harold's freedom. Perhaps his life had not heretofore been suitable to the conditions of his mind; the battle, shift, various play, kaleidoscope change in active city life were often wholesome, and, doubtless, would prove so to him.

CHAPTER XXII.

"A MAN of many brothers, Mr. Bensley," said Mr. Thomas Granway, indolently, in his library the day following the events of the last chapter, "and Mr. Twitt, who is the best of counsellors, keeps watch over all the effects of my brothers, not exclusive of numberless lads and lasses. I don't mind, Mr. Bensley, if lads and lasses have acceptable manner, and rid one of all responsibility. Unfortunately, nieces and nephews are always in difficulty and wanting advice, and expecting you to be paternal, and all that. And here Mr. Twitt has written to me his troubles about Miss Susan Granway. I wish he hadn't—I really wish he hadn't. What do I know, what can I know about a young woman? He says she fascinates the gentlemen, is

fascinated in turn by gentlemen, and will be sure to marry a village youth without a dime. I have written to Twitt that I don't care. I have said to Mr. Twitt—your judgment is good, it sees all sides—decide what to do, and do it. Very troublesome this, Mr. Bensley, looking at all sides of a subject. Whatever Twitt does I have no doubt in the world the young lady's father would sanction, if he were here. I have said all this to Mr. Twitt, and I beg you, Mr. Bensley, to repeat it."

"I shall not forget, sir."

"But I am really perplexed about the affairs of another brother. You see, sir, I had six brothers, and only one excepting me alive. My brother Lemuel wandered off to the Southern country; settled in a South American city; made very large sums of money; married the daughter of an English resident; came here to see us once in a while; lost his wife very sadly by a fever; and a few years afterward came home broken-hearted, because his daughter, a mere child, had run away with an adventurer, Colway his name, from the Southern States. He brought with him wealth, those trading ports are very lively, no doubt, but afford no opportunity for that art and literary culture which alone render wealth a means of pleasure."

Mr. Granway paused, and looked with vast complacency around his sumptuous and agreeable apartment. "My dear brother," he resumed, "cared not a straw for books, for pictures, for the stage; nothing amused him, nothing occupied him; he mourned his lost daughter, and sunk into a melancholy that killed him. That's his story, which I excuse myself from repeating, because it leads to the subject of one of Mr. Twitt's letters."

"I find the story very interesting," said George, perceiving Mr. Granway had paused as if he expected him to say something.

"Of course, you see," resumed Mr. Granway, changing one luxurious attitude for another, "it was quite incumbent on me to make search for the daughter upon the death of my brother. Mr. Twitt said so; my friends said so; my conscience, as far as I could make it out, said so, too. I told Twitt to go to work, and invested the property left by Lemuel in trust for the heir. That was a number of years ago. South America is a long way off, and people die in those countries with remarkable ease. Twitt left nothing undone, he assured me. And now, sir,

what do you think? At this late moment a chapter of the history turns up. A clue to the daughter's movements has been found. It is proved she had a child; that her husband died; that she married again—and here all positive information ends. But rumor, it seems, is an active institution under the equator. The rumors which Twitt's correspondents entertain us with are, that my brother's daughter went with her second husband—name uncertain, but supposed to be Maywood—up the Mediterranean, whence he returned without her, alleging that she was dead; and that afterward the husband disappeared. Twitt now thinks the search may as well be abandoned. Pray, sir, what do you think?"

"It seems to me you have done your duty in the matter. How long has the search been prosecuted?"

"Full ten years."

"In my poor judgment, you are justified in ending what appears to be a hopeless pursuit. But Mr. Twitt, sir, is your adviser."

"Of course! of course! But lawyers do not always get on the humane or benevolent side of a subject. I wanted the opinion of a man like yourself. And I am really relieved. Not that I am anxious for Lemuel's property; I have quite enough for my simple tastes—quite. I am a bachelor, you see; no spendthrift sons; no bills at Stewart's and Tiffany's for charming daughters. The sagacious Twitt knows this well enough, and makes a suggestion in his letter which does him honor. I only want to be sure; I know Twitt wants to be sure; and if Twitt says we can go ahead, I really cannot see why we shouldn't, although I cannot feel that a young lady who thinks Tupper a love of a poet, and goes to sleep over Sheridan, is exactly the thing."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I don't"—

"Understand? True enough. I made a short cut, and forgot the story. Miss Susan Granway is rather poor; so is Tom, named after me, her brother, now at West Point. There are four of them who call me guardian. The other two live virtuously with their mothers, who have consented to survive; and have wealth. Mr. Twitt thinks the evidence will transfer the custody of Lemuel's property to his heirs-at-law; and as Susan and Tom are poor, urges that not only the necessary steps should be taken at once, but that my interest in the property should be trans-

ferred to them. As I am heir to several of my brothers who died without issue, you will perceive that is much the larger portion."

Again Mr. Granway was silent, and George not perceiving that he was called upon to say anything, bowed his thanks for all this confidence, and was silent, too.

"I am the frankest of men," resumed the man of many brothers; "I am talking to you exactly as I talk to Twitt, and before putting these letters in your hands I was desirous of chatting over their contents. Will it surprise you if I say I have written to Twitt to do as he pleases? I expect to live twenty years yet. That's my mark. I don't wear myself out, you see; quiet enjoyment, lively society, active habits, sprightly temper, no vexations—twenty years is positively very moderate. A man that's called Tom at fifty-five might be excused for putting off old age to the other side of eighty. But twenty years would keep these nieces and nephews a long time out of my property—why not let them have Lemuel's at once, and make the best of it?"

"A highly honorable thought, Mr. Granway."

"Oh, don't praise it. I am not talking for praise. All I care about is—what if Lemuel's daughter, or children of his daughter, suddenly come to light? A plague on it, there's a romantic side of my nature which leads me continually to expect the improbable. I really do believe I ought to have been a novelist. It is astonishing the pleasant stories my fancy takes delight in constructing—and all with such charming last chapters. However, hard-hearted Twitt should have his own way, I suppose; for Twitt—not the least knowledge of art or poetry—is deuced good at matter-of-fact. Let me ask you if you have seen Miss Susan?"

"Yes, several times."

"Pretty, eh?"

"I thought so."

"Let me offer you a glass of wine. I will not ring. Here it is at our easy service on the sideboard. Pretty, eh? Now, do you really approve of my plan as to Lemuel's property? Sherry, sir?"

"Sherry, if you please. I must say, sir, your plan does not appear to me in any way objectionable."

"I am exceedingly glad to hear you say so. Do be good enough, will you, to say the same thing to Twitt. Try and make him look at it as we unpractical men do."

"Why, I thought, sir, the plan originated with Twitt."

"Did I say so? I believe I did say so. A little diplomacy, Mr. Bensley. I thought it would look so much more sensible and business-like if it appeared to come from Twitt. I am sincerely afraid, though, Twitt would never have thought of it—in fact, I am considerably afraid he will scarcely sanction it. However, I trust the case to you, Mr. Bensley—make it appear as sensible and proper as you can, will you? Dear me, I had forgot the sherry. I beg your pardon. By the bye, how about Miss Delville? Is she, in fact, married?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Sanford was too late to prevent it."

"A fine bit of romance, altogether, wasn't it?"

At this moment a rapid step was heard upon the stairs, and almost instantly Mr. Jack Broom came hurried and bustling into the room.

"There you are, blast you," he cried, "and at it! Jupiter! Just in time. A glass for me, Tom. And you, Mr. Bensley, delighted to see you. What do you think, Tom? I've seen her. As confoundedly magnificent as ever. And that isn't all. I've seen the old gentleman. Hang it, he looks as if he was born bear, sucked bear, eat bear, lived bear. The infernal savage snapped my head off, and looked as if he would like the rest of my anatomy because I asked him a question about the affair."

"But the husband, Jack?"

"Mad—horribly—and of course the marriage can be untied. She'll be glad enough to be rid of a madman, and Sanford and I are going to manage it?"

"Sanford and you?"

"Yes, gad, though! it was a difficult job. But I brought it about. Nothing like oil, Tom—oil and sugar. He was devilish tough at first, but the way I tickled him was delightful. Hang me, I'd agree to tame a hyena in six easy lessons. It wasn't long before Sanford was smoothed down—oiled, salivated, put in a juicy state, ready to be taken in whole—just as any infernally nasty boar would do when serving up an ox for dinner. Oh, I got him. Never saw such a bear in my life. But it took Jack Broom—and he's safe down stairs at the door, in a carriage."

"Mr. Broom," said George, "I sincerely believe Miss Delville loves Harold, and that he loves her. Ought they to be separated?"

"She don't care a bit of chalk for him. Nothing but

revenge. These injured women love their revenge better than anything. Can't understand it. Now, I've got a heart to forgive a dun—once pardoned my washerwoman because she came twice for her money. Take my word for it, Bensley—she don't care a fig for him. But there's Sanford in the carriage. I promised to bring him up if the coast was all clear. Now, my dear Bensley, confound it, you'll have to get out, you really will."

"Very cheerfully, sir. But I do hope you'll do nothing to affect either Harold's or the lady's happiness."

"Plague on it, don't I like her? Don't fear. Even if she lose a madman, and find Jack Broom, there will be no cause for tears, I'll be sworn. Come, I must hurry back to Sanford."

"I'll say good-day to Mr. Granway at once," said George; "I have all his directions."

Broom followed George down the stairs and parted with him at the hall-door. He then went to the carriage, threw open the door, and Sanford emerged.

"A very old friend of mine," said Broom, as he ushered him up the stairs, "a very old friend, a capital fellow, and just the man to aid us. Knows Lucie—great influence over Lucie—just the man to persuade her to give Harold up."

"I come," replied Sanford, more stern and sullen even than his wont, "at your request. All I desire is to have this marriage annulled. You may do with the woman as you like afterward."

"Exactly so. Confound it, Lucie must be saved from a madman—she's too fine a creature for a fate like that."

Sanford did not reply, and followed his companion into the presence of Tom Granway. Mr. Granway stepped cordially forward to welcome his guest.

"Mr. Granway," said Mr. Broom, in his off-hand manner.

"The name?" said Sanford, without noticing Granway's hand, and turning darkly to Broom.

"Granway! Granway! Tom Granway! Everybody knows Tom Granway."

"Mr. Thomas Granway."

"The same."

Sanford looked darkly, and with ill-suppressed passion from the face of one to the other; then abruptly turned upon his heel, and strode from the room.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Broom, staring after him.

"The deuce it is!" said Mr. Granway, and sat down laughing at the amazement of his friend. "Who can he be?"

"Hang me! Blow me! What in the name of—of—blast it, Tom, help me to an oath, will you? What did the confounded fellow mean? Never saw a man so cut, though, in my life before. Gad, there's something wrong, somewhere. That fellow doesn't like to hear his conscience tick in the dark. A bit of his past history must have popped up in the dark at the sight of you. Plague me, if I don't find out what it is. Just wait. Ask me to breakfast to-morrow—no, the next day—and if I don't bring you the soundings of that cistern, write me down an ass with all possible rapidity. Good-bye, Tom—look out for mystery, and a splendid fifth act. Good-bye."

With numerous nods and waves of the hand, our vivacious gentleman ran down into the street. The carriage was gone, and Jack, after a volley of epithets and exclamations, buttoned his coat up tightly as if in that way to button up his determination, started briskly down the street in the search for Mr. Sanford and Mr. Sanford's secret, emphasising his purpose as he went along with a good many whacks with his cane upon the pavement.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was the second day after his return to Hareton before the duties of the office enabled George to ride over to Ellen's cottage. He found her in the pleasant parlor, by the open window, musingly busy with her needle. Busy, too, with strange dreams, if the flaming torches in her cheeks told a true tale.

"Alone, I see," said George, as he entered, and his eye wandered about for Carrie.

"Why, don't you know?" said she, rising, taking his two hands and leading him to a seat by her side. "Don't you know, George?"

"I understand," he replied, turning very white in spite of himself; "she is gone!"

"Yes. Two days after his departure, a special messenger came for her."

"Ellen, I may never see her again," exclaimed the lover passionately.

"You never may," replied Ellen, shutting her lips resolutely.

"Mr. Sanford is resolute in his purpose to separate us, you think?"

"I do."

"What are his reasons?"

"My brother has only passions and prejudices—never reasons."

"But Carrie, certainly, does not act from passion or prejudice."

"From duty, perhaps."

"Does she refuse even to speak with me from duty?" replied the youth. "And duty to what—to whom? What is the mystery between her and her father? I am wild, thinking of these things. Do you recollect her terrible scream—her wild terror—that night?"

"I do; and if you had seen her when that messenger arrived! She frightened me, her grief was so violent—more violent than any cause I could think of justified. But she is Harold's sister, remember that. She knows, I am aware, the danger which lurks in that fact, and hence her conduct toward you."

"But, Ellen, must I lose her?"

Ellen's brow flushed, and her eyes blazed with a meaning light. But with effort she silenced the word that came to her lips, and uttered only some commonplace. The lover paced the floor in silent agitation, and Ellen was too wise to push her advantage at that moment. But, as she stood watching him, the feverish purpose that worked and warmed in her heart of hearts gathered new hopes and new strength. Carrie lost, indeed! Then why not the crowning of her passionate dream?

The interview was brief. George rode homeward in a stunned, dull, yet feverish way. Carrie now, indeed, appeared lost beyond hope. Before, faith had been big; it had looked through the clouds, and fancied the sun was behind them; it had hoped and dwelt fondly on the certainty of daylight ahead. But faith and hope and all were now cast down, for unknown distances were already between him and Carrie; their paths separating, would reach, with every day's duration, into wider and more impassable spaces.

But his grief, profound and passionate, was mingled with a little disquiet and shame, born of Ellen's merciless scorn of his affection. Young, impressible, for long years under the influence of this strong woman's intellect—her words, her appeals, her scorn, had not failed to awaken some responses. The clamor of her arguments, the sharp, biting character of her scorn, a sympathy with the passions to which she appealed, all had reached him through his weaknesses. A young man's love is impetuous; it springs from emotions not well understood, and is apt to hide itself in the corners of the heart. To have his affection for Carrie so sweepingly attacked, and by one who had always been his law and guide—to have it presented as destructive to his ambition, ruinous to his fortunes, an insuperable bar to his success—had been to array against it every aspiration, wish, vanity, hope; in fact, to put in opposition to his love the entire remainder of his nature. For a long time his love had stood strongly up in this unequal contest; but if now, when hope itself forsakes his boyish passion, when not an ally remains, the heart should yield somewhat to the charm of Ellen's feverish words—if—

We will not write it. Strength, and faith, and courage, and long fidelity, are more or less in all of us; and he displays the most of those qualities who is not too severely pressed or tempted.

The days passed. In the office all day was the outwardly calm routine of duty—study and labor succeeded and pressed upon each other; but far behind law-books, and many fathoms below law-papers, were incessant ebbs and floods and shiftings of many-tinted thoughts. Down one page of Story or Kent the eye follows, and down, too, sinks the undertone of passion—low sinks hope, and dull grows the golden vista of the future; along another page of Story or Kent the eye follows, and while the mind grasps the measured phrases and close analyses, far down beneath logic or law the heart is bounding on billows and catching the rays of a glorious to-come. Outwardly, dry duty, passionless labor; inwardly, cloud and sunshine, light and shadow.

He is frequently now a visitor at the cottage. Tony is kept in Hareton, and the distance is so much less than to Clefside, that he often rides over in the twilight, and either returns later in the evening, or gallops back in the

early morning. Ellen is always alone, and the hours thus passed are full of history. Invariably it is the disappointed, gloomy, saddened youth that rides up to the cottage; invariably it is the half-ecstatic yet feverish youth that waves back gallant adieux from the saddle as he departs. Never, during their long years of friendship, did Ellen knit herself so closely to him; never before did he so experience the influence and beneficent sweetness of woman's interest and affection. Ellen was more than herself; her active, vivid intellect was incessantly in play; she fired him with her own passions, and applauded them as his own; she poured intoxicating praise in his ear; she borrowed the appearance of youth by really feeling its vivacity and sensibility; and she even studied her person, taking care to fill his eye pleasantly with graceful *toilettes*.

Nothing reached them of those who had gone. The outside world, with all its affairs, scarcely rippled in their ears. But to George this very calm was a source of disquiet. Harold and Lucie, Sanford and Carrie, appeared, in his imagination, tossed on great seas and in terrible storms, the murmur if not the force of which must soon reach them. Expectation and listening apprehension appeared not only to mark his own feelings, but the doings of others. Every time he saw Ellen he approached her with expectant eyes; he would even at moments involuntarily bend his head to listen, as if the far-off storm was murmuring on the breeze. In the earnest, intense interviews with Ellen, he forgot this sensation with many other things. But away from her, as he walked or rode, as he read or wrote, he was oppressed with an unconquerable sense of something far off encircling them, and soon to burst upon them. He tried to explain it to Ellen. She laughed, but caught his arm nervously, and wound hers around it, shivering strangely. But in five minutes she was mistress of herself, and merry at his superstitious weakness.

But the mysterious apprehension still remained. One evening he rode toward the cottage more than usually oppressed, shivering even as Ellen had done when he first mentioned to her the apprehension. Once he involuntarily checked his horse in an open, barren place, where the sun, just setting in a great flood of scarlet, shot along the surface of the landscape its flaming hues, staining every object with spots of red. As he and his steed stood hushed and

motionless, darkly drawn against the solemn tints, it seemed as if he caught for a moment the echo of the battle he was dreaming of. In the profound stillness a cry arose and floated upward and around him—a wail which, to the youth's fancy, seemed born of Carrie's voice. Startled, with beating heart and straining ear, he listened. It was not repeated; and, hearing no response to his loud summons, he rode swiftly forward, horse and rider still darkly tinted in the blood-red hues of the sky.

Almost the moment he reached the cottage gate, Ellen met him.

"Harold and his wife are back," said she, almost without greeting him.

"Back here?"

It appeared in some inexplicable way as if the struggle he was dreaming of had begun.

"Yes, to the lady's cottage. They arrived last night."

"Have you seen them?"

"No. I get my information from a neighbor. Don't look anxious, George. How can their return affect any one?"

"It would seem in no way. Did you ever meet Lucie?"

"I have passed her on the road—that's all."

"You know what she is, of course—who she is."

"Yes."

"Would you be willing to see her?"

They had walked to the cottage, and stood in the porch.

"I know her story," replied Ellen, "but she is Harold's wife; and for that reason, if for no other, I would go to her. Harold I pity and like."

"Shall I see them first?"

"It would be better."

In obedience to this conclusion, the next day George rode over early from Hareton, and, leaving Tony at Ellen's, walked to Lucie's cottage along the river path. He had proceeded a little more than a mile, and was enjoying the beauty of the scene with a completeness which arose from those long hours and days in the darkness and dulness of Twitt's office. The river flashed so brightly and silvery gay by his side; the grass, the waving branches, the field flowers, were all so bright, crisp, and beautiful; the sun poured out such breadths of shimmering light: the cloud

shadows scampered along over the plains with such lightness and coolness; the picture at all points was so thoroughly in nature's best feeling—that Bensley opened all his senses to the softening and elevating charms. Thus absorbed, he came unexpectedly within a hundred feet of one walking the same path. It was Harold, and each spoke the other's name at the same instant.

"Hi!" said Harold, whose face bore something of that shattered expression George had observed in the trying interview between Sanford and Lucie—"hi!" said he, "I'm glad to see a chapter of old times again. I have been pitched head-foremost among so many new things, and into so strange a life, that I have danced heels upward. That's a figure. People insist upon language keeping down to mathematics, and dealing only in the positive. With me it won't—it gets into carnival—it plays antics—it is your very showman's monkey for antics. Well, isn't the river beautiful? See it sparkle—see it bubble! Hark! I've had my ear on the bank for an hour listening. Oh, rare music! Nature makes me mad, George! I want to get my heart into it. I want to love it as I love a woman, with a big, passionate embrace!"

"How is Lucie?" asked George.

"Lucie! well! No, I am wrong—she weeps too much."

"Is she not happy?"

Harold turned upon George a restless, searching glance.

"She is a splendid creature, George," said he. "I love her. She knows it. She is as fascinating as ever, and talks like a Rosalind or a Viola. I swear these actors belong to another race. With them fancy is always on tip-toe. Still—I don't know—they set me in a whirl. Oh, it was life, but it strained, and snapped, and—hush! there's the river! Listen! The river is life! Let me be buried in it; let it dance forever above me; let me die! Lucie will weep when I say that. It's strange how her splendors sometimes fade when we are alone; she sinks down and moans and cries. I'll do something yet to make her wildly happy."

"I want to go and see Lucie, Harold. Shall I do so?"

"Do, do! Tell her how much I like her—tell her my father will like her one day yet, too. She acted, George, once when we were in town. It was *Beatrice*. If you had heard her laugh; it was the merriest music I ever listened to. And the wit—it danced on her lips, flashed

in her eyes, and sat upon every finger and feather. Grand! And then she went home and cried upon my shoulder for an hour. God bless us, I wish she wouldn't!"

"Perhaps I can persuade her into a more cheerful mind."

"I wish you could. Try to. I beg her to dance, to talk, to sing; and dance, and talk, and sing for her, but to no use."

"Walk back with me to Lucie," said George, slipping his arm in his. "Where is your father, Harold?"

"Not in New York."

"Are you sure?"

"We have not seen him since that day. He would not have kept from me so long had he been in town. Yet, I wonder where he is. How quiet the country is, George. Just after the noise in Broadway, one is stunned by so much silence. But come, faster. Come."

He started off so rapidly that it required almost a run to keep pace with him; while, at the same time, he talked incessantly until they reached the cottage—disjointed, wild, broken, utterings.

Lucie was looking very pale and depressed, contrasting strikingly enough with the gay, showy woman as George had first seen her. She took his hand silently, and with feeling.

"Mr. Bensley, we have come back. The city appeared to render Harold unhappy. He likes the country best."

"I only like to live with you, Lucie," he said, kissing her hands, and then playfully swinging them to and fro. "Come, don't let us stay in-doors. Let us walk. I like to feel the sunlight upon me. I like to smell earth."

"Shall we go?" inquired Lucie of George. He assented, and walked by her side.

Scarcely had they reached the lawn ere Harold, impelled by his usual restlessness, wandered away, running first to a clump of shrubbery, and breaking off twigs, snapping and tearing them with his fingers; and from this point to others, until, to George's gratification, he could address Lucie alone.

"How has he been?" he asked.

Lucie shivered, turned her face so Harold could not see, and burst into tears.

"It is terrible, Mr. Bensley. There is no hope for him."

"He grows worse, you think?"

"Every day, it seems to me. I fear that scene with his father fairly overthrew what little balance there was."

"I wish I could give you some hope," said George.

"Do, Mr. Bensley, if you can. I am terrified for him, and horrified at myself. Oh, to think that I wickedly schemed this marriage! To think I set to work to fascinate him—to draw him into a trap. Perhaps there may be some pardon for me, since my very crime brought its own expiation. I, who planned such injury to another, am wedded to a life-long sorrow, drawn down upon my head by my own hands. But if you knew how Sanford wildly stung and inflamed me—if you knew how I was burnt up with a desire to avenge my injuries. Oh! I did not know his heart was stone. I was a fool not to know it!"

"You are not without your revenge," replied George. "Hard, cold, bitter as Mr. Sanford is, to Harold he is gentle and humane, and in winning Harold from him"—

"Then I *have* reached him," interrupted Lucie.

"Yes, I sincerely believe so."

"And I am not glad. I cannot be glad. Harold deprives me even of that satisfaction."

"Let me ask you if you would see Ellen, Mr. Sanford's sister?"

"No."

"Most unlike Mr. Sanford—a woman after your own heart. I think it would be best to surround Harold with some of his old associations."

"Let her come, then, by all means. But if she come with the puny pruderies and prejudices of her sex, I should feel like stabbing her. If she come mincing texts and pretty-doll moralities—this sweet, mild, stale consolation that fine perfumed ladies dole out to women whose hearts are swelling with the grand symphonies of passion, I shall hate her, insult her, perhaps."

"You have described her very opposite. See her, and you will like her. Through her, perhaps, Mr. Sanford"—

"May—" She raised her clenched hand, but uttered no further word.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Harold, joining them.

"Nothing," replied Lucie, assuming an air of indifference with marvellous celerity—"nothing. I have consented to see your aunt, Harold, and Mr. Bensley will bring her to us."

"Ellen is a good creature," said Harold; "a little sharp on poor Carrie, but she's got a sound head. We'll have talk then."

"Have you heard from Carrie?" asked George, readily following this turn of the conversation.

"What do you mean?" said Harold. "Is she not with Ellen?"

"George explained that his father had sent for her. Harold looked as if disturbed and in pain."

"He gives me up to Lucie," he muttered. "He has gone back South again; it is certain. He abandons me for Carrie; he forsakes"—

"Harold!" cried Lucie, quick and passionately, as she heard his tones, broken with distress and regret. He understood the reproach, and laughed somewhat painfully.

"Never mind, Lucie, I do like you. Let the past bury the past. Only smile and laugh; tickle me with delicious talk; read, sing, dance, play with me. The world, then, is not so much as one glance from your eyes."

She smiled mournfully, and run her fingers through his locks.

"Oh, if I could only be wife, father, friend!" and added, in a murmur, "physician too!"

George, offering his hand in parting, heard the murmured word, and whispered:

"You may. I do hope and believe it."

It was the third day after this before George fulfilled his promise. Ellen's rockaway was gotten up for the purpose, and they drove over in the early twilight.

When Ellen and Lucie came together, each, under a manner thoroughly courteous and polite, studied the other. But there were elements in them of cohesion, and almost before George knew it they melted in each other's sympathies and good feelings.

Harold was, as usual, restless and vivacious; his talk incoherent, and vivid with the flashing of his singular mind. He dragged George out of doors to look at the moon, leaving Ellen and Lucie together. From the lawn he urged him to the river bank to see the water in the moonlight.

Here he almost raved. His sentences rattled on—weird, poetic, inspired—but so oppressive in their strained, broken meanings, that young Bensley was glad to get back to the house. When they entered, Harold appeared irritated a little to find Lucie agitated, and with signs of tears; but her cheerful salutation dispersed the cloud at once. And Ellen whispered a word of praise of his bride in his ear which sent a sparkle to his eyes.

"I thank you," said Lucie, with deep meaning, when she took Ellen's hand to bid her good-night.

"We are friends," said Ellen, briefly.

"The good and wise may do without friends," thought George, "but the repentant, in the name of Heaven and in the name of humanity, need them, and die without them."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE drive homeward, through the light of the moon, was, for the first mile, a silent one. Both George and his companion were too well employed with their thoughts to give them words; and when at last Ellen spoke, her voice was so tremulous and husky George scarcely recognized it.

"It is a strange sight we have seen," said she—"strange! That woman's devotion to a husband so improperly won is surprising, and to me, beautiful. I wonder what it means. Sorrows chasten and make mellow the heart—do repentant sins also? Ah, George, the merely good are so like this cold and pallid moonlight. The warm heart that is scorched with remorse, wrung with pain and repentance—tell me why such a heart becomes sublime? David was the favorite of the Lord—tell me why?"

"I do not know."

"The man of sin, but the man of repentance: the man of crime, genius, and passion; whose heart was big, inspired, grand, and made so, too, by his sins. I don't say I believe this—I only wonder if this is so; and can't help recollecting that virtue is usually so icy and dead."

"Then you like Lucie?"

"She affects me, I hardly know why. Perhaps, because I have been shivering so long in the chilling virtue

of your pretty Carrie. A bit of warm, 'broad color, an autumnal tint, and Indian-summer mellowness, are about this Lucie. Your white-faced little girls are neither substance nor spirit! I ought to be a man—I ought! I'd marry a gypsy before I'd marry a white-and-red parlor doll. Women are not born with souls—they buy them of experience when full womanhood comes upon them. But even in this they are often better off than men, who go without souls to the last."

"What *is* the matter, Ellen?"

"I'm thinking of the bitter blunders the world is continually making. The terrible thing is, that, with or without souls, women are never wise—never! never! never! With their eyes open they do and sanction such foolish things. Why, Harold, even according to the judgment of women—of men I would expect nothing better—ought to have married a school-girl, or some pretty piece of inanimation, because young and fresh, and so forth. Harold is not mad, I declare—he is the wisest of us all. He has married a woman who will crown his life with rich, ripe, mellowed happiness—a woman full of passion, and a marvellous power of living and being. Oh, if I were only a man—I'd teach your sex what and how to marry."

She folded her shawl tightly around her body, and said these things looking away and staring intently at the moon.

"Is wisdom with us the unknown quality?"

"Of course I mean the wisdom of happiness—of hearts and homes. You are wise enough to each other—it is only to us that your imaginations get so puny and silly that I wonder if they haven't fed on millinery. You like strength, force, character, color, passion, in a man, but you exact of woman a sort of porcelain humanity, very white, very cold, very meaningless. If there are white teeth, dimpled cheeks, pretty curls, a soft smile, you think you've got an angel. You are absolutely sick with a theatrical fancy, which supposes that white muslin and pink ribbons mean innocence, and virtue, and modesty. I tell you, in a school-girl, delicate, pretty, blushing, I've seen selfishness, greed, and an imagination utterly rotten. The difference between strong women and weak ones is, that the strong find out their weaknesses, call them by their right names, and struggle with them. The others whitewash their vices, make them look pleasant, and call them by sweet names."

George drove on in silence.

"You must not return to Hareton to-night," said Ellen, as they drew near the cottage. "It is late, and the morning ride will be so much pleasanter. Will you stay?"

"I had intended to go back to-night, but the morning will do."

"I'm glad of that. As these September nights are cold, I'll have a few twigs lighted in the grate, and we can have a pleasant half-hour over a cheerful blaze. Now you are tempted to stay, I'm sure."

"I was tempted before."

"I'm afraid you'll have to put up the horse alone; but you know the stable and are used to that duty. By the time you are in, I shall have the fire blazing."

They had reached the cottage gate when this was said. Without aid she sprang from the carriage, and ran up the path to a side entrance.

When George returned from the stable and entered the sitting-room, he found it all in a glow from a sparkling blaze in the grate.

"Isn't it cheerful?" asked Ellen; "come, now, draw up before it, and we'll have an old-fashioned, comfortable hour before bed-time. But how dull you are? What are you dreaming of?"

"I'm thinking of Carrie, Ellen."

"Ah, sentimentally trying to, I dare say. George, your love for Carrie is a love for an idea alone—an idea of a woman—and you bestow a thousand qualities on her which spring entirely from your fancy. A blushing, pretty girl sets your imagination on fire—you think you are in love with her, while you are only smitten with a reflection in her of your own dreams. When you marry Carrie—"

"I shall never marry Carrie. I see she is lost to me."

"But you will marry some one."

"Life is long—perhaps I may."

"What do you think of Lucie and Harold's marriage? I have not heard you say."

"A most wretchedly unhappy affair, of course."

"Pshaw!"

"Is it not?"

"No! Emphatically no!"

"Why?"

"He may be saved by her—if not by her, then by no human being. And she, let what will come to him, is already saved to herself and the world—saved because she

loves, saved because there is another life, even if it exist only as a memory and a mourning, indissolubly linked with hers. The past is buried; her future is Harold's; if she should become a widow to-morrow the recollection of her love, the recollection of his love, would sweeten and hallow all her days; and if he recover, she is one to bind him to her by a thousand things—she'll knit herself into his being. Where hearts live there is always salvation."

"You've seen Lucie for an hour, and talk——"

"As if I knew her. I do. It took three minutes by the clock to find her out."

"People are not usually so easily read," suggested George.

"The crafty are not—the ingenuous are seen instantly. They speak, and look, and photograph themselves upon you."

"Lucie must be the elder of the two."

"What of that?" very sharply.

"I do not know; it is not the common rule, that is all."

"Common rules are very good, but their chief use is to know when to break them. Think what marriage is—how soon both will become old at best! These rounded cheeks and ripe lips are very brief."

"But there is something so beautiful in youth."

"There is," exclaimed Ellen, almost starting from her chair; and then taking his hands in hers, she said, "It is beautiful, George; God knows how I see and feel it! But hearts, my dear friend, that are dead when youth goes, make life a long and weary road. To be ten years younger, even I would pay any price—any price but your friendship."

"I could not like you better, Ellen, if you were younger."

"You to say that, with the proof before me of its untruth. Think, George, if I were ten years younger I would dare presume to anything."

"In fact," replied George, "I might like you less, for, possibly, we would not understand each other so well."

"But Carrie is younger," impetuously exclaimed Ellen, "and think how well you like her, for no other reason that I can find out than because she is fresh and girl-like."

"But you never appear to me otherwise than young," replied George. "I always couple you and Carrie together; I think of you as a sister, as a companion, and my equal in years."

"But you loved Carrie."

"I did. I thought of marrying Carrie—I thought of having you always to be my friend."

"But did you never feel Carrie somewhat unequal to you?"

"I will confess to you, Ellen, that sometimes I did. I loved her with all my heart, but I wished often that she had the same appreciation for my ambitions you had. I confess this to you, Ellen, because you can understand it, and will not think me weak or false. I could not help sometimes wondering if a woman like Ellen Sanford would not bestow greater happiness upon me. This was only momentary—in some petulant, disappointed mood."

"Moods," replied Ellen, reaching her hand to his, "which would have increased as you knew Carrie better."

We cannot follow the long devious talk led always by Ellen toward one object, deviating and winding off often, but returning always to the same path, looking to the same end. They chatted hand in hand, to any looker-on more like lovers than friends; thought flowing into thought, feeling into feeling. And the flickering light from the now lowering blaze, casting its warm tints into the cheeks and eyes of Ellen, seemed to light a purpose or passion there that scarcely had birth in friendship alone. Whatever it was, as she still held the hand of George, and bent forward always so that she could look into his face, it would almost seem to strike a responsive passion in George.

Under the charm and sway of her words, under her delicious flatteries, her fine sympathy, her warm praises, his courage and resolution seemed escaping from him. Then there arose a thought the birth of innumerable scenes before this, springing from a soil long prepared, subtly working upward through many recent interviews, at last leaping to his imagination at a moment when his entire nature was under the influence of the being who had fostered, invited, compelled it.

Ellen saw the dawn and the rise of the thought; for a moment she shrunk; then was irresistibly impelled onward by the force of passions it was too late to resist, and which she was only half willing to subdue. While holding her hand at a moment when she was uttering a word of intoxicating praise, he involuntarily raised it and wound her arm around his neck. Half playfully and half tenderly, as she lifted her fingers to his head and ran them through his locks, he slipped forward with his elbow in her lap, and his face

upon his hand, looking upward into hers. She touched his cheek with her hand, and—the thought found words. In a breathless moment the two were pledged to each other.

Later that night, when they parted, they stole off on tip-toe, each with blazing cheeks; but with George a something different from either peace of mind or happiness.

He rose early the next morning with the intention of riding to Hareton before breakfast. Secretly anxious to escape from the house without being seen, he went cautiously down the stairs, and was slipping noiselessly back the bolt of the hall door, when Ellen came out of the parlor, extending her hand to him.

"You are going early. I shall not oppose it; but let me see you very soon."

Her hand burned in his palm; her lips looked parched, her cheek was hectic, and her eyes blazed with an unnatural, restless light.

"Have faith in the future, George," said she, nervously withdrawing her hand from his, and unconsciously pressing it against her heart; "have faith," she repeated; "you will need your courage. I know how it will be taxed; but ask yourself always if you do not know me better than the world does. You must not heed the bitter tongues that will speak against us."

"The world will oppose us, then?"

"It will, for it is full of black prejudices and injustice; so much oppose, that I fear for my happiness and yours so long as they remain supported alone by your courage."

"Am I weak?"

"None of us are strong to combat the opinions of the world. When we are married it will be too late for scandal to injure us, and until that event you will not be safe—nothing will be safe; we shall both be in daily danger."

"If I were rich, I should not postpone the event a day."

"I have some means, and our wants will be few. But I will not urge precipitate action; and I think it would be better to let the matter be kept secret until we are ready to speak."

"I decidedly think so."

Ellen winced at the emphasis with which this was said, but she offered her hand, saying:

"Good-morning," and looking intently into his eyes.

"Good-bye," he answered, with some reserve, and avoided the look in her eyes, for the impulse to part as

lovers part, forsook him. At that moment he could not have kissed her had some great loss been the price of the omission. She appeared to read the feeling, and her cheeks deepened in their tints, while her eyes sunk inward strangely.

"Let me hear from you soon," she said.

He replied yes, dropped her hand, and stepped out upon the piazza. He had not taken three steps ere she was by his side, her breath hot in his ear, and her accents torn from a bosom that shook with emotion.

"George, don't let me lose you now! don't! Don't cool, George. I'll make your life an Eden; your path smooth and strewn with flowers. I know how to make you happy—know how to fill your soul with such bliss you've never known before. Don't let me lose you now. Oh, God, if I were younger! George, dear George, say something!"

"I esteem you profoundly, Ellen."

"Terrible word! Esteem! George, make haste to let me prove to you what woman's love is."

"I am anxious for the hour, Ellen."

"Ah, then you shall forget the world; you shall hate it and defy it as I do; for I will make you happy without it, in despite of it."

"Shall it be secret?" said he, turning around fully to her face.

"Yes," she answered, and with an effort stood bolt upright, and returned his gaze steadfastly.

"At once?"

"At once," she replied, with passionate emphasis, and, wheeling about upon her feet, ran into the house.

George hurried for Tony, and was soon galloping swiftly along the road to Hareton, a far from happy lover. During all that day there was agitation, heat, restless fever, occasionally flushes of pleasure, but the feeling mostly was of a weight—of a something impending. He sighed heavily and involuntarily—fell away into brown studies, and at times almost trembled as the thought stole upon him that perhaps his pledge to Ellen was in reality repugnant to his heart. He could think of her always pleasurably in any other light than that of wife—as a friend always by his side, affording an intellectual delight no other companionship ever afforded; but as a wife, one whose presence supplied all the needs of the senses as well as the intellect—

as one who inspired the magnetism which unites opposites, blends antagonisms, fuses feeling and emotion in a mystic sympathy—to this ideal, he was forced to admit, Ellen did not respond.

But, at least, the union would be brilliant; it would excite a wonderful life of the faculties; the two together would struggle up the paths of life, and snatch rare felicity from their triumphs. Ellen would be his fellow-worker—his twin brain—the splendid coöperator in all efforts of the intellect. It is always an exquisite pleasure when thought strikes upon thought; and those subtleties of feeling or perception that spring from the genius of a gifted man, hunger for responsive appreciation. George had experienced this primal mental happiness, and the certainty of an applauder always at his elbow dazzled, swayed, and at times utterly mastered him. Carrie had always been so silent, he reflected, while Ellen was ever with honey upon her tongue. He did not perceive that Carrie saw other things to admire than these qualities of the mind, and that Ellen, pleased only with intellectual display, heaped inflammable fuel upon his imagination, and set heart and tongue and brain on fire.

Still he was very far from being happy. A dozen times that day he sprang from his desk and paced the floor in absolute consternation. Those wild, egotistical, passionate aspirations usurped his imagination entirely only when in Ellen's presence; away from her he swept rapidly back to his better and truer feelings. He even detected this fact, and, although shrinking from the consequences of his pledge, he still doggedly resolved to fortify his purpose by every hour's society with Ellen he could obtain.

As for Ellen, a more passionately restless heart cannot be conceived. She wandered from room to room, from the house to the garden and orchard, and from orchard and garden back to the house again, writhing and disordered as if a serpent coiled in her breast. Her movement was not that rapid, decisive, emphatic one common to her; she staggered and went motiveless from object to object, and carried her head low on her breast, while her hands continually wandered uneasily to her heart. Yet, with all this, in her eyes and upon her lips her triumph sat dazlingly; she would even laugh aloud, and her fancy swept away at moments in a rapturous dream of her future—sweeping back again suddenly into the remorse and pain

that stung her. And how she, too, longed for him. In his presence alone could this restless conscience be utterly silenced. In the grace, freshness and beauty of his youth, her imagination alone was alive; she admired; she was filled with the charm of his manner and presence; she forgot the nettles that at other moments womanly pride, conscience, and truth, thrust into her side.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. THOMAS GRANWAY, well brushed, perfectly gloved, sauntering down Broadway on a sunny morning, looks as cheerful and fresh as the scene through which he moves. There's not a bit of antiquity about Mr. Thomas Granway, and no affectation of youth, either. A natural, smooth vivacity so lightens up his features, no one can think of him in any other way than as young. There are plenty of people, indeed, ready to swear he has been young, to their knowledge, some thirty years or more. Time may get old, men and women generally, may get old; but Tom Granway keeps so steadfastly on the sunny side of the years they make no mark upon him. He laughs so pleasantly in the bearded face of venerable Time, the old sage jocosely shakes his hour-glass at him and passes on.

Mr. Granway carries dangling against his waistcoat, his eye-glasses. He lifts them frequently to look at a gay shop-window, or a passing figure; sometimes to watch the steps of a child; sometimes, with genuine art-feeling, to study a bit of color or picturesque grouping—for Tom has an eye and taste well pleased with these things. And Tom, well dressed and gloved as he is, has a vulgar way of peering into shop-windows; and he is just, with glass to eye, scanning an opera bill, when his, and our, impetuous friend, Jack Broom, hurries up to him, out of breath, and very hot and eager.

"My dear Tom," he exclaims, "those Many Brothers! Will you? I was running in hot haste after you. Give me the story—those Many Brothers, you know? Confounded odd. Gad, I've got him. Come now, Tom, let's hear all about it."

"What do you mean?"

"Miching Mallecho, I mean mischief. I've got hold of

the end of a plagued snarl; Sanford is pretty well tangled up in it in the middle, and a Granway somewhere at the beginning, and what's more, a deuced pretty girl at the end of it—and that's all I know about it."

"In love again, Jack?"

"Now confound you, Tom. The plaster isn't off the last wound yet. But do come somewhere. I've got a three-volume novel at the roots of my tongue, and I want to get out of you those Many Brothers. Just let us get somewhere, then I'll astonish you."

"I'm at your service, Jack. Will you go back to my house?"

"That's a mile. In this case a mile may miss a miss. Go a mile to tell a story? Hang it, Tom, I can't keep coked as long as that."

"Let us turn into a side street, and talk as we walk along."

"Give me your arm, then. Let me have three seconds to find the beginning of my matter. You know the day when Sanford bolted out of the house because I said Granway to him?"

"Yes."

"Well, that made me think. I'm confounded good at thinking when I get at it. So, after Sanford ran, I began to scan. Infernal doggrel that. Well, in three minutes I was after it—Granway, Sanford, said I—to be sure—Sanford, Granway—then my logic dropped head first into the Many Brothers. That's it," said I; that scoundrelly Sanford—don't you see, Tom?"

"Not quite yet, Jack."

"Just let me have the tales of the Brothers, will you? Plaguedly romantic and soporific, of course. I hate tales. Scrapes of all sorts rasp me like new graters. But out with them, Tom."

"Pon my word, Jack, you are rattling on very unintelligibly. Tell me what you want."

"The particulars about the Many Brothers—the fortieth time I've told you, or I'm a muff."

"All?"

"Confound it, Tom, all."

"There are a hundred tales of them. It would be a new Decameron."

"The deuce! Then I may as well give it up. I don't go fishing in any such sea of talk."

"Tell me *your* story, and possibly I can fit it."

"My story! Well, here it is. I go through my stories, Tom with the hop-and-skip jump. Long wind is good in a race, but abominably bad in a story. I told you I meant to fasten on to Sanford. I did. He took to me—we laid our heads together, and soon had a plan for separating Lucie from Harold; then I went to see Lucie, and, blame me, if I didn't turn a somersault."

"Physically, Jack, and in a lady's presence?"

"Hang it, you know. There I found her and her young husband, so infernally tender, and loving, and wrapt up in each other; and Lucie took me aside and made such a pretty story of her griefs and hopes, and the deuce knows what. Confound it, she had me. I rushed frantically off, borrowed a Bible, swore a terrible oath on it they shouldn't be separated, then rushed back and vowed how much I loved her."

"After her marriage, and after such an oath?"

"To show I liked her, and was hers forever, and meant to defy Sanford—in a beautiful Platonic way, of course. Then back to Sanford, to tell him to go to the devil; but didn't tell him—policy, you know—and found a young lady with him. Angelic, but his daughter; plaguedly silent, and red about the eyes. Went to work to pump Sanford about Granway, and when I mentioned the name, saw the girl give a little start. That sent me back to Harold again—he ought to know, I said—I laid it down to him on my five fingers, but could only manage to get something about Rio Janeiro, Granway, and a marriage"—

"Why, Jack," interrupted Mr. Granway, "Rio was the place in which my brother Lemuel lived so long."

"Then there *is* something in it. That's superb! That's delicious! Sanford and Granway must have crossed each other there—to poor Granway's injury, I am afraid. For there is scoundrel spelt from Sanford's chin to the top of his infernally ugly head. I wish somebody would say what these villains were invented for. Deuced useful in melodrama, of course, but there the black brutes get knocked on the head in the last scene. That's the rascally difference between the stage and fact, for in real life it's the black scoundrel that does the knocking on the head. Well, Tom, out with it, will you? What's going to be done?"

"Really, my good fellow, I don't see that there is any-

thing to be done. If there is you had better see Twitt. Perhaps Twitt knows all about it, for he has a way of keeping his secrets until somebody asks him for them."

"What! the country lawyer, Tom? Can't we have him down here? Shan't we send for him?"

"Just as you like, Jack. But Susan may know something as well as Twitt. She was a good deal with Lemuel until he died; he liked to talk, and Susan was a good listener."

"Then, Tom, I'm off to see Twitt and Susan. I want to get the upper hand of Sanford for Lucie's sake, and I'm a good deal interested in that pretty girl. First, I'll see Sanford, then Lucie and Harold, and if the scent keeps good, I start for Hareton."

"A most astonishing fellow, Jack," said Mr. Thomas Granway, with unaffected surprise and admiration. "I wish I had your energy and impulses. But I haven't, you see. Tell Twitt to do his best, and if the upshot is likely to prove interesting, don't fail to have me in at the climax. Good-bye, Jack. I have an appointment with Porch, the artist—a new picture, and wants my opinion."

"Behanged to you, Tom," cried Mr. Jack Broom. "Go to the deuce, will you! Confound it, don't be so infernally indifferent. But you can't help it, of course. Brain is a special privilege, and not in your way."

Tom and Jack, heartily shaking hands, and heartily thrusting epithets at each other, part, and as Tom coolly and pleasantly walks back toward Broadway, Jack goes off at a swift pace, thumping his cane as he hurries along every time he thinks an epithet.

Walking swiftly, and yet heedlessly, he finds himself several squares out of his course; but turning back upon his traces, he is not many minutes arriving at Lucie's address.

"All right, my man," he exclaimed to the servant. "You know Mrs. Sanford"—

"They've gone, sir."

"That's a lie, you rascal. They were here yesterday. Or if they're gone to walk, I mean to wait."

"They left for the country, sir, last evening."

"The dickens! Swear it, you Celtic importation; swear it."

The man reiterated, and Broom was reluctantly forced to believe.

"Back to her cottage, by Jocko!" muttered he, turning from the door. She's whipped him off where she may have him safe. Wise thing, no doubt, if there's any wisdom in it anywhere. Sensible girls shouldn't marry off the stage. It's always unlucky. Infernally so!"

"Muttering these phrases; nodding and bowing, always pleasantly and gaily to people; sometimes hitting a friend with a keen, sharp word as he passed; always brisk and smiling when he spoke, but when thinking only, a little sad and heavy; a worldly, but a childish man, as tenderly led by his impulses as any light-hearted school-girl, and yet as versed in life, the world, its sins and sufferings, as only a long, shifting, varied public life affords—this child of play and impulse and eccentricity went lightly on, wearing his heart upon his sleeve, and carrying his humors there also; went lightly on, smiling, and nodding, and thinking, thumping his cane on the pavement, whisking it about in his fingers in the air, muttering epithets, letting his griefs off in jests when they became too painful; went lightly, happily on, knowing, in spite of the Tom Granways and the murmurs of applause that reach him, how many doors are shut against him, how many hands are withheld from his touch, how many draw close their garments and turn away as he passes; knows this with smiles and jests, and yet with a dumb, silent pain—knows it with humility and with pride; above all, knows it with charity and patience!

It is because he knows this truth with pride that he would have saved Lucie the pang of a marriage that would bring her into society by consent of a cold, distant sufferance; and because he knows it with pride he would now, the marriage being complete, fortify it against the oppression of this man Sanford, and all the world beside. He would have urged Lucie to keep aloof from society; to have married in the profession; to have as proudly repulsed the world as the world affected to repulse her; but as the thing was done, and his own first flush of grief passed, he swore, with many an oath, to fight it out for her sake, and the sake of the profession. As for Harold's infirmity, he poohed, and only asked if Lucie really liked him.

"Gad!" said he, "if he's never more insane than he is at present, it's a sort of lunacy confoundedly pleasant to keep in stock. Hang brains! Brains all run into arithmetic,

and think of nothing but making two, four. Addition must have been the plagued tree of knowledge; let it once get hold of a man, and he's all up. His heart might change places with his liver, and no one know it. Well, here is the hotel. I wonder how the young girl is. Sweet creature, but in trouble, though. Hang me, if she couldn't tell me something I'd like to know. If I could get a word in her ear apart, now. But impossible, that Sanford is such a bearish rascal. For Lucie's sake, how I would like to choke him. Plagued awkward, hanging for a murder. Some murderers ought to be rewarded, instead of hanged. If real justice was in order now, I'd get a vote of thanks and a Cross of the Legion of Honor for putting such a rascal out of everybody's way."

So muttering, he entered the hotel, and was ushered up to Mr. Sanford's parlor. To the summons at the door there was so low a response that he hesitated, and would have withdrawn, but that the servant turned the knob and opened the door.

"Miss Sanford," said Mr. Broom, as he perceived Carrie alone in the room, "I beg your pardon. I will retire"—

"Please come in," exclaimed Carrie, blushing and in confusion, and then rapidly growing pale.

"Your father will be in soon, of course. It will be pleasant to wait. I thank you. Your father—my gracious! what's the matter?"

He sprang forward suddenly, dropping his hat and cane, for Carrie, staggering back with a sudden faintness, was near falling. Broom was in time to save her, and to aid her to a chair.

"'Pon my soul, my dear young lady, are you ill? are you alarmed? are you frightened? or what the plague is it?"

"I am ill, Mr. Broom—I am wild—my head turns. I want a friend; I must have one. You know Harold; you are his friend"—

"And yours, Miss Sanford. But your father"—

Carrie shuddered, and brushed the hair from her brow in a nervous, agitated manner.

"I repeat, Miss Sanford, isn't your father a friend?"

"No, sir; no, no, no," replied Carrie, rapidly and low.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I cannot tell. I do not know. I am afraid I have no friend, and I cannot tell what I ought to do or where to go!"

"Where are the friends you have been living with—your aunt, for instance?"

"She is not my friend. None are my friends. All turn against me—conspire against me. Harold is not here, Ellen is unkind, and—and"——

"Are you absolutely in earnest, Miss Sanford—absolutely in earnest? This is no bit of school-girl sentiment, now?"

Carrie looked up at this speech with an earnestness that Broom felt to be embarrassing.

"It's no matter, Mr. Broom," said she, and pressed her hands together in her lap, as a flush mounted to her cheek and brow.

"I didn't mean to offend you, Miss Sanford. I'll be—Well! I didn't! There's the whole of it. But your father"——

"He is not my father!" exclaimed Carrie; and then, as if stung by some mad remembrance, sprang up and hurried with disordered steps across the room.

"What the d——!" cried Jack, in great astonishment. "Then there's mischief on foot, of course. To be sure you want a friend. Look to me. It's not in my line, perhaps, but I can learn the part at short notice. Not your father, eh?"

"To-day, he declares he is; yesterday, he swore he was not. But he forgets. No, no; he cannot be."

"Just let me ask you, my dear, why you gave a little start when I mentioned the name of Granway the other day?"

"That was my mother's maiden name."

"Ha! What? The Many Brothers. By Jocko! Hang me, if I didn't think it! Granway! My dear young lady, it's all right; it's splendid! You are made; made, my dear."

And Mr. Broom, in the outburst of his delight, ran up to Carrie, caught both her hands, and began to shake them with the most extraordinary violence and rapidity.

"Granway! It's all right. A daughter of the Many Brothers—one of the Brothers—that's it; hang it, not daughter, either! You are too young for that. But you know Tom Granway?"

"No, sir," replied Carrie, who was listening to this out-break with puzzled interest.

"Well, Tom is your good genius, and a brother of the Many Brothers. Just wait. There's pippins to come. I'll

get hold of Tom. But the deuce take it, who is Sanford? Not your father, and you are here—and—I should like to find how to stand that tale on its legs, head upward. I would"——

"You would?" said a deep voice.

"Yes," said Broom, turning round to confront the speaker, and not the least disconcerted to find it Mr. Sanford.

"I thank you," said Mr. Sanford, "but neither Carrie nor I are likely to afford you the information you desire. You have thrown your interest over to the actress who has stolen my son, and now you are willing to play a part between me and my daughter."

"Oh, confound it!" interrupted Mr. Broom, "don't put on airs. This is your room. Of course, I'll go out, if you want it. And as for my interest, d—n it, sir, I can like Lucie and her husband, if I please, better than I like Harold's good-natured dad. Had the Sanfords stuck to the Gulf of Mexico, Lucie might have been mine. But I forgive them, and may they drown or hang, as they choose! I wish you an infernal good-day, sir. Don't trouble yourself about me; I can find my way down alone. Don't be surly, will you, because Carrie and I had a chat? Ladies do like to chat with Jack Broom. Perfectly natural, you see, he's so confoundedly good-natured. Good-morning. Lovely day, isn't it?"

He covered his retreat to the door with this rattling talk, and although Sanford, dark and angry, strode toward him, he waved his hand, shot his smiles and glances, and backed himself out with no show of indecent haste, and to the last master of the situation.

When he was gone, a dead stillness ensued. Carrie had sunk into a chair by the window, and, trembling with apprehension, knew, although she did not hear the silent tread, that Sanford had come near and was standing over her.

Presently his hand touched her shoulder, and, prepared for some violent burst of passion, she bowed her head submissively to the storm. Several moments elapsed in silence, and then, although his tones were, as usual, heavy and sullen, he made no allusion to the scene just passed, and spoke without passion.

"To-morrow," said he, "a steamer leaves for Savannah. We go in it."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Carrie, low and beseechingly.

"It is settled, so be prepared. As for Harold, I give him up, because I must give him up. We two once understood each other."

He spoke huskily, and with a heavy sigh. Carrie, in surprise, bent her head to listen.

"I give him up, and no one will believe with what pain. For almost twenty years we have been together. His misfortune made me like him, and he appeared to like me. But now he is fascinated by that woman—too deeply fascinated ever to come back to me as he was before."

Again he sighed, and pressed his brow musingly.

"She has carried him off to the country, too; and as I must give him up or give up other plans, I have chosen which. To-morrow we go."

"I implore you," gasped Carrie, "do not."

"It must be so. You will learn compliance. Learn to accept cheerfully your new destiny."

"I cannot."

"You will come to think differently. I did intend, I confess it, to marry you and Harold! Harold is my son; you are the daughter of Caroline Colway; you two are as apart as the poles."

"Don't, don't," muttered Carrie affectingly, and sank upon the floor with her face in her hands.

"I cannot see the wrong. Not the remotest link—not a shadow of a relationship between you. However, Harold has ruined all. And I—what is my relationship to you? I am your guardian, true; but not a drop of my blood flows in your veins. Old men can like young wives."

"Sir, sir, you promised me never to hint that thought again! You married my mother. Oh, be silent! Hush! Crush the terrible thought."

"I promise you to be silent—at least, until we arrive at our Southern home."

"Oh, why, why, do you speak in this way?" cried Carrie, trembling intensely.

"Well, well," replied Sanford soothingly; "do not tremble so. You have no friends, and I have no friends; at least, you can still be my daughter—be to me what Harold was. I am your guardian, and you must go with me South; not that I wish to force you, but here I cannot stay, and here I will not leave you. Be calm. Control this agitation."

With a wild, frightened look, Carrie listened, without power to answer, but with fears that discovered a danger in every word. Sanford lifted her from the floor, but she hid her face against her chair back, palpitating, white, and shivering in every limb. Oh! for Ellen, or George, or Harold, or any one, to rescue her! She could not speak, and Sanford stood silently watching her.

"I tell you," said he, "to be calm. I have nothing more to say until we are out of this accursed place. You'll think better of it, so be patient and sensible."

He went out, pausing at the door for another impatient look at her. Carrie sat for a few moments pressing her hands upon her throbbing brain. She must escape. That necessity was clear, imperative. There was no safety even with the man who once assumed the name of her father; and what fate might be hers far away in the unknown South thrilled her through and through with terror. Escape! How? Whence? There was no time, no power, to think how or whence—the absolute necessity was upon her. She sprang up, and ran with nervous speed to an inner room; caught up bonnet, and shawl, and gloves; with quick, trembling fingers, and yet with delays that seemed intolerably long, got them imperfectly and slovenly on; wrapped her shawl tightly, drew her veil, and in a whirl of fear and excited resolution hurried to the door. All might be lost by venturing out, but all was certainly lost remaining within. No one was in the hall. She knew the way well to the private exit. She shut the door, locked it, and then swiftly glided along the hall to the stairs, and down the stairs to the entrance. Here servants were placed, but they gave little heed, and made no observations. She passed them, one stepping forward to open the door. She almost rushed by him into the street, scarcely recognizing the attention.

In the street all ways were appalling, and no way the right way. In the street, utterly bewildered, purposeless, incapable of resolution, pursued by fears and confronted by fears, the poor girl sped along, changing from street to street, avoiding the more public thoroughfares, until at last, fatigued and sped, she came to a small enclosure of grass and trees, where, clinging to the railing for support, she stood still, and endeavored to collect her senses and comprehend her situation.

Alone, and utterly unknown in the city, her mind could

but revert to the valley. Lucie and Harold were there; and even Ellen, though dreaded, would be a protection against her present danger. With clearer purpose and renewed strength, she again started forward, inquiring now her way to the station of the great railway whose iron path lay through Hareton.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In the early sunrise George and Ellen stood by the cottage gate together. George held the reins of Tony, but Ellen, clasping his disengaged hand, was detaining him. The hero scarcely bent his eyes upon his companion; his gaze was wistfully wandering off; he gave his hand to her coolly and indifferently. Ellen, even with a momentary expression of pain on her features, looked singularly young. Her *toilette* had put on youth; and a hundred little touches, in the colors, the ribbons, the adjustment, even in the white rose fastened in her bosom, gave unlooked for grace and charm to her appearance. In fact, young enough in mere years to pass for youth, she had made the mistake of accepting and maintaining the state of middle life, and thus an attempt to look young or winning again seemed doing violence to nature and fact.

But as she stood clasping George's hand, there was a nervous, searching look in her eyes.

"George," she said, "your mind is a long way off. It is not with me."

"Do you think so?"

"Oh! I know so. When we were only friends, you came closer to me than you do now. Don't doubt me, George—think always of what we promise for each other."

"I do."

"That is spoken so heavily—with not a spark of life."

"The morning is chilly," said he, evasively, "and it is late for me. I promised Twitt to be at the office at an early hour."

"Ride faster—stay longer. Answer me before you go, why you came at all? You've scarcely done a thing but sit and look sad since you entered the house. Oh! I wish you liked me better, George."

"I can never like you better, Ellen, than I did in the old time, when we lived so much together."

"You played gallant to me then; believed in me then. I ask no more; but, live back fully in that old time if you can. Oh, I long for the hour when I can begin to justify myself and you by the happiness I shall create for you."

"I care not how soon it comes—would not care, at least, if I were richer."

"Security is all, wealth is nothing. We know each other—why not?"

She paused, and then whispered a word in his ear, which sent the blood in a red flood to her own cheek.

He bowed assent, and with a hasty leap sprang into the saddle.

"It shall be arranged," he said, and, waving his hand, with a touch of Tony's rein, went galloping swiftly from the cottage gate—without a backward look, or glance, or smile, such as lovers soften partings with; while Ellen, grasping the paling, watched him till out of sight, and then, turning slowly toward the cottage, pressed her brow with pain and dread, struck her bosom with delight. Conscious of all that his half-sullen departure meant; seeing in it the lover only partly weaned from the old love, and only faintly won to the new. Yet this, with many other things, were forcibly subdued, imperatively put aside, resolutely thrust from her heart. She gave imagination play to its hopes; she fortified herself against the intrusion of caution, or reason, or wisdom; with blind intentness and eager purpose she gave herself to the swell and flood of her passionate dreams. Far out now in a great sea, she shut her senses against the whisperings of cloud, and storm, and wreck.

Two hours after George's arrival at Hareton, alone, in the now familiar and even friendly office, busy with much tape, and wax, and law, practical and abstract—law whose philosophy is the philosophy of costs, and law whose philosophy is the grandest of all problems, human equity—alone, and intent upon themes he was beginning to understand and like—the door was swung wide open, and Harold came rapidly in.

"Holloa!" he cried, "the busy bee! Come out of your hive, plodder. Votary of the black art, come out in the sun and hear a tale."

"What is the matter, Harold?"

"The matter," said he, and laughed unpleasantly loud; paused, and then sighed despondently.

"Well," said George, winding his arm through his, and leading him out under the trees, "I know you can talk better here. What story have you got to tell?"

Harold leaned against a tree, wound one arm around it, and his chin dropped upon his breast.

"How is Lucie?" asked George, finding he did not speak.

"Why can't Lucie and the old gentleman be friends? They ought to be. Then I should be happy—for somehow—I don't know—well, I miss him, that's all."

"Living with Lucie, you mourn for your father?"

"Lucie is magnificent. She is a type and model. I like her with both eyes and ears—how she looks and what she does make me mad. But still—it's strange—you see *we* have been the world over."

"After so long a companionship, it is not strange you miss him."

"George, my lad, you are the new Solon. So sensible! They should sell wisdom at the shops by the pennyworth. I want it—the world wants it—Lucie has too much, I think. My wit is of the free and easy order, but Lucie pours such fire, and light, and splendor on it. Well, I never knew a man for me like my father, George."

"But your father has forsaken you."

"And Lucie makes such splendid amends. We chat, we ride, we talk, read, dance. We are sprites, fays, or what you like—and yet I do get melancholy in a corner. I wonder what it means. It won't be still. I am ridden to the devil by a rider—I am spurred to hell; I am driven to the hills; I wish I was on the sea—where——"

The sentence remained unfinished. An expression, earnest, wistful, and even painful, crossed his features; he sunk down upon the sod at the foot of the tree, against which he had been leaning, and began, in a silent, vacant way, plucking up the grass with his fingers. Suddenly he attained his feet at a bound.

"Carrie is back?" he exclaimed, with momentary joyousness.

"Back!"

George staggered and gasped—a world seemed to open before and close again quickly upon him. "Back!" The word was crowded with a hundred hopes and a hundred terrors. "With her father?" he succeeded in asking, calmly.

"No, that is the strange part; alone. I cannot get hold

of her story entirely. She locked herself up with Lucie, and then came to me with half her tale. Mere evasion. I see it; and am curious only because I hope for my father. He should have come, too. The thing is, I suppose he will. Yet it's odd. Carrie looks white enough, cries enough, talks wildly enough, for a pretty lady's novel."

"She came to you, then?" George was controlling and suppressing the turbulence in his heart; he looked calm and cool enough as he asked this question, while, in fact, he was on fire. "Do explain, Harold," he continued; "how did she come? With whom? From where?"

"Lucie and I, my Prince of Lovers, run away, and Carrie got in an imitative way, that's all."

"Ran away from your father?"

"Why did she do that?" said Harold, wonderingly.

"Did you not ask her?"

"No—or if I did, got no answer. When I think of it, it was queer. Come over, George; come at once, and find out. I do not mean to tease myself about it—let it go. What matters?"

"Harold," said George, "there is something very mysterious between your father and Carrie. Can you explain it?"

"I am bothered about it, too, George. Not that I care—but he never turned his hand over for a woman before. But let mystery flourish! Who is going to open his heart and ask the world to take a peep? Not William Sanford; no, nor Harold Sanford, either. Don't I carry, lashed down under the hatches, all damnable things, all wicked purposes, all wild terrors! Let mystery flourish—let Carrie and he have it out. Come and see the girl, George, and catechise at your leisure."

"I will go to-morrow. To-day it is impossible."

"Do, my lad, for Carrie hides away in corners, and dreams of young Bensley. I can see her dreams in her eyes—I can see, too, some sorrow in her cheek. If you like her don't let the world interfere. Win her, George, and snap your fingers at the gossips. There is only one wisdom in the world—obey your impulses."

"You are right, Harold."

"I am—and good-bye. Your law-dust here is choking me. I should grow yellow and musty, and shrivelled, like your parchments, in two hours, if I remained within forty feet of your legal atmosphere. Come, George, and good-bye."

He walked off rapidly at the word, but in the wrong direction. Abandoning the road at the first open field, he went rambling, divergent, uncertain, through meadows and orchards; loitering on the banks of little brooks on his way; pausing sometimes in shady places, and flinging himself full length upon the ground; at moments moving slowly and musingly, and at others hurrying along with great impetuosity—his course, like his mind, irregular capricious, aimless, and yet touched with a freedom and grace not without their charm.

The next day George mounted Tony and rode out of the village. His errand was first to Ellen's, but his imagination was with Carrie, and he rode forward with hesitation. There was an agitation in his heart he could not repress: old hopes and old dreams were springing up, and with these renewals of his boyish passions were mingled, of course, a repugnance for the destiny recently accepted.

He had scarcely left the village ere the morning train from the city came rushing, with terrible energy, across the fields and up to the station. Among the passengers who stepped upon the platform was an active, impulsive gentleman, abounding in brisk epithets and outspoken raciness.

"The man I want is Twitt," said the gentleman, addressing himself indiscriminately to everybody within hearing. "Minturn Twitt, Esquire—Lawyer Twitt—Old Twitt. Confound it, Tom Granway's Twitt!"

"I know," exclaimed a ragged village urchin; "tain't far."

"Boy," said the gentleman, holding up a dime between thumb and finger, "lead me to Twitt's door and we shall understand each other."

"Come on, sir," replied the lad, energetically.

"Good," said the gentleman, and followed his ragged guide, who soon led him to the little brown, isolated structure known as Twitt's, or Lawyer Twitt's.

Mr. Twitt was at his desk when the stranger entered, who bowed, smiled, and announced himself as Jack Broom.

"Tom Granway's friend," he exclaimed, as the lawyer scrutinized him out of the corners of his glasses.

"Take a chair, Mr. Broom. How is Mr. Granway? Mr. Granway," said Mr. Twitt, pulling up his collar, pulling down his vest, setting right his cuffs—"Mr. Granway is a gentleman I like; and, I do not hesitate to say, a use-

ful member of society has been lost by habits of idleness"——

"To be sure," interrupted Mr. Broom; "it is a pity Tom isn't something useful. It is a terrible pity Will Shakspeare didn't turn his hand to something useful. What confounded bores useful people are! There's nothing like a loafer!"

"A loafer!" cried Twitt, aghast.

"A man who stands on door-steps and takes a view of the world. So shrewd, knowing, off-hand, with scraps and facts sticking about him everywhere."

"Idleness," said the practical lawyer, "is the nurse of all the vices."

"Oh!" said Mr. Broom.

"Idleness!" exclaimed the now irate Twitt, while he thrust himself into his collar, as if it were a wall of virtue—"idleness"——

"Of course," interrupted Mr. Broom; "d——d nice!"

"Sir!"

"About Mr. Granway," suggested the actor. "I'm Tom Granway's friend. Tom is an indolent dog. I asked him about the Many Brothers. The fellow sent me to you."

"The Many Brothers?"

"That's what Tom called them; but I am only concerned about Lemuel."

The lawyer looked frowningly over his collar, but did not speak.

"My dear Twitt, unfold, will you?" exclaimed Mr. Broom, stretching out his legs, and nodding in the face of the lawyer with cool assurance. "Tom says you know something about Lemuel Granway. I think I have found out something—it wouldn't be confoundedly strange if what I knew and you knew, put together by a skillful lawyer, should mean something."

Mr. Broom's compliment mollified Twitt, and the allusion to a discovery brought him down from his dignity post haste.

"Do you know anything about Lemuel's heir?"

"Confound heirs! They're always a snarl. But a little girl I've met may be an heir, or something of the sort. Let me have Lemuel's story, my dear sir, and then you shall hear what I know."

Mr. Twitt placed his hand on a package of papers, but Broom interposed a vehement ejaculation.

"No documents, sir, as you have mercy. Tell the story—don't read me a thing. My brain is tender; a law paper would be the death of it. Tell the story, my dear Twitt."

"Well, sir, the story can be told in brief. Mr. Lemuel Granway went to South America."

"Yes," said Mr. Broom, industriously thrashing his foot.

"He married there in the family of an English resident. In a few years his wife died, leaving him a daughter. This daughter, at the age of eighteen, married in opposition to his wishes"—

"Yes, to be sure"—

"An adventurer from Mexico, but an American by birth. His name was Colway"—

"Hang his name! He died"—

"He died, leaving a destitute wife and child; but this was after Lemuel's return to us. The widow, so I have learned, married again—a man"—

"By the name of Sanford!" exclaimed Mr. Broom, with such exulting enthusiasm that he began thrashing Mr. Twitt's boots instead of his own.

"No!" said Twitt.

"Eh? The deuce! Confound it! No? Blast it! not no?"

"That was not the name," said the lawyer, searching among the papers. No, here it is. Mr. Charles Maywood."

"Spilled, by Jocko!" exclaimed Broom, dolefully; "snagged, run aground, used up! No pretty last act, after all. That's what I always say—plenty of romance in real life, but no last act, no climax, no restoration, and peace and plenty, and a tag at the footlights. Nothing of the sort. Invariably gets spoiled before the last scene. Lost babes won't turn up: d—d surly uncles don't get tender, and never have bank accounts; the right lover never appears at the right moment. Confound the thing, that's all! Mr. Charles Maywood be hanged! I hope he cut his throat, or got the yellow jack, or made a supper for a shark. Confound him, that's all!"

"Hadn't you better hear the rest of the story?" inquired the lawyer, dryly.

"Go on," said Broom, and applied his cane once more attentively to his boots.

"After the marriage the lady's strength failed. Maywood took her up the Mediterranean, and two years later returned alone. Both wife and child, it was said, had died somewhere abroad; but whether Maywood gave currency to this rumor, or simply permitted it to pass uncontradicted, I do not know. Maywood soon after disappeared, before my correspondents set to work, and no trace of him has been found."

"It's all up," said Mr. Broom.

"Don't be too sure. Let me now hear your story."

"Soon told, my dear sir. Met a gentleman from the South—sullen devil—with his stepdaughter—daughter supposed, you see, but proved to be stepdaughter. Accidentally learned that the girl's mother's name was Granway—and—and—confound it, if I don't believe that's all; thought I had a whole romance, but that is what it turns out to be. The fellow's name is Sanford"—

"Names are easily changed, interrupted the lawyer; 'adventurers often have a new name for every locality.'"

"Hang me! What an ass I am! Of course they do. And this Sanford is a notorious rascal."

"But, then," observed the cautious Mr. Twitt, "according to my account the daughter died."

"A plague on that!" briskly replied the vivacious actor; "of course she didn't die. Heroines never die. Your plagued correspondents were wrong. I'm sure of the clue now—the last act, after all, is going to turn out the pretty thing."

"Well, sir, what do you propose to do?"

"Gad! you ought to decide. Perhaps the girl knows more than she has told; or, stop! Deuce take it! There's Harold—he may know."

"Harold! What Harold?" asked the lawyer. "The half-crazy fellow who comes here hunting after young Bensley?"

"You describe him, sir. The same—he is this Sanford's son. And Sanford has whipped off the girl he called his daughter—frightened the poor child out of her wits by some mysterious threats."

"Is the girl you allude to Carrie Sanford, of our neighborhood?—the name is the same, and your allusion to Harold makes it probable."

"Exactly—that is the girl. Have you got a clue, too?"

The lawyer mused a few moments in silence. "Mr. Broom, I think I have—Sanford and Maywood may yet prove identical. I begin to comprehend certain inquiries that have been set afloat, I could not discover by whom, relative to Lemuel Granway's property. But silence, sir—if you can—"

"Can? D—n it, sir!"

"Mr. Broom, you are an incessant swearer," said the blunt, but virtuous Mr. Twitt.

"There's a confounded deal of virtue in an oath," replied the erratic actor; a man who plumps his round, hearty expletive wears his heart where daylight sees through it. But I can keep a secret—which I can't say of anything else; and, meanwhile, I'll go and see Harold and his wife. They may help us, and if there's a spavined, broken-kneed, half-starved horse in the village that can't be persuaded to go, I think I'll trust him, and drive over to Lucie's. Confound it, sir, Tom Granway shall know what it is to have a friend. I'll astonish him yet with my talents as a detective. I'll hunt up that quadruped—and, hang it, don't be uneasy! Here goes! Look to see me to-morrow with a budget of news—and the fifth act complete."

And, with his cane over his shoulder, Mr. Broom went lightly and gayly out from the presence of Minturn Twitt, Esq., and down the village street.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GEORGE, riding forth on his errand to Ellen, fell into the hands of an arch-persuader, who succeeded in turning his horse's head toward Lucie's cottage. The arguments, *pro* and *con*, between George's prudence and George's inclination, we will not attempt to set down; but the end of the controversy was victory to the latter. Inclination turned Tony into the road that led away from Ellen and toward—the fates ordained that it should be toward Carrie.

The cottage under the trees stood in mingled shadow and sunlight, and fairly sparkled in its emerald setting of grass and shrubbery. All was silent around it, and as our hero walked to the cottage door his heart fluttered with expectation and dread of Carrie's appearance. He started

at every rustle of the wind; around every bush he almost fancied he could see her gliding, and what he should do or say if she did appear, was fairly a terror. His fancy could form no word, his imagination conceive of no act, which would appear appropriate. He wished he had not come, yet with vague but hushed apprehension he went on.

She did not present herself as he entered the cottage; and he had scarcely stepped into the parlor ere he heard a step, but which he knew was not her's.

"Why, Mr. Bensley," cried Lucie at the door, "how glad I am."

She came up to him with her dark eyes flashing with a pleasant light, and gave her hand with warmth. Her manner was simpler, her dress quieter and in truer taste, than in the former times. Even her face looked more refined, and her smile, losing its former artificial glitter, was genuine and sweet.

"You have come to see Carrie," said she leading him to a seat by the hand, and helping herself to one near him.

"No, you are wrong," said George, with quickness, but blushing in spite of himself.

"Is it not strange—Carrie's flight from her father?"

"So incomprehensible—this and other things—that my nights are sleepless thinking of her. I wonder, indeed, Lucie, if he is her father."

"In truth, I doubt it; but Harold will not be questioned about the past, and I can learn nothing from him."

"Is Harold happy?" asked George.

"No," said Lucy, her eyes filling, "I'm sure he is attached to me warmly, but something is wanted. Something!—something!" she kept repeating this word with her gaze upon the floor, and beating her foot upon the carpet in a meditative way. "How is it," she resumed, "that Mr. Sanford, so cruel, so hard, relentless, and wicked, is to Harold what no other human soul is or can be—not even me, although it breaks my heart to say it? Oh, Mr. Bensley, it is so strange, so terribly strange!"

"Your influence over him is very great," said George; "he may now miss and mourn his father, but time will modify those feelings."

"I hope so. I pray so. I do know how to please and occupy him; once, indeed, I had absolute control of his heart; but since that fatal interview with his father, he has not been as he was, and I grow wild with the fear of the

fate to which he tends. And what, I ask myself hourly, if, back to his father, he should be well; if by yielding him up to my terrible enemy he should be saved? Could I do it? Have I the courage? I do not know, but I would rather die for Harold—make any other sacrifice than that. I tell you, George Bensley, there is a red-heat always in the centre of my breast. It is the very spot where once Sanford struck me. I think of Harold and cover up the spot with my hand; but if Harold cannot be mine—if the father must come between me and him—then the red spot shall flame again—then—no matter! Thank Heaven, he is still mine?"

"Where is he now?"

"Rambling somewhere with Carrie. Since her return she has clung to him strangely; uncommunicative, restless, singularly ill-at-ease with all others, in him she appears to seek a protector and confidant. The girl is very unhappy. There is a secret in her bosom that keeps the roses out of her cheeks. Suppose we walk out and find them."

"I did not intend—I do not wish—" stammered George.

"My good Mr. Bensley," said the lady, smiling and patting his arm, "I've had so much experience. Ah, love is beautiful—keeps the heart young, the mind pure, and the eye bright. Wait, Mr. Bensley, please, till I get my shawl and flap."

She stepped into an adjoining room, and was back almost immediately.

"I am dreading our departure from this noble valley," said she, as they went out together; but two weeks more and my vacation ends. Then excitement, business, work, and pleasure that is worse than work. You have never seen me act, I believe."

"No," replied George.

"They tell me I do it well. I knew it before they told me. It is an odd life. You are petted and stabbed, kissed and stung—the history of all like me. Great Heaven! what is that?"

There was a long, distant, fearful cry, that arrested the steps of both, and sent the blood from their cheeks. It was repeated a second and a third time, each repetition more faint and distant, but, to the imagination of the listeners, charged with an increased terror.

"Carrie! Harold!" exclaimed George, with wild earnestness, "where are they?"

"By the river; they wander there continually," replied the actress, trembling violently with uncontrollable apprehension.

"They are lost!" cried George wildly, as the recollection of Harold's passion for the river flashed upon him. He darted swiftly forward from the side of his companion, but had taken but a dozen steps or so, when, moved by a second thought, he turned back and flew to the spot where Tony stood tied to a tree-branch. To loosen the rein, spring into the saddle, and turn the animal's head toward the river-bank, occupied scarcely more time than to conceive them. Tony felt the nervous hand of his rider, and dashed forward over the greensward, leaping the low fences and heading in a direct line for the river. The cottage stood several hundred yards from the stream, which was reached only by foot-paths. But Tony was true to the will of his rider; the fences were cleared with ease, and the fields crossed at a speed which, although at Tony's best pace, seemed fearfully slow to the impatient and almost maddened spirit of his rider."

As he reached the river he overtook William running swiftly and with intense alarm along the river bank. He hailed him and soon learned the story. Harold had persuaded Carrie into a boat, although William, alarmed at the more than ordinary wild mirth evinced by Harold, had endeavored to deter them. They went sailing down the current, William watching them from the shore, Harold every moment breaking into wilder and more vehement paroxysms of passion and mirth. Presently they disappeared around the curve of the stream, Carrie clinging with terror fully excited to the maddened Harold. He attempted to follow them along the shore, but in a few moments later he heard the screams which had startled Lucie and George.

Young Bensley heard no more. In an instant Tony was galloping along the shore of the stream. Fortunately a narrow footpath that followed the side of the river afforded favorable footing for the horse. On Tony dashed, frantically urged by his rider. Life might depend on the delay of a second. In a frail boat, upon a river turbulent and dangerous with rapids in many places, what might not a fatal moment effect?

On, on, on! How strange he did not overtake them! The swift, arrowy current by his side answered the question. But there was no repetition of the cries. Was it

already too late? He spurred and urged on Tony, with a wild terror at the thought. But, as following a bend of the river, a long reach of it suddenly opened to his view, he saw them—saw them with such a bound of delight as nothing in his life equalled. The tiny craft was dancing upon the waves. Harold was standing erect, his head uncovered, his hair, floating in the wind like pennants, his arms outstretched, while frantic, wild words broke from his lips. Carrie was crouching terrified in the bottom of the boat, but desperately attempting to calm and soothe her frenzied companion. But the madness in him was rioting above control or guidance; the subtle passion had too evidently at last burst its bonds, and was leaping and rioting furiously through the veins of the unhappy youth.

The boat glanced swiftly along on the current, but George rapidly gained upon it. Harold heard his approach, and turned toward him.

"Harold! Harold!" cried George, "in to shore! in to shore!"

He laughed a long unnatural laugh, and threw up his arms.

"No, the river!" he shouted. "Hear it sing! Hear it laugh! I have it now. It is mine."

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed George, "in! in! Save her! In the name of mercy, be yourself, Harold!"

"Oh, the river!" shouted Harold. "It is life! music! mirth! I live in its heart! I feel its pulse—Carrie, too, is in love with it!"

Carrie, still clasping Harold's knees, uttered an imploring cry, but the mad youth gave another laugh, and attempted to lift Carrie up from his feet. In doing so his weight was thrown heedlessly on one side—the boat careened—Carrie shrieked—George held his breath, and his heart stood still, for suddenly into the dark, rapid current they both were plunged.

In a frantic terror our hero struck his horse until he leaped forward all nerve and fire.

"On, on," he cried, and almost with the utterance of the words was opposite the spot where they had sunk. Nothing of them! The boat floated bottom upward; the waves glanced in the sunlight, and all was still, so terribly still, that the silence fell upon George's ear more terrifying than the loudest clamor.

The current would float them rapidly down the stream, so he urged Tony forward, straining with passionate eyes

for a glimpse of them. Presently he thought he saw an object—the edge of a dress upon the surface. He headed his horse to the stream. Many a time had he sported on Tony's back in the river, and the experience thus gained was now to serve him greatly. In an instant horse and rider were boldly in the current. They struck the water a little below the object which had caught George's eye, and in less than a minute Tony had reached the line of its course, but a short distance below it. With what a wild heart-bound did our hero discover it to be Carrie, floating onward, partly buoyed by a few faint and fast failing efforts of her arms. Fortunately, Carrie had some slight knowledge of swimming; but her arms dropped, and she began slowly to settle beneath the surface ere yet the current had floated her within reach of George's arms. In the breast of the youth there was a thrill of terrible fear, and then every nerve and sense was strained to its utmost. He wound one arm around the neck of Tony, and bending forward with the disengaged hand, clutched at the body as it came floating on, just reaching it ere it had sunk finally and hopelessly into the depths. He grasped it, drew it with great difficulty to his side, held it there a moment while he mustered all his powers, and then with a strength that nothing but the occasion could have supplied, he dragged the body, heavy with saturated clothing, out from the water, and up by frantic efforts to his horse's neck. The rest was comparatively easy. Carrie's wet head rested against his heart, his arms were wound around her form, while his fingers were clutched in Tony's mane for support. The reins hung loosely over the horse's neck, but he succeeded in turning his head, and Tony swam swiftly and steadily to the shore.

Scarcely had George reached the bank ere William came with breathless speed over the fields. By his aid Carrie was carefully lifted from the water. They bore her up and laid her on the grass, and George, kneeling by her side, chafed her hands, breathed into her nostrils, and, with mingled hopes and fears, with prayers and eager eyes, watched the still, breathless, perhaps forever silent, body. But at last, as the dawn breaks upon the lost, storm-beaten wanderer, came flushes and faint touches of life. She was saved! Oh moment of measureless happiness!

But Harold never rose to the surface.

William, the moment Carrie was safely laid upon the

grass, hastened to the river and along the shore. The waves only danced in the sunlight, and the green leaves that hung above them waved musically in the wind. There was nothing more.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SUNSET, with heavy clouds over the sky, and along the western horizon a narrow belt of deep and sombre red; winds rushing over the plains and through the groves with dismal lamentation; gray mists slowly and silently tracking the sun down into his lair.

Against the melancholy hues of the sunset, and through the gray that came gathering from the east, they come, those who have dragged the river, heavily, hushed, with inanimation and appalling stillness stretched among them. The terrible tramp, tramp, falls upon the twilight air with a strange horror.

Into the cottage they move with uncovered heads. The bier strikes lightly against the wall, and the outstretched form quivers. It is like a motion of life, and the heart leaps to see it. Softly, slowly, whisperingly, they bear it in. Wet clothes hang about it, and little currents of water fall and course along the floor. The locks are beaded with river-drops, and cling heavily and darkly to the marble cheeks. Beneath the white covering one sees not only the dead but the terror of the death.

They set the body down and went their way—rough, uncouth fellows, treading softly, speaking low, with tears welling up to their eyes from their compassionate hearts.

The wet locks were wrung out, the body was robed, the limbs were fixed, and it lay in the calm habiliments of death, telling no tale of its violent end.

Around it were gathered hushed whisperers, George and Ellen, and Mr. Broom, who had arrived just in the horror of the catastrophe; and Lucie, struck into passionate dumbness. She stood with her hand upon his brow, changing it sometimes to press upon his heart, or snatching it away to beat upon her own bosom. Mr. Broom drew near to say some word of consolation, but could not. She observed him and gave her hand, and then, as if this little act aroused the torpor of her grief, she burst into tears, and flung herself upon Harold's breast.

Ellen drew Broom aside, who was in such dismay at this evidence of Lucie's grief he knew not what to do, and began walking nervously and excitedly up and down the room.

"Mr. Broom," said Ellen, "my brother should know of this."

"I have already proposed to go to town for him," said Mr. Broom. "I am best spared here, and best know where to find him there."

"You will go in the train to-night?"

"Yes. William is now getting up the horse to drive me over. Miss Carrie, you say, is quite restored?"

"Oh, quite, I thank you. George, Mr. Broom is going to town."

George in response joined them, and went with Broom to the carriage. When he came back, Ellen whispered:

"Stay with Lucie. I must go back to Carrie, who has been left too long."

"Will she suffer injury, Ellen?" asked George, in tones so earnest that Ellen shook his hand from her shoulder, where he had placed it, and went hurriedly away.

In an upper room lay Carrie, still suffering from the effects of the accident. Her face was very white, excepting a slight touch of fever in her cheeks. Her head tossed uneasily, and her brain appeared haunted with terrible fancies. The scene upon the river still occupied her imagination, and reacted itself continually before her feverish gaze.

Ellen, entering, removed her hands, that were tossed above her head, laid them by her side, smoothed her brow with a soothing, pleasing touch, and set, with a few brief words, other thoughts and scenes before her. But while she did these nursing offices, she was ill at ease herself, and even sought, in the activities of her duties, a relief for her disturbed mind. Later, when Carrie slept, she stole out upon the upper balcony into which the windows of the room opened, and here, waxing hot and cold by turns, yielded herself to a flood of new-born fears.

"He is lost!" she exclaimed passionately, "he is lost! This terrible day ruins all. I am too late! too late!"

She uttered these words with indescribable emotion, and went walking staggeringly up and down the balcony in that hot, wild way, which so frequently marked her manner since the day she first thought of George as more than

a friend. In the midst of this outbreak of feeling she heard a horse's tramp below, and, bending over the balcony, saw George through the semi-darkness spring into his saddle, and ride off toward Cleftside. As the hoofs were heard receding along the road, Ellen suddenly felt a hand upon her shoulder. It was Lucie's.

"I warn you," said she in a low tone, and with a motion of caution, as if Carrie might overhear; "I warn you."

"Of what?"

"Of youth. Do not be dazzled by it. Do not dazzle it. It was so with me. I won him. See the end. Oh, Ellen, I am struck wild before God and man! I attempted an act of retribution, but only entangled my heart and his—killed Harold and destroyed myself."

"But you are not the cause of Harold's death."

"I am. I separated him from his father, the one being who could control him. His madness strengthened, and so led to his death. I killed him by loving him. Oh, Ellen, it is better for women like you and me to keep our hearts free. We, who have brains, should not think to have hearts, too. Whoever bears both must carry great suffering."

"I know," said Ellen, "how that is."

"Then be warned," said Lucie, throwing her arms around Ellen's neck, and drawing up her face so that she looked closely down into it. "Be warned. Some calamity will come, if you give your heart its way. Some retribution will follow. You will see him dead as I see Harold dead."

"Hush, hush!" said Ellen, hurriedly

"Be warned, then," repeated Lucie; "and come, now, down with me, and look again at Harold. I stand still with wonder when I think that only an afflicted, unsound, mad youth like Harold could ever reach me—could warn me—more, more, Ellen! could make me human and tender. I am a woman, now."

She said this, leading Ellen by the hand down the stairs and into the presence of the dead Harold. Both were silent for many moments, as they stood in the room by the side of death, stretched in terrible stillness, and only dimly seen in the semi-shadows of the partly-lighted room.

"He is beautiful," said Lucie, in a whisper.

"I loved him like a brother," said Ellen.

"He was brilliant, too; so happy-hearted, so tender, so

graceful, so childlike. I am sure that in heaven his infirmity pleads for him."

"I am sure of that, too."

"We do not pray for the souls of the dead," said Lucie.

"No."

"And prayer from my lips would shock you as well as me. Do you pray, Ellen, and pray for him. Leave all to heaven, but pray for him for the sake of our own peace, if for no other sake."

While these two women, each with largeness of heart, and neither free from sin or suffering, kneel by the side of Harold, we leave them and follow our hero, galloping through the darkness along the road toward Cleftside.

There are those who hear the hoofs clattering on the hardened road almost as soon as George sees the light through the windows. At the door he meets them all—father and sisters—and each seizing, or endeavoring to seize, a hand.

"We've heard about it," said Mr. Bensley, "for bad news travels fast. A neighbor came post-haste to let us know. But sit down, and tell us the particulars."

"Is Carrie safe? Is she injured? Is she ill?" asked both Emma and Betsy, in a breath. "I must go with you," said Betsy, without waiting for a reply to the questions, "and tend on Carrie."

"Carrie is safe, and I hope will soon be well."

"But how came Carrie back?" asked Mr. Bensley, "and without her father, too? Plague me, if mystery doesn't stick to those Sanfords, all round! Girls, keep out of mystery. Mystery is—"

"Very perplexing to other people," retorted Mr. George.

"I'm sure it is to me," said Betsy, simply.

"Well," said Mr. Bensley, a little disconcerted at George's retort, "there is no mystery about Betsy, for she has promised Harry so loud and so publicly, that every lady in the county has given a tea-party especially to discuss the little matter."

"I'd just as lief go to them all, and take Harry with me," said Betsy, with a flush of pride and petulance.

"Come," remarked Emma, "do not let us forget George's story of his adventure."

The story was told after the household manner, with many digressions, interruptions, and explanations. Their horror at the calamity was relieved by their admiration

for their hero George; and their delight in Carrie's rescue almost destroyed their pity for Harold. Their sitting was long, their talk much, yet none knew of the unnamed secret that lay at George's heart. To tell them of Carrie lost and Ellen won was more than the hero had courage to do. To tell them that Carrie, though rescued—which their eyes, their tongues, their hands, as they pressed his, so warmly congratulated him upon—was not saved for him, was such a confession, that every time it came struggling to his lips was driven back by shame.

"I could not do it," he exclaimed, when in his room alone. "I never can do it. I shall never dare look at them after it is done."

That night, as he reacted the events of the day—as he thought of Carrie stretched upon the sod, with her head in his arms, and the life-tints stealing back into her cheeks—it seemed to him as if the old love was new-born. His boyish passion rose upon him like the sea, drowning and burying every other thought or dream; ambition, success, friendship, all yielded to the flood, and hope drew once more its entrancing pictures of love crowned and accepted. And these thoughts followed him into his dreams.

Soon after breakfast next morning, George and Betsy took their places in the buggy and drove over to the cottage. They arrived at a painful moment. On the lawn they saw a carriage, the panting horses indicating a recent arrival. On the door-steps they met Mr. Broom.

"He is confoundedly cut up," said he, after saluting Betsy; "didn't think anything could touch him—but everybody has got a heart somewhere, eh?"

They entered, and saw Mr. Sanford standing over the body of his son. He stood very hushed and silent; but even in the partial light they could see his lips quiver and his breast rise and fall heavily. In respect for a grief, to which more respect was due than to ordinary sorrow, as the one link of his heart to human tenderness, they silently withdrew.

"He really loved him," whispered George.

Betsy did not reply, but said she would go at once to Carrie. As she left him, Lucie went swiftly by him, and entered the room of the dead. George started, for what painful consequences might follow a meeting at that moment between Sanford and Lucie! He followed, anxious to prevent a scene, or to interfere, if necessary, for the pro-

tection of Lucie, and stood by the door watching them, but did not enter.

Mr. Sanford was, as before, standing erect over the body of Harold, hushed in profound grief. Lucie entered, and went steadily but slowly up to the body. Sanford did not see her until she stood directly opposite him. He fell back a step or two, when, looking up as a shadow fell before him, he saw his son's hated wife.

"You here!" he said huskily, pointing to the face of Harold.

"Yes, Sanford, I am here. Let us both remain. Listen to me, Sanford; here, where Harold is, whom we both love."

He bowed his head in response, and kept his eyes fixed upon the floor.

"Sanford," said Lucie, "you were cruel to me, but Harold always loved you and you loved him. He made your heart soft—he humanized you—he was the one being whom your affections acknowledged."

"You are right."

"He was the one being," exclaimed Lucie, her voice rising, but with broken, tremulous utterance, "he was the one being who made *my* heart soft, who humanized *me*, the one whom *my* affections acknowledged. Oh! Sanford, I forgive you, for his sake. Forgive me, for his sake. In his presence, our enmity dies; we are alike, we feel as one, we are human. Sanford! Sanford! my heart beats only with tenderness for those whom he loved!"

The strong man—the stubborn, sullen, selfish, unkind man—stood with folded arms, looking like resolution, defiance, unconquerable will; but even while he so appeared, his arms suddenly unfolded, his body bent and shrunk, his head dropped forward, the bosom heaved, and a passionate sob broke upon the air.

"He was my son," he muttered, and put out his hand.

Lucie seized it, kissed it, and, with it still in her hands, fell on her knees by the side of Harold.

"Harold!" she cried, "your wish, your prayer, is rewarded! We are friends—we, who of all the world best knew, and only loved you!"

Then the stubborn, selfish, sullen man, with his hand still in Lucie's, turned his face away, that even she might not see the cheeks so long unstained with tears.

Thus death levels us all. Thus are the uses of adversity sweet!

CHAPTER XXIX.

"CARRIE," said Betsy, as the two girls stood together by the window of the room, "your father is here."

"Ellen told me," replied Carrie, almost in a whisper.

"He has not been to see you, notwithstanding your narrow escape."

"No."

"That is strange."

"It is not strange, although it appears so. Indeed, he must not see me."

"Carrie, I wish you would confide in me what this means."

"I am not his daughter," exclaimed Carrie, hurriedly and breathlessly; "he tells me so. For that reason I was obliged to escape from him. Oh, Betsy, be my friend—I need one, how well you cannot guess. Be near me, keep by me, for I do not know what to make of every one else."

"Ellen is your friend, is she not?"

"No, no, no," said Carrie, with a shudder.

"And George?"

"He saved my life, and yet I have no right to expect a kind word from him."

"Do tell me why," urged Betsy; "what do you mean? Why is there this mystery?"

"When I see your brother," replied Carrie, with studied calmness, "I will thank him for the life he saved—and then, perhaps, we shall never meet again."

"Haven't you seen him since the accident?"

"No."

"Then I will bring him here at once."

"No, no, don't," cried Carrie, with great agitation, and clasping Betsy's arm.

"I insist upon it, Carrie. You loved each other once. I know all about it; and I am not going to have any misunderstanding between you. I shall bring him here at once: there is his step on the piazza now."

Betsy went, heedless of Carrie's entreaties, and in three minutes more Carrie, who stood in a nervous tremor by the window, heard their steps on the stairs. When they entered, her face sank upon her bosom, and unable to lift

her eyes to the face of George, she remained silent, abashed, trembling, and ignorant that Betsy had quietly glided from the room.

"You asked to see me, I believe," said George, after a pause.

"No," said Carrie, looking hastily up, and searching eagerly for Betsy; "I can't say—that is"—She saw that she was alone, and so violent was the bound to her heart, whether of hope or fear, that but for the support of the window base, in her weakness and agitation she would have fallen.

"I ought to thank you," said she, speaking in a breathless way, "for my life."

"Do not think of that, I implore you."

"I must. Had it not been for you I should be by Harold's side. I am grateful—yet perhaps it would have been better."

"That is a startling wish for a young girl."

"I know it seems so."

"Carrie," earnestly exclaimed George, "I wish that I were your friend now, as once I was, so that you might confide in me. I loved you, and you cast me off. Why was that? And what is this strange thing between you and your father?"

"I will try and confide in you, George, for you *are* my friend. Mr. Sanford is not my father—although he was my mother's husband."

"Then you are not Harold's sister."

"No."

"Then Ellen made a terrible mistake. Was it not because you feared Harold's infirmity?"

"Others feared for me," interrupted Carrie. "I cannot blame you—did not blame you. Your apprehensions were just."

"But I never uttered, never felt an apprehension," exclaimed George, with impetuous astonishment.

"You told Ellen your fears—your fears on that point and on others, too. I do not blame you for either. Indeed, George, Ellen was only too right. I am in no way fitted for you."

"What does this mean?" said George, now walking the floor in uncontrollable excitement. "Carrie, both of us, I am afraid, have been greatly deceived. Ellen incessantly diined into my ear your unsuitableness for me, but my

heart never doubted; how often at times her arguments seemed plausible; and if, indeed, I had feared in you any infirmity like Harold's, it would have been with tenderness, and with no thought of loving you less."

"Still my duty would have been plain."

"And for that reason you so cruelly cast me off?"

"For that and other reasons."

"Which you was urged to do by Ellen?"

"Yes, and wisely, George."

"Not honestly, if she assumed to reflect my feelings. I loved you well, Carrie, and it was not until I thought you was lost that"—

He heard the rustle of a dress in the room, and knew it was Ellen's, even before he turned to see her.

There was a dead, embarrassing silence of many seconds. It was Ellen who had the courage to speak first. She saw what was upon their minds, and guessed all that had transpired at once.

"Your looks are accusing me, George," said she, "what I did was done for your good, and Carrie's good. I did not know at the beginning more than Carrie did, that she was not Harold's sister."

"You put me in a false position to Carrie, and Carrie in a false one to me," said George, sternly.

Ellen staggered back as if struck, and looked at George with reproach and pain.

"Will you explain?" continued he, still frowning and stern.

"I see I have no hold upon you," she muttered plaintively, and a little wildly. "Your heart is not with me; my hopes are fruitless, my dreams were mad."

"You do not answer."

"I will not be catechised. You are two such children that I have pity on you. I dared to plan things for your real happiness. I dared to make you think of life as something more than a toy—as an earnest, grand reality. You could not learn. I pity you."

These last sentences were addressed to George.

"This is confession, I suppose," said he, still speaking severely.

"Carrie, will you leave us?" said she, turning quickly toward the young girl. "I have something to say to George, and can only say it alone. Leave us now—tomorrow I shall not interfere."

Carrie obeyed without speaking, and as she left the room Ellen hurriedly shut the door, and stood with her back against it. Again a silence of many seconds ensued.

"Ellen," at last said George, less harshly than before.

"George, George," exclaimed the unhappy woman, staggering forward, bent, and with hands clasped. "I see how it is, you do love Carrie. I forgive you; it is your nature, and cannot be helped. Go back to her. I have made one tremendous sacrifice for you. I will make another."

"You deceived us," he said, but mildly.

"I did—I did. And that was my sacrifice—the sacrifice of honor and integrity. This confession I make is my self-inflicted penalty for the crime. I could not bear to see you in Carrie's arms. I did not at first think of you more than as a friend, as a dearly valued friend, as a friend whose destiny I longed to become identified with—but when I saw you likely to lose yourself in a childish passion, I was prompted by some wickedness in me to win you for myself—prompted to do deceitful things, unwomanly things"—

"Ellen!"

"Don't reproach me! Don't condemn me! Don't pity me, or console me! I cannot bear either. I am inflicting a great penalty upon myself. I am telling you, my first friend, my only friend, that I have deceived you; I am a woman; and am telling you that, with unwomanly forwardness, I tricked and cheated you in toan offer of marriage. I am doing all these things, and the self-inflicted pain is enough. I will hear nothing from you—nothing—I know that you love Carrie—knew it always, however hard I tried to cheat myself and keep the knowledge out of my heart—so take her, and for this last sacrifice and confession, try and think of me charitably."

"I do, Ellen."

"You say so, but you cannot. I know what confidence destroyed means. But I will go on. I will make you happy, if knowing that your friend was false can make you happy. There is nothing to prevent your marriage with Carrie, although I thought once there was an obstacle. My brother undeceived me, but I did not undeceive you. I said I will deceive him, for he would weary of Carrie, and with whatever reluctance he may enter into a union with me, I know how to make his life rich and blessed. I will make

such amends, thought I; I will bestow upon him a hundred-fold more than I shall deprive him of. I struck a bargain with my conscience until I silenced it. All the devils seemed to drive me into my new career of crime. It seemed so glorious to ascend your paths by your side; I was dazzled; the old friendship did not content me; I became a fool and a criminal, and in grasping for all, lost all. I know it. I see it. But I tell you, don't condemn me! Don't pity me! I will bear neither."

These sentences were uttered with a fluent and passionate vehemence, as she paced the floor up and down, not once looking at her auditor. She paused by the mantel as she ceased, and buried her face in her hands as they rested on the shelf. George walked silently to her side, and laid his hand upon her shoulder. He spoke tenderly and with profound feeling.

"Ellen, let us teach ourselves to forget this story, or to remember it only as a lesson whereby we are chastened. I am intensely gratified to think I can inspire a friendship like yours. I like you profoundly, yet it seems fitter that Carrie should be my wife. I shall know how to value your friendship when I reflect that it prompted you to surrender that which you had taught yourself to consider important to your happiness. Let me take your hand, Ellen."

"Not now," said she, springing from his side. "Not now. I cannot. This is an impulse of generosity. Some other time, after you have reflected, if you come to me and say, let us be friends again as we were in the olden time, I will take your hand. I will bless you. I will feel then that this unhappy story is forgotten. Let me go now. Stay here, and I will send Carrie to you."

The restoration of love and the restoration of lovers! The tangled path, the troubled way, at last, behind, and the open, known redeemed future stretching before—the scene which ensued was one that art cannot compass nor language paint.

Mr. Jack Broom, hunting for a listener to whom he might tell his story, found it in Betsy.

"I'm sure she is a Granway, my dear Miss Betsy," said he. "It was hard to make it out at first. It was like a Chinese puzzle. There was Twitt's story and Granway's

story, and my story. You only give them a few tosses, and lo! they fit exactly. Yes, Carrie is positively a Granway."

"But according to Mr. Twitt's account, the daughter died," said Betsy.

"Don't you see how easy there could be a mistake in that? But the thing is to get the story from Sanford. If he would speak, confound him, all would be clear. Why the deuce was the fellow born with a tongue! Hang your shut-up mouths! If people did not talk, one might as well turn owl! What confounded dunces the old fellows were in calling the owl wise, when handsome speech is the finest thing in life! Well, I've told you the story, Betsy, and you and I must prove my notion right for the sake of Carrie."

"Perhaps Ellen can persuade the facts from Mr. Sanford. Now is the time to approach him."

"Yes, for the rascal proves he has a heart, after all, confound him."

"And so has Mr. Broom," retorted Betsy, "whom I once supposed"—

"Eh? Now what did you suppose? A confounded selfish dog, eh? An actor, so, of course, one of Satan's own cabinet! An idle, whimsical, swearing fellow, eh?"

"Very much so, Mr. Broom, I must confess. But, then, we always liked you; and now your interest in Carrie, in Lucie"—

"Selfishness, by all the gods, throughout! I do like Tom Granway, though—or is it his breakfasts? Hang me if I can tell. It is an odd world. My philosophy is, laugh through it—keep coppers for the beggars—beware of horse-flesh—like Broadway on sunny mornings—read Shakespeare—look out for good dinners—and a plague on all the rest!"

They entered the house together, laying their plans to get the coveted story from Mr. Sanford, and at last agreed, with Ellen's help, to boldly approach him on the morrow, after the funeral.

On the next day, two hours before the period appointed for the solemn ceremonies, Mr. Twitt arrived, and shortly afterward drew Jack Broom aside.

"We are on the right path," said the lawyer; "I'm sure of it. I've been tracing back those inquiries that were

current relative to the wealth of Lemuel Granway, and find they were set afoot by Sanford."

"To what end?"

"Carrie is not his daughter—to Carrie's property he has no claim. You spoke of frightening the girl with mysterious threats. And she ran away from him, it seems."

"Yes. To be sure. I wish I was a lawyer. I do; that I might see what all this means."

"Sanford," replied Twitt, "could only get Lemuel Granway's property by marrying Lemuel Granway's heir."

"Ha! So it is. What a magnificent fox! What a comprehensive rascal! What a"—

"Hist!" interrupted Twitt, as Sanford's step was heard approaching.

The unhappy man was pacing the halls and rooms of the house with a ceaseless motion. Nearly all night his restless step was heard, wandering from room to room, treading with a monotonous gloom through the silent hours. Hushed, distant, impenetrable, there was that about his grief that filled every heart with a nameless awe. He seemed apart, remote, without the need or the function of sympathy.

His stern manner softened when at the grave. Lucie was near him, and with apparent unconsciousness he took her hand and held it. But he returned to the house apart and as reserved as ever, until entering the parlor, when he addressed them all.

"I have something to say for Carrie's sake," said he, "Which I ask you all to hear. She is not here. That is well. She knows she is not my daughter; and what she knows else is her knowledge and mine—none other's. You know her story nearly—but I will repeat it. She is the daughter of Caroline Granway, whom I met, a widow, in Rio Janeiro. Her first marriage had been unfortunate; her husband had become a gambler, a drunkard, and was killed in a brawl, leaving her with a little child quite destitute. I married her. But she could not recover from the misery experienced in her unhappy union with Colway. She went into a decline. I took her to Egypt. She died there. The infant I attempted to bring back with me, but, stopping at Naples, left her with a nurse. Some years after, when on a voyage up the Mediterranean, I renewed the care of the child; and on the return first met Lucie Dalton. I mention this because Lucie will recollect the child with

me. Carrie, therefore, is the grand-daughter of Lemuel Granway."

"And niece of the Many Brothers," exclaimed Mr. Broom, exultingly.

"Tell Carrie this, Ellen," resumed Sanford; "and do you renew her charge once more. She is at least my step-daughter. For what has passed between us may she have charity. I am alone now. To-day I leave for the South—never to return."

"William, I am your sister," said Ellen, earnestly, "I will cherish"—

"I thank you," he interrupted; "I shall die as I have lived, a wanderer."

"And I am your daughter," said Lucie. "The past is buried with my husband. Can we not live together as friends?"

"We are friends here," replied Sanford, "with this calamity fresh upon us, but we could not continue so. Away from this spot and this hour I shall be as I have been—an isolated, sullen, unloving man, heedless of the world, hating the world. Lucie, some day I will make an effort to restore to you your father's money."

"I do not ask for that. Let it be forgotten."

"No, you shall have it, if I ever succeed in earning so much. I have said all. My carriage is at the door. If Carrie will come to me before I depart, I shall think it kind."

He walked away from the silent listeners, and Ellen glided from the room to bring Carrie to him.

An hour later he entered his carriage; and as it rolled away, it was the last they ever saw of William Sanford.

Mr. Broom carried Sanford's story to Mr. Thomas Granway, which gentleman, after considerable difficulty, plucked up energy enough to post to Hareton to see his niece, in whom his fastidiousness found so much to admire, that he declared at once she should make a visit to his bachelor mansion. Twitt was also summoned, and the legal formulas at once executed whereby Carrie succeeded to the property of Lemuel Granway, but with Tom as her legal guardian.

As for George, he now resumed his studies with all his

energy, eager for the hour when he might take a diploma, put out his shingle, as in America it is phrased, and so be entitled, by position and the promise of success, to ask Tom Granway for Carrie's hand.

Ellen went back to the cottage, where George often visited her. But, in spite of all, there was a gulf or distance between them. Their thoughts and confidences did not flit to and fro from one to the other, as over a bridge, like in the olden time. George would observe her at times looking at him with earnest eyes—full of regret, interest, eagerness, and a desire to come up to him, to touch his heart and mind as before. Time might restore the old fellowship, but their story was too recent and strange to be thrust away and entirely silenced at once.

Years afterward, in the serene atmosphere of home; in the balanced contented calm of his heart; in the delight in simple things, and the sweet pleasures of the hearth; with blooming children around him; in the enjoyment of fair success, the good-will of neighbors, moderate wealth—George perceived what a feverish, restless life it would have been with Ellen, and in his daily happiness saw the problem of life solved. What fame or success that came, George learned to let come as the winds come, unsought and unbought.

Ellen learned the wisdom of these things as well as George; and although to the last his friend, his counsellor, his admirer, yet she was the saddened, subdued woman. And George saw that when she gathered his children around her, the tales she told were honest and wholesome ones.

Of the other characters in these pages, they glided into the story, have told their parts, and glide easily out again. We have only to look a little beyond the story to see our Betsy the happy and proud Mrs. Harry Elton. Emma, unmarried, is still papa Bensley's fond, mild, true housekeeper, and papa Bensley himself, a little more portly than ever, is still a thriving agriculturist, fond of his pipe and home-made jests. Mr. Jack Broom and Tom Granway like Broadway on sunny mornings, and eccentric Jack always delights to take Carrie by the hand. Lucie is still the famous *artiste*—and more, the honorable woman. We reach our true selves by strange ways. The seeming destruction our passions pull down, sometimes proves the means by which we are lifted up; and the apparent good we often clamber

to, becomes the precipice down which we are hurled. Lucie, it is whispered, has promised her hand to Mr. Broom. Humanized and chastened by touching Harold, she will make him a better wife than if she had accepted him before; and all who understand her large, passionate nature, must feel that she is safer and happier wedded to a man she can esteem than with her heart turned solely upon itself.

"What do you think?" said George to Carrie one day, some eight years after their marriage, "I am nominated for Washington."

"I am glad of it, George," said Carrie.

"What do you say, Ellen?"

"Don't accept it."

"Why not?" asked both George and Carrie.

"I have been studying life these eight years past," replied Ellen, "and I now know the paths wherein happiness lies. But if you can keep your finger on your pulse, and your pulse cool and slow under your finger, then you might accept it. But don't let politics, or Washington, or any other unwise ambition, play the part to you one you called your friend once played."

"I am older now, Ellen. I think I can put my finger on my pulse, as you say, and go on calmly, accepting success as an incident, and not an end."

"Then go on, George."

"I obey you," said George, and as he took Ellen's hand, she looked up to him with that earnest sympathy, that look of the old boyhood time, which he had not read in her eyes for many years.

THE END.