

LIFE BEFORE HIM.

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A Novel.

"THY FATES OPEN THEIR HANDS; LET THY BLOOD AND SPIRIT  
EMBRACE THEM."—*Twelfth Night*.

NEW YORK:  
W. A. TOWNSEND & COMPANY.  
MDCCCLX.

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W. A. TOWNSEND & COMPANY,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District  
of New York.

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C. A. ALVORD, PRINTER,  
No 15 Vandewater Street, N. Y.

W. H. TINSON, Stereotyper.

J. W. S. H.

MY DEAR H.

I DESIRE to dedicate this Book to you, because I am indebted to your advice—and shall I say penetration?—for the courage to embark in a vocation so perilous and exacting as the Novelist's. You have been pleased to think that I might prove not an unapt student, and, trusting to your friendly judgment, I have ventured "on a sea of glory," "like little wanton boys that swim on bladders," perhaps, far beyond my depth; and I am glad of the privilege of dedicating this volume to you, because I cannot tell, have no means of measuring, all that I owe to the hints, counsel, and companionship of one whose culture and taste have afforded me and others so much social and intellectual pleasure.

The story, my dear H., will no doubt prove to you its own best interpreter, but I am not unwilling to recall some of the theories of the art which we have discussed together,

and to remind you, that in making no attempt in this tale to "point a moral," I have acted only in accordance with my frequently expressed views. I believe that the profoundest sympathy of human nature is for *Life!* Man, as the proper study of mankind, is a sentiment acceptable in its broadest sense; it is the aspirations, struggles and passions of our kind that awaken the keenest interest and employ the best feelings of the heart. Before the significance and importance of these purely human sentiments, all abstractions, whether of ethics or science, are subordinate. The novelist has need in his performance of no other purpose than the design to create; the artistic requirements are complete if his characters and incidents carry within themselves the power of human sympathy. He is justified if he depicts human nature in such phases as to animate with its spirit, charm with its colors, its grace and sparkle, and its ever varying forms; and by extending the boundaries of life and feeling, widens experience and enlarges sensation. All attempts to force life in a current, by suborning its vital phases to the furtherance of a dogma or the illustration of a text, are apart from the proper aims of the art. If Life in itself is not sufficient, the vocation is a mistake. Of course, in all just delineations of human character, there are moral undertones; there are sermons in stones, and events preach their important lessons every hour.

But whether I am right or wrong, my dear H., I have attempted in this book no moral as an end. You will find in

my pages simply Life, a theme which I must humbly claim to be neither too low nor too insignificant for either of us. It is my only regret that I have so inadequately caught its splendid colors and rich meanings; but, while I cannot applaud the success of this performance, I trust that the book does not altogether lack pages in which the life and vital spirit are not indifferent expositors of the truth and value of my theory. The public may deny me even this qualified praise, but upon your kindly judgment, my dear H., I repose with confidence, and repeat my assurances of affection and esteem.

Yours abidingly,

THE AUTHOR.

NEW YORK, *March*, 1860.



## LIFE BEFORE HIM.

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### CHAPTER I.

**T**HE Train came to a sudden stop under the swinging lamps of the station. As the hoarse snorts of the locomotive ceased, there burst upon the air the explosive shouts of four score hackmen vociferous for fares ; and then amid the click of the wound-up brakes, a sleepy, stretching crowd came emptying through narrow doorways and down narrow platform steps. They came muffled, package-laden, dusty, bewildered by the sudden lights, the new noises, the uncertain localities, and the sharp change from the narcotic atmosphere of the pent-up cars. They precipitated themselves in wrong directions, upon each other, and into the arms of lusty fellows already rushing hither and thither with ponderous trunks. Confusion sprang up suddenly as if evoked by a summons ; all the Discords rushed pell-mell upon the scene. People bristled up with antagonisms, or plunged into hot baths of hurry and impatience ; tempers broke loose ; there was abundance of collision of tongues, jostling of bodies, imprecations from choleric words down to flat blasphemy, and no little wear and tear of patience and all the minor virtues.

Two travellers picked their way amid the mazes of the crowd, and emerged from the din and flurry by a narrow passage, out into the stilled, shadowed, midnight city.

"Here we are," said one, with a long inhalation, and uncovering to the fresh cool air. "Well, our journey is history—how of our acquaintance? Must that be of the past, too?"

The speaker was a man of thirty-five. His stature was large, his manner broad and free; the make and wear of his garments were flowing and negligent. He wore a wide-brimmed, slouching hat, a collar turned back wide from the throat, and a neckerchief worn in big folds and an ample tie. His face was massive, slightly pock-marked, and without a beard; a great mass of dark brown hair, brushed back from his brow, fell in long masses upon his neck and shoulders.

His companion was a youth, just stepped into manhood. His air was rural, his cheek ruddy and brown, fresh from the air of the hills; his dress simple, and that of a gentleman.

The youth stood still when the elder spoke, looking upward and downward with hesitation. He withdrew his arm from that of his companion, and spoke somewhat sadly and with reserve.

"I am without friends, and so I hope, sir, that we shall meet again. Meanwhile, I believe this is my way."

He pointed down a long, narrow street, sentinelled with dim street lamps, otherwise silent and desolate. But the elder watched his face with sudden keenness; he did not follow the direction of the pointed finger, but looked into the speaker's eyes.

"Why part?" exclaimed he, with sharp abruptness.

"With me friendship needs no probation. I am magnetic

—all attraction or repulsion. We are loadstone and needle—born to come together."

"You trust to your instincts, then," said the younger, evasively. He turned his head as he spoke, and his thoughts appeared to travel from the scene.

"I do," exclaimed the first speaker, with a short, abrupt utterance; "nature, my lad, always takes sides, and the right side, too. Keep your faith from princes as long and as thoroughly as you please, but trust to your instincts with all your might—unless, indeed, conventionality has washed their colors out, starched them into lifeless propriety. I am Philip Giles. Call me Philip. There begins and ends my category. My name is my whole estate and property; for the rest look at me. You confess that you are without friends—I ask for an opportunity to prove this to be a mistake."

"Our acquaintance is only half a day old. Friendships cannot be made so quickly and heedlessly."

"Not heedlessly! I am a swift reader of character, young sir. I am a magician and have plumbed you. There are chemicals in my brain by which I photograph human character swiftly and surely. I know you, and like the knowledge. The only difficulty is, that you have not the same clear insight into my more opaque composition. By the way, you have my name—I do not know yours."

"Warren."

"Warren! Patronymic? Come, sir, frankness is a fine virtue."

The young man flushed, and answered coldly: "Call me Warren only. It is enough for all that's likely to be between you and me."

"As you will," replied the elder, without noticing the

manner or the words of young Warren. "Come, shall we walk? Your baggage"—

"Is here," said the other with haste, and looked down at a small bag in his hand. "Tell me," said he, with a nervous, disquieted manner, "where to find you to-morrow, and I will come."

"Humph! To-morrow! I'll walk a square with you, and we can arrange the appointment. To which hotel?"

"To none."

"None?"

"No, sir."

"A private house, eh? It is late to be knocking at a sleepy relative's door—late to be stirring from cosy sheets a cold unwelcome."

"I have no welcome to expect, cold or otherwise; no sleepy relatives to unkennel."

Philip Giles answered by an interjection, and watched, in a musing yet suspicious manner, the countenance of his fellow traveller. They walked a square without a word. Suddenly Philip wheeled before his companion, and laid his two hands upon his shoulders.

"I hope, my lad, you're no runaway—no fugitive from your family."

There was a silence. The young man only turned aside his head.

"Warren, look at me. I am vagabond, outcast, Bohemian, without family, without kin, I fear; honest, perhaps, but a waif, useless, aimless, drifting *from* nothing to nothing—and so believe me, Warren, I know better than any other the wisdom of the words I utter: Cling to your friends and kindred! There, my lad," said he, with sudden

gaiety, as if to scatter a sadness that had settled down upon his words, "there is text and sermon for you."

The cheeks and brow of the youth reddened quickly. The first impulse was to evade the issue so suddenly raised; the second to face and master it.

"Mr. Giles, to-day my history begins. What has gone before I discard and forget. My life is cut in two; the past is utterly banished from me and from my recognition. I will not think of it, or recall it. There is nothing, sir, to which I can cling or return."

This was a little declamatory, perhaps; but earnest words have a pompous swell sometimes.

Philip sighed; then, with one of his quick shiftings of humor, slipped his arm through Warren's, and said:

"Well, my lad, there is no crime in your antecedents—of that I'll take oath before bench or jury. So hang retrospection! We'll think of sunshine, and good luck to come."

With a muttered exclamation he looked suddenly grave again.

"Do you know the town?" said he.

"I never saw it before."

"Then, does your road lie this way?"

"It does, I believe." The answer was hasty; the accents evasive.

"I am curious," said Philip, "only in the people I like. You think my questions sometimes impertinent. I risk the imputation, and proceed. This street terminates awkwardly for a traveller at night in a strange town."

"How does it terminate?"

"In the river."

"Ha!"

"Not three squares off. You have no intention of making your lodging in the bed of the Hudson, I take it."

The young traveller stopped short, and looked around like one at bay. He lifted his hat, and wiped his brow, upon which the perspiration stood thickly, and then, with difficult utterance, turned to his companion.

"Sir, a man's misfortunes are sacred. Will you please leave me? It matters little which way this path leads me, or any path. I cannot go astray. I shall be a late sitter to-night, and to-morrow an early riser. May I have better luck hereafter."

"Warren!" said Philip, in a tone of mingled exultation and sympathy.

"Good night," said Warren.

"By St. Mark, he's poor!" exclaimed Philip, with an emphasis, almost enthusiasm, which astonished the young adventurer.

"The fact seems to give you pleasure," laughed Warren, with painful levity. "I *am* poor. My last coin paid my way to town—make what mirth of that you can."

"Why, to be candid, I confess that I like fellows with nothing in their pockets but honest emptiness. Yet my prejudices are not ultra. I should have preferred you to be rich enough to pay for a night's lodging."

"Well, sir," said Warren, assuming a proud, cold air, "you guess the rest. I accept my fortune with fortitude, you will admit. Once more, good night. I shall have pleasant dreams, no doubt."

But Philip seized the hand of the outcast. "Warren, I thrust my friendship upon you because I know it's honest. I shall not leave you. Besides"—he paused, and burst into broad, vociferous laughter. "So you're moneyless?"

"Not a dime."

"Here's conjunction;" and Philip broke into fresh laughter.

"I am glad I can afford you so much amusement," said Warren, doggedly.

"Amusement! Birds of a feather, lad, will come together. See!"

He thrust his hands into his pocket, and drew them inside out.

"See," he exclaimed, with renewed merriment; as if inspired with mirth by the whimsical coincidence, "our fortunes are of the same color. Warren, I have not the tenth fraction of a dime."

"What!"

"Neither gold nor silver."

"This is odd."

"Odd! It is bad luck got into comedy—a fantastic caprice of fortune that sets me in a roar."

## CHAPTER II.

WARREN caught the gay humor of his companion, and the adventurers grew merry together. Their laughter echoed through the lonely streets, and here and there the head of a disturbed sleeper was thrust from a window in wonder at the untimely sounds.

Our hero—for to such rank I exalt at once the younger of the travellers—was of genial temperament; his fancies were sweet, his courage high, his heart fresh and hopeful. His manner and dress evidenced that these sharp necessities were new experiences, yet the hardships of a houseless night in a strange city did not appear to affect him. His ardor and courage would doubtless have accepted such a freak of fortune gaily—but there was something else—a shadow of some misfortune, some recent adversity and suffering, which weighed upon his spirits. The mirth, therefore, died swiftly upon his lips.

"Well, Warren, down again, eh!" said Philip. "It is your first act in the real romance of life, I see."

"As we are both homeless and bedless," replied Warren, with an effort at animation, "let us keep up our spirits by cheerful talk. We shall have time enough for long stories, and all our philosophy."

"We'll keep our philosophy until it is needed. I said I was moneyless, but did not confess to being roofless. Fortunately I have an attic, which is mine. It is up more stories than I've ever had patience to count, but your limbs

are tough and will not mind them. It's small, poor, sad enough, but it serves to hide me from the world sometimes. There is one bed, which, if not wide enough for both, can serve at turns—and that is better, I think, than pacing these echoing stones all night."

Warren fell back a little. He had not been able to shake off altogether certain feelings of distrust, prompted, no doubt, by the eccentric and reckless manner of his companion, and he wavered between distrust and an inclination to believe.

"You will not trust me, I see," said Philip, with some bitterness. "When I take to the highway, I shall be wise enough to pluck geese with feathers. Remember that! There is never danger for the poor, young sir. Men like you and me are safe everywhere."

"I am perhaps too cautious," said Warren; "but I know the world only as it has been echoed to me by others—the echoes have been full of warnings."

"There is nothing I can filch from you but your virtue; and if that can be stolen it's a cheap article—pinchbeck—false coin—and not worth the keeping."

"As a principle," suggested Warren, "is it not well for innocence, sometimes, to be guarded by ignorance?"

"Manhood leaps into life, and battles with the world as it is; it is strong by conquest, not by flight."

"Good terse sentences," said Warren; "but lead us not into temptation, you know."

Philip winced

"An abstraction," he exclaimed. "Its application lies only in extremes. The temptations that lie about us every hour should be faced and overcome. But I ask you again, Will you venture in my den? Will you dare the deviltry

I may invent, the mischief I shall plan, the deep damnation of your taking off, which I may venture to accomplish?"

"Why, I had resolved to pass the night in the streets, and in the morning begin my new career. But I should prefer a roof to the street."

"And in the morning be the fresher for your tasks. Well, it is not five minutes' walk from this spot. I have led you toward it as we talked. We must to bed superfluous, I suppose—but I assure you, it is a proceeding which has no novelty for me."

They came to a tall structure, of innumerable windows and small doors, situated in a narrow street which crossed the great central highway. Its lower floors appeared used for shops; its upper ones told no tales at that hour but those of darkness and silence. The adventurers entered readily by a door to which Giles carried a key. The passage was black, solid darkness; but Philip groped his familiar way, and with Warren close at his heels, they, with occasional stumbles and misteps, slowly ascended the stairs.

After innumerable landings, turnings, and passages, they reached the attic story; and Philip ushered his guest into his apartment.

It was a small room, in confusion with a crowd of many objects, indistinct in the faint light cast by the stars through the one uncurtained window.

"Come Warren, no words now," said Philip as he lighted the end of a candle; "we'll to bed with all speed. Sleep now and plan the campaign to-morrow. Then look out for wisdom; I shall unburden; I'll show you most delightful good sense in the world. Meanwhile I do not speak another word. The cot is narrow—I will take the wall and hug it

close. Give me ten inches elbow-room, and I can sleep under all possible circumstances, sublimely!"

In three minutes Mr. Philip Giles was under the blanket; in three more he slept and snored.

Warren was not so fortunate. He experienced a sense of novelty and strangeness; the occasion awakened a throng of recollections; the future and the past both crowded and pressed upon him, the one with its fears and hopes, the other with its pains, passions, and sorrows.

"I must not think, but only hope," exclaimed he, pressing his hands upon his temples. "I must teach myself to look forward only, and never backward."

The grey began to tint the eastern sky before he slept, but he slumbered far into the morning.

### CHAPTER III.

“YOUR dreams are too long,” shouted Mr. Philip Giles in the ear of Warren; “cut them short.”

Warren started up from a condition of dreamy slumber, and shook off the remains of sleep.

He found his eccentric host standing by the bedside, half dressed, a shaving box in hand, and busily employed in preparing a tough beard for the razor.

“There you are, eh,” said he, lathering himself with great energy as he talked; “you’re a late riser, and let me add, far from a safe sleeper. You slumber with your dreams much too near the end of your tongue.”

“I do not understand you,” exclaimed Warren, flushing quickly.

“Do not be alarmed,” was the calm rejoinder. “You’ve entertained me here for an hour with mutterings the most dire, but your secrets are your own. I could make nothing of your disjointed talk.”

“But you tried to do so?”

“I did,” coolly replied Giles, seating himself on the side of the bed, and applying a fresh supply of soap to his chin. “I was curious enough to listen and see if your dreams were innocent.”

“Well?”

“I was satisfied.”

“I am sure I thank you for that conclusion,” said War-

ren, with a smile, “but one does not like his unguarded words so closely watched.”

“Of course not. But who cares for guarded words. It is only when a bit of nature peeps out that the real clue is obtained.”

“You assumed last night to read and know me—did you mistrust your judgment so soon?”

“No; but I desired to read further. That’s all.”

And Philip in a musing way began piling up the masses of white and foaming lather upon his cheek and chin. Warren rose to dress. The room was so small, and so crowded with a medley of many things that there was scarcely space enough for two at the toilet. But Warren made shift to do; puzzled more than ever as to the character of his host, now when the full light of day revealed the strange incongruous scene.

There was a great confusion and crowd of strange objects; an easel and bits of canvases against the wall; a pallet, powders, oil bottles, and a few crude studies and sketches of landscape; various portions of odd costumes, wigs, indescribable coats, plumes, a rusty sword, and a broken scabbard; a few books and some manuscripts; stuffed birds, either headless or tailless; a manikin crowned with a tattered hat; a shelf with a pipe and a few odd pieces of crockery; a small stove; a mirror very much the most pretentious article in the whole odd assemblage, the faded gilding and costly ornamentation giving it an air of decayed splendor; and in addition to these, those inevitable associates of all neglected apartments—dust, ashes, and cobwebs.

“Well Warren,” said Philip, having at last sufficiently softened his beard, and proceeding to cut down the tough

and wiry stubble with broad, reckless sweeps of the razor—"well, Warren, let us hear something of your plans. I have had some rough observation which perhaps can do you service."

"It is necessary to earn money," replied the youth, with some embarrassment; "I must go out into the city and learn how it is to be done—and learn quickly too, for already I have forewarnings of hunger."

"But I've had luck," exclaimed Giles, wheeling around suddenly from his position before the glass; "and I forgot to tell you. You must know that, for a man without a purse, I own more pockets than, economically considered, would appear necessary. It occurred to me this morning, while you were asleep, to search them; there was a possibility, by a hair only, that a stray coin might be lurking among them. I did, and Eureka! In Moses' breeches pocket I found it."

"In Moses' breeches pocket?"

"There they are. Who could have expected mercy in a Jew?" He pointed to a pair of worn, coarse knee-breeches, flung in one corner upon a pile of similar articles. Warren's puzzled look did not escape him.

"You do not understand, eh? I'll explain it all over the chops—for that was fortunate silver. No sooner found than I proceeded to its disbursement, and, to be brief, Madam Todd, an ancient lady who honors the adjoining attic, has undertaken to serve us coffee, chops, and hot rolls in consideration thereof. Think of a breakfast, lad, and take heart."

"Good news, indeed," said Warren, yielding himself without further reserve to the temper of his surroundings. For youth is plastic, and daylight is wholesome. Last

night our young adventurer was disposed to wrap himself in gloom and mystery; now, in the sweet light of the sun, he caught this gay, Bohemian spirit, and relished it. "Good news," said he, "and if I do not mistake, there comes the chops and coffee now."

As he spoke, there was a shuffle along the floor without, and then a knock at the door.

Philip's beard was so stubborn, and his tongue so active, that, notwithstanding his prolonged labor, he was not more than half shaved. But he dropped brush and razor, and hurrying to the door, threw it open.

A very ancient lady, indeed, with an ancient head-dress, and exceedingly ancient gown, stood at the door, with an ancient and battered salver, on which steamed two cups of odorous coffee and two rather diminutive chops.

"Madam Todd," exclaimed Philip, "you are magnificent. We shall pledge your health, and the memory of your honorable husband, the departed Mr. Todd."

The ancient lady, who was a subdued, saddened, withered lady, brightened up a little in her mottled, wrinkled face and her bleary, winking eyes.

"Ah, sirs, my husband!" said she, in a shrill, tremulous voice, "used to be drank to many times, for everybody loved him—everybody. If he were down from heaven here now, he would thank you as prettily as may be; but I can't—I can't."

And with this ancient love, fresh and earnest as when it was a new and modern love, she dropped a courtesy so quaintly and affectingly ancient that it brought tears of mirth and tenderness to Warren's eyes, and slowly shuffled away.

"Now wheel out that table?" cried Philip. "Here's a



breakfast that will at least blunt our appetites. In three seconds I will be ready for you."

Philip now fairly precipitated himself upon the labors of his toilet, and with an energy and speed that made amends for his previous delay, completed the delicate and various operations.

"All ready!" exclaimed he, very burnished and red from the violence with which he had applied water and towels; and drawing the table near the cot, offered the bedside to Warren for a seat, and drew up a trunk for his own.

They ate in silence. It was not until over the remains of their coffee and their last roll that they began to talk.

"Now," said Philip, "your plans? I am battered in the world's ways; you are a sapling—green, juicy and pleasant—but still a sapling, as innocent of life as a school-girl. Have you lived in the country always?"

"Always."

"I envy you. I like to roll on the grass, and kick my heels at the sun. I have an ambition, Warren; it's for a cottage and a hill-side of my own. It's a pleasant fancy, and serves a good turn when there's nothing for dinner but dreams. Now you, in your own fashion, have your ambitions too. You have nursed some big dreams, I dare say."

Warren blushed, and confessed the charge.

"Of course. I never knew a country lad that had not. While your town-fellow is perfect in the polka, admirable in his costuming, grand in his horses—splendor, dash and pleasure being the three things he covets and attains—Rusticus is a silent, secret dreamer, with his eye on the high places and the main chance. All our big politicians are rustic bred."

"That had not occurred to me before."

"Now, in, what direction do you aspire? You have made up your mind, of course, to be great. You have a contempt for riches; you are very honest, and mean to accept no fortune you do not honorably win; you expect to find the world on tiptoe to receive you—in the boxes, for instance—ready and anxious to crown you the moment you appear."

"My aspirations," replied Warren, with some confusion, "have been more moderate than you suppose."

Ambition in an honest lad is like love in a virtuous girl. He does not parade it; it is a precious secret; he blushes if it is discovered or rudely touched; it is a cherished dream, hugged apart, shrinking from harsh sneers and cold doubts.

"I have a fondness," said he, after a moment's pause, "and, I believe, some taste for literature."

"Then may Heaven help you."

"Are the chances of success so few?"

"The road is rough; the crown, when worn, full of thorns; still, if your impulses are genuine—if it is genius and not vanity that impels you, do not hesitate. You can only be happy in the life of your faculties. If any power within you lies disused, there will be discord and wretchedness."

"I think I must give it a trial," said Warren. "I have a fair education, and am tolerably well read, and have some perception of the art. Indeed," and he blushed at his confession, as if it signified some revelation of guilt, "I have brought some manuscripts with me. To-day I shall try and sell them."

"You had better peddle matches. If you stole into a shop with the design of robbing the till, your necessities

might excite some compassion ; but a green, hopeful, bashful lad, with a manuscript to sell, must run a gauntlet of hard derision, merciless scorn and pitiless repulsion, which no other experience can equal. Still, courage conquers sometimes ; and if you are not cursed with the curse of versatility there is some hope for you. If you can do one thing well, it is fortunate ; if you can do ten things a fraction less than well, you simply accumulate failures."

"Yet varied ability gives charm and grace to character."

"I speak only as regards success. But all art, as viewed by the wisdom of the world, is a mistake, Warren. It is a miserable fact, that a man may take to trade, and wax rich, pompous, and respectable ; but if his organization has elements above or averse to buying and selling ; if he yield to his dreams, his fancies, and love of the beautiful, he must take them into attics and cellars—enjoy them in rags—starve with them ! They have no bread and butter availability."

"Mr. Giles," said Warren, "you excite my curiosity. Will you be frank, and tell me what you are ?"

"A blunder !"

"Readily classified," replied Warren, laughing.

"I was born," resumed Philip, "in a mad fright, and my thirty faculties sent scattering. They have never settled back to their proper places, but have rushed hither and thither in blind confusion ever since. They are never available for any practical use, and make up so tangled a maze of cross-purposes, whims, caprices, good sense for others and bad sense for myself—capacities of the wrong kind, and incapacities of all kinds—that I find myself interesting as a puzzle, but rather unmanageable unless in somebody's harness. Professionally, I have three identities."

"You amuse me, sir. Please go on."

"I am an actor and a failure ; an artist and a mistake ; an artisan with the smallest appreciable success."

"An actor !" exclaimed Warren, glancing around the room ; "now I understand."

"Yes. That explains this confusion of toggery—and Moses' breeches pocket. Sheridan's Moses—I acted him only recently."

"And you call yourself a failure ?"

"Of course. Your true son of the buskin must be plastic ; his imagination must mould his individuality as if it were potter's clay. Mine is too hard baked in a rough world, and will not yield. It thrusts itself through all the characters I assume. I am Philip Giles in spite of ingenious make-ups and hard study. I can *think* Hamlet well enough, I dare say, but when I try to act him, he comes out all awry—percolated and diluted through my stubborn and angular peculiarities."

"Your imitative power is weak, perhaps," said Warren.

"Pshaw ! mere imitation is a paltry quality. All actors possess it, doubtless, but your great one flings over it the riches of imagination. Acting, you see, is not talent ; it rarely proceeds from positive mental processes ; it is a synthetic or outward perception of character—a species of insight which defies analysis. Your actor possesses the power to absorb, to fuse new elements, to act apart from himself. His imagination is exquisitely subtle, and is matched with perfectly responsive and sympathetic muscles and organs. I've heard actors theorize—splendidly ; and demonstrate logically how things should be done in a way to delight you—but let them act ! They couldn't slip into their parts ; couldn't wear any individualities but their own."

There was my Lady Clarinda. What knowledge, brains, theory, study; how she mastered the whole theory up and down, in and out—and added to her own stores the richer stores of my learned friend, the Professor. But could she act? My dear sir, it was art laid on inches thick, but nothing spontaneous or genuine; to borrow the phrase of a witty Athenian, between herself and the characters she assumed, there was no 'saturation point.'"

"Then it is not a matter of mind at all," said Warren.

"Mind! If mind was all," exclaimed Giles, with an egotism that didn't mince the matter in the least, "I should have been acting Hamlet last night—and you had lost a friend."

"How of your painting? Your peculiar organization should not bar success in that?"

"But it does. I am as analytical as you please; can define things; can think on mere abstractions as clearly as most men. But I show no feeling—the word which obtains with us all, and best expresses the quality which I have attempted to define. I am fond of art so far as appreciation goes; but my fingers are stiff, my fancies harsh—and my pictures go to the cheap auction shops. Now there is Charley Ashby, an artist of the grand stamp; his pictures are glorious to eye and heart; his imagination is all compact with hues, forms, conceits; he can think *things*, and fling them on his canvases, while I can think only fantastic words."

"A genius, eh?"

"Absolutely—and a capital fellow. You shall know him."

"And now, sir, what is your third profession?"

"When acting and painting fail me, as they frequently

do, I have a trade which serves to bridge what otherwise would be awkward gaps. In truth, it makes me more money than either of the others; but so perverse and cross-grained is my composition, that I cannot steadily pursue a purpose like other men. My blood is restless, I shift, turn, change, blow hot and cold, and keep poor. My third accomplishment is printing—the art as I hear it magnificently called, preservative of all arts—which fine phrase doesn't reconcile me to it at all. It is convenient though; it travels with me; it is available everywhere; and sometimes fills an empty pocket both pleasantly and quickly."

As Philip ceased, a faint knock was heard at the door.

"My ancient Todd, for the crockery, getting up a hectic knock on the door. Enter Todd!"

And without waiting for reply he caught up the breakfast dishes, and running with them to the door, threw them into the arms of the venerable dame.

"There they are, madam, and please withdraw. The breakfast was good."

Then without heeding the attempted remark of the ancient lady, he unceremoniously shut the door in her face, and turning upon Warren, clapped his hands upon his shoulders.

"Warren, I like you. You are too fine a fellow to be at the mercy of these publishing autocrats, and so Charley Ashby and I must concert something for you. Ashby knows everybody; we must go to him at once; he'll be sure to put you in the right way. By the by, is it a love scrape?"

"That brings me to town? No."

"Excellent! Then you shall marry my sister—when I find her."

"I thank you heartily," said Warren, gaily. "I am as delighted, no doubt, as your sister will be. Yet, who is your sister? I thought you were alone in the world."

"So I am."

A peculiarly sad expression came over his eyes; there was a slight quiver of the lips.

"I am, Warren; yet I believe that I have a sister somewhere. I will give you the story. It is brief enough.

"My father died when I was so young that I cannot recall him. My mother was very gentle and very beautiful. I loved her, I recollect, with all my heart. Well, she married again. Her husband proved a tyrant; his iron hand and ruthless temper pressed her down. There was a daughter—a cherub! and like my mother! My little half-sister was my pet; I loved her better than I know how to say. But *he*, her father, hated me—oppressed and trampled upon me. Submission could not always last. I resented, and fled—this was when I was sixteen. I have been a vagabond ever since. Well! There is little else to tell. He became unfortunate, moved from place to place; at last abandoned my mother and her child, and disappeared. Then my mother died, as I learned, and my poor sister passed into the care of others—with whom or where I do not know. I have no trace of her. This is my weakness, Warren, and I wander up and down the earth, searching for her."

Philip's voice was a little husky; but his eccentric humors came and went as swiftly as lights and shadows on a summer's day. In an instant he was all gaiety and lightness again.

"Come, Warren, now for Ashby's. He is the man for you. The distance is not half a mile."

"I go with some hesitation."

"Why?"

"Time is so important to me. I must be at work."

"Ashby will be a short cut to what you want. Besides he will not pester you with long talk, as it is my delight to do."

"And my pleasure to listen. Your philosophies have an Attic relish."

"My dear boy," replied Philip with the most amusing assurance, "I can *talk* the most exquisite sense in the world. It is easy enough. The difficulty is, I cannot *act* it."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"**H**ERE," said Philip, pausing before a large stone structure, whose doors, posts, panels, lights, were broken out in an eruption of small signs, "here is Babel, here is a hive where busy, and something knavish bees, fatten on green blossoms, and distill honey. Here also artists most do congregate. We shall find Ashby's studio somewhere between the doorstep and the stars, if we have patience to travel high enough. Shall we begin?"

"Yes."

"We of the vagabond tribes have a way of tripping up ceremony," said Philip as they began to ascend, "and most of us come to familiar names. We are not going to Mr. Warren you. Can't you give us a Jack or Joe, or something convenient to get hold of?"

"It is my misfortune that I cannot. You may call me Warren James—and clip it into any familiar form you please."

"There is no familiar, no sunny side to it; it has no hinge; it cannot bend. Yet a sister now might call you Warry."

"I have no sister."

"Ah! God grant that I have, somewhere."

They were ascending the last flight of stairs, which reached the attic story at an intersection of two long galleries. At this point, leaning against the balustrade, or seated on the railing, was a group of talkers in a great

variety of odd plumage, remarkable for their amplitude of hair, and generally uncouth, slovenly appearance. They wore beards of the most extraordinary length; little jaunty gold-bound caps; coats of faded and rusty velvet; trousers of enormous dimensions, various as to color and pattern, but uniform in their worn, decayed, spotted character.

The appearance of strangers appeared to startle this singular group. Their talk died away; they dropped from their perches on the railing; and then like a flock of crows among whom a strange bird has suddenly flown, swiftly flapped off along the passages. There was a simultaneous slamming of doors, and all had disappeared.

Warren laughed outright.

"Who are these birds?" said he.

"Artists, every one of them. You cannot mistake the breed. When a man takes to pencil and pallet his blood becomes infused with a new life; he appears not only to adopt a profession, but to be mysteriously initiated into a new tribe. Henceforth he is as distinct in habit, gait, manner, dress, as if he were a gypsy or a Jew. But here is Ashby's door."

He knocked as he spoke, and to the immediate response threw it open.

Beneath a window whose angle turned slightly upward to the light, an artist was seated before an easel. He rose as the door opened, greeting Philip heartily. He was a man of middling stature, quick and nervous in his movements; his brow was broad, bulging above the temples at the seat of imagination; eyes deep, intense, and searching; lips full but slightly compressed, shaded by a long smooth beard. His manner in repose was cordial, gentle, with crosses of pleasantry and humor. He appeared one of those

many-sided characters who combine keenness for enjoyment with depth of feeling ; who unite with severe earnestness of purpose a fine sensibility to humor. He was young, moreover, and his character had not yet fully settled down into that breadth and resolution which mark the middle age of all strong men.

"I am glad to know you, Mr. James," said he when Philip had presented Warren. "Mr. Giles and I like each other well enough to accept each other's friends."

"Then my good fortune is remarkable," replied Warren; "for only yesterday I arrived in town utterly friendless."

Ashby turned a sudden look into the eyes of Warren, and then glanced at Philip.

"Only yesterday," said Giles, "we run together by mutual instincts—the consanguinity of poverty. But who will put asunder unions of that sort?"

"None, I hope. There is free-masonry among us on that point. Eh Hawley?"

He addressed a gentleman who stood apart, with glass to eye, scrutinizing a recently finished canvas.

Mr. Hawley bowed, showed a pair of very white teeth, extended two fingers to our hero, but did not remove his hat. He wore an enormous beard of black and grey which flowed down in ample sweeps upon his breast, while from under the rim of his hat there gushed out and poured down upon his shoulders great masses of hair of the same mingled hues as the beard. The gentleman's dress indicated a struggle between his poverty and his needs. His linen was clean but frayed; his coat, too short in the arms and too cramped in the back, was a faded memento of the days before fortune forsook him and corpulency set in. A similar short-coming characterized his trousers. He carried gloves too dilapi-

dated for the hand, so he held them between two fingers, and whirled and whipped them in the air incessantly. He wore an eye-glass, attached to his neck by a ribbon, which kept continually bouncing from his eye, sometimes when talking cutting into his sentences in a way which resulted in their premature quietus.

"Now Charley," said Philip, "Warren is a lad above buttons. He has dropped here in town from a balloon, or some other mysterious and inscrutable source; sprung upon us full-made from the brains of the provinces! Now what can we do for him?"

"Do you like art?" inquired Ashby.

"I am not an artist," replied Warren, a little annoyed to find himself so freely discussed.

"No pigments for him," roared Philip; "he has no taste for grinding colors. Look at his head. Give him a line to one of your literary giants. Do you not see there is philosophy in him?"

"Literature!" broke in Hawley, abruptly, and with great vivacity; "my dear sir, it is degraded; beneath the thought of a man of genius. It has fallen into the hands of upstarts, pretenders—a crowd of indolent, brainless clowns who thrust us men of real parts from the lists. There was my last effort, *An Examination of the Volcanic Origin of the Moon*. My style, sir, is a remarkable style, especially for the Reviews. Classical! stately! learned! Well, sir, a bit of imbecility on that pitiful Italian question was taken instead, and my labored, and, I venture to say, superior production, was sent back unread, as I am willing to swear. And there's my *History of the Empires*. You've not seen my *History*? That, sir, is on account of the conspiracy of the publishers, backed up by their lite-

rary hounds, who hunt me down, sir—who hunt me down.”

He pulled a worn, tattered volume from his pocket, and spread it open in his hand. Philip suddenly walked away. Ashby hastily resumed work on his picture. But Warren was thoroughly amused, and listened.

“Here’s my History of the Empires,” said he, in a loud, declamatory way, “the most remarkable attempt at historical composition of any age. Ten years ago, sir, the first volume was printed. The remaining seventeen are in manuscript, ready for the public. But, would you believe it? You cannot believe it, I am sure—it is monstrous, in this age of civilization—in this enlightened epoch of the world. For ten years I’ve been looking for a publisher, and cannot find one. Not one with the independence and liberality to give to the world a work which would immortalize me, and munificently reward his enterprise. And why, sir? Because I am persecuted, sir! Hunted down, sir! Tracked from publisher to publisher by the envious literary dogs, who fear my genius—dread my success.”

“This, indeed, is infamous,” said Warren, with what gravity he could.

“It is not only my history; it is so with everything. I possess remarkable versatility. It is my characteristic. I say to these publishing nabobs, who feed on the hearts and brains of genius, what do you want? Is it a novel? a poem? a biography? a history? a translation? an essay?”

“The best in the world,” broke in Ashby, laughing, “either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral, scene individable or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.”

“Eh! Ha! What!” exclaimed Hawley, whirling his glove with great rapidity, and wheeling suddenly around to face Ashby, and as suddenly back again to the face of Warren. “Eh! Yes! true! But it makes no difference. Let me propose what I will, I am forestalled. Somebody else is before me; somebody has possessed the ear of the publisher, and I am crushed.”

He put the unfortunate History back into his pocket with a forlorn air, and lifted his hat to wipe the perspiration from his brow. Warren fairly started as he did so, for the entire top of his head, from the line of the ears, was utterly and intensely bald. Not a hair varied or disturbed the glistening surface. The change from the thick and thrifty growth that flourished below the crown was fairly startling; the effect was as if something had suddenly fallen away or vanished; it suggested a slide at some time—an occasion when the whole mass came precipitated down the smooth sides of the skull in an avalanche of hair.

Warren expressed his solicitude the best way he could, and the author of the History of the Empires, relieved by his outbreak, extended his two fingers to each of the company, and tripped out of the room, whirling his glove as a parting salutation when at the door.

“Capital!” exclaimed Philip. “I am glad, Warren, that you got your dose of Hawley through with so easily. Make up your mind, however, never to hear the end of his History. From this time forth, like the rest of us, you are a haunted man.”

“But Mr. Hawley must publish sometimes.”

“Yes, he contributes papers to an obscure Review printed in an attic in an obscure way, and circulated among the dead men, it is supposed, as mortals rarely see it among

mundane things. The facts, I dare say, are that its contributors are its readers, its patrons its proprietors, who in this luxurious way tickle their vanity, and spend their money."

The door suddenly flew open, and Hawley came tripping back again. He drew a pamphlet from his pocket.

"Sir," said he, "I must beg of you to examine this number of the Literary Caustic. Admirable, sir! Look at the essay on Josephus, subscribed by the name Titan. I choose an appropriate signature, you will confess. It is pronounced by competent people to be the best paper on the history of the Jews ever written. History is prostituted nowadays, sir. It has been damned by that Scotchman, Alison, and that funny man, Macaulay. Carlyle has tried it, sir, and he makes me think of a man with the colic. Ha! ha! ha!"

He roared and bent himself up with laughter at this comment, as if the thought was father to the complaint.

"You have no essayists with you here," he continued; "they do not catch the proper style, the stately flow. Bancroft and Prescott are respectable, but, my dear sir, confidentially, so absurdly overrated. They have not got the Attic finish, the sparkling spirit, the versatile expression always found in men of real power. Irving is an elegant, plastic imitator—that's all. Literature is in a bad way. Learning goes to the wall. Ignorance has the public button-hole."

Warren felt his cheek flushing with indignation. This cool depreciation of men whose genius had fired him with enthusiasm and aspiration, exasperated him into a sharp retort. But Hawley only whirled his gloves and showed his teeth.

"You're young, Mr. James; you'll see into these things by and by."

Warren was tempted to say that he saw into Mr. Hawley already, but he held his peace.

"You are going into literature, you say. Let me advise you not to think of it. It is only first-rate ability that succeeds, and not that if conspired against."

"Upon my soul, I thank you; but you must permit me to say that you measure my abilities rather hastily. You have not tested them yet." Warren spoke with unconcealed irritation.

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Hawley, with a superciliousness that stung Warren into a rage; "it doesn't take long, you know, to sound a man. I understand it all. Light stories—yes, light stories! You might try the milliner magazines with a love tale or two. They'd do, no doubt. But don't try higher—you'd fail, sir—fail. Try the stories, and there will be some chance for you—poor matter, at best, of course; but people must submit to their intellectual limitations."

An ambitious young gentleman, with his eye on all the great lights of literature could scarcely experience anything more exasperating than this. Write tales for the milliner magazines! Why, his contempt for the whole class was lordly and arrogant; for youth is prone to get into high altitudes, and to frown from ideal heights upon the mediocrity which, in later years, it sometimes is compelled to come down and shake hands with. Warren was not quick to anger, but this contemptuous advice put his blood in a tumult. Hawley's arrows shot home, and wounded him where he was most sensitive. So he replied, with some bitterness:



"Advice, sir, when unasked, is unwelcome."

"Of course! truth is often a hard fact," replied Hawley.

"Ignorance and malice sometimes assume the name of truth. If Mr. Hawley will shape his own ends, and leave me to hew out mine, I shall thank him."

"Ah! bless me! Yes! True! I leave you to a better temper."

And smiling in the flushed face of Warren, Hawley backed himself from the apartment.

Warren, whose choler was fast rising to an explosive point, turned to apologize to Ashby for his exhibition of feeling. He found him in a corner with Giles. The young artist stepped forward immediately.

"Hawley is a man, Mr. James, that honest men are apt to get angry at; but most of us are used to his follies, and only laugh at them."

"Which I was not wise enough to do, I am sorry to admit."

"A kind of wisdom," said Philip, "which the world rubs in."

"Philip has been explaining to me," said Ashby, "how I can be of service to you. I hope he is right, but I doubt my influence. It is not what he supposes."

"Rubbish!" exploded Philip. "These fellows of the quill are at your button-hole incessantly. So sit down and write."

"I'll give you letters, but I warn you, they will serve you little."

"Ought I accept them?" said Warren bluntly. "I am a stranger to you."

"There is brotherhood between gentlemen, you know."

I will write and say that you are one. I expect to make a friend—that will do as well as anything."

Ashby seated himself to prepare the notes, and Philip led Warren to an examination of the pictures. The walls were hung thickly with studies, sketches, unfinished pictures; some in frames stood upon the floor; others were upon chairs and benches. Manikins, draperies, stuffed birds, busts, were scattered around.

The canvases were mostly landscapes; compositions, studies of trees, rocks, etc., views of famous lakes and valleys.

To Warren's ignorant eyes, there was astonishing genius and beauty in all. The mountains in their distant haze, the lakes in their transparent, placid surfaces; the skies aerial, tender and soft; the foliage delicate and wonderful in its elaboration; the foregrounds of trees, rocks, grasses, miracles of patient study and observation! They possessed nature and truth; they glowed with imagination and sensibility; sunlight sparkled upon the woods and the waters, cast its rich shadows, and flooded the heavens with its glories; a thousand shifting, evanescent tints played upon the hills and in the skies; nature herself was in league with the creator.

"Ah," muttered Warren, "I could love the art. To live always in creating the beautiful! That were something noble."

The artist stood behind him and heard these words. His eye lighted up; a glow came to his cheek.

"But the beautiful," said he, "has its votaries through more arts than one. Sometimes when I read the poets—when a picture by mere words is fixed upon my imagination as vividly as any of these, and set aglow by the passion,

emotion, harmonies of thought ; when the eye sees, the ear hears, the heart feels, and all by the subtleties of language alone, I turn from my poor art, which speaks through one sense alone."

"And captivates the rest. This lake scene here has a tenderness in its soft beauty which, I know not how, touches me like pathos in music. That is its eloquence, and surely it has its own unspoken harmonies."

"Take care of your sentiment," broke in Philip. "If you soar too high, you'll crack your crown against the ceiling."

The eye of the artist looked keenly into the face of Warren. He smiled slightly.

"I hope your praise is honest, for we men of imagination like it more than I will sometimes confess. It is astonishing how highly I prize a man's judgment after he has praised one of my pictures. There is no help for it. Praise is sunshine, and summer rain and gentle dew ; it gladdens, masters, and sweetens. How often, too, it renders the soil where it falls rich and fruitful!"

"Then," laughed Philip, "shake a few crumbs to me. I am as greedy as a poet—and poor enough in product to obtain all the culture of that kind possible."

"Sands and rocks will not bear. *You* are incorrigible," said Ashby, and then turned to Warren. "Now here, Mr. James, are three letters. One is for a journalist—he may find you a reporter's desk with plenty of work, small pay and poor thanks. Another for Mr. Wilton Clay, editor of the *Literary Ancient*—a capital fellow—he will accept your stories, poems, essays, by the score, and the plan toward authors is very liberal. If your articles are admitted you can pay for them with a dinner at Delmonico's"

"What ! I pay for them—why I must work for pay."

"Exactly," said Philip, "but down at the Ancient office, they have an upside down sort of logic, that reasons these things out in the way Charley has told you. You'll get used to it, Warren."

Warren was puzzled as to the way he could get used to it. He must have more money than at present—and a large increase of vanity in order to desire public print under circumstances so peculiar.

"And here's the third," said Ashby; "this is for an honorable fellow, employed on an evening journal. He will help you if he can."

"Mr. Ashby, this"—

The artist interrupted him.

"You want to thank me. Do not do it. But there is one way in which you can serve me."

"I am glad of that. How?"

"By accepting my assurances that I am glad to know you, and taking a hint without offence, that the light is fine, and I must to work. Philip, you rover, bring Mr. James to see me again."

The artist bowed, and our adventurers withdrew.

"Why," said Warren to Philip on the stairs, "this looks like the smile of fortune. Last night penniless, homeless, friendless ; to day"—

"To-day's story is not told," interrupted Philip : "Wait !"

## CHAPTER V.

THE artist slipped the bolt into the socket, and thus secure from interruption, ran with an eager zeal to his easel.

But two pictures swung open into the room, and through the door thus concealed, a light figure glided in.

"Are they gone, Charley?" exclaimed a pair of ripe lips, as a pair of bright, dancing eyes shot quickly around the room.

"Every one, Fanny, and now to work."

"And I am already. Everything is in order. Do look, Charley, how pleasant it is." And she ran back and threw the door wide open.

"Get your book at once," said Ashby; "I'll look at your housekeeping by and by. Let me see, you finished the first canto yesterday."

"I'll not read a word, if you do not praise my work. Charley, you are not fair. Everybody comes to admire your pictures, but who comes to look at my flowers, my taste and order, my pretty little gem of a room, and all out of a rough, ugly attic."

"Some fairy of housekeeping has indeed touched your fingers with the true tact. Come, sis, one look, and then to my canvas."

He playfully caught her hand and ran with her into the inner apartment.

"There!" said Fanny, "isn't it fine? I don't believe anything could be prettier."

"Admirable! Such art! Taste! Genius!"

Ashby threw himself into an attitude of mock admiration; but Fanny, somewhat piqued, caught his little finger and deliberately bent it. He gave a little cry of pain.

"There, now! You hurt my feelings, Charley. See what pains I took with the vases; and how I covered up that ugly break in the fire-place with fresh branches; and how prettily I arranged the curtains—and strain on tip-toe I had to, with the table drawn under the horribly high window, in order to get them to suit. You're a man, Mr. Charles Ashby, or you might see what a managing sister you've got, without my being compelled to tell you of it."

"I know what a charming sister I've got—is not that enough? A merry, gay, pretty sister! Bless me! The thing is, somebody else will find it out—then good bye to home and happiness."

"Pshaw!" And Fanny laughed, and shot a quick glance from the corner of her eye, and hummed a little tune, and then broke into downright laughter.

"Why, you are sad! and you sigh! and that is like a selfish man, and a brother. You cannot see."

"What can't I see, Fanny?" said Ashby, and walked back to his easel.

"Probabilities! You don't know how to reason, Charley."

"That's good," said Charles with a supercilious smile, and began touching his canvas.

"But you don't."

"Will my logical sister show me how?"

"Are you not great, and fast becoming known? Do not great ladies already invite you to their houses? Are you not admired and sought after?"

"Success begins to reward me, I confess. I shall soon

be rich enough to give you a better home than this, Fanny."

"Then I hope you never will be rich," said Fanny, who had drawn up a low seat between the artist and the window, and opened a book in her lap. "I would rather live here where I can be with you, than ever so finely situated elsewhere, just to pine in splendid solitude. We are alone, you know, Charley. That is, I am alone. You will have splendid opportunities—you, not I, will be the one to marry, and then what becomes of me?"

"But I don't intend to marry."

"You think so, of course. But Charley dear, I know a great deal better. You will. I am sure of it," and Fanny emphasized her observation with her book on her knees. "And you know very well that I never will—or if I should, just to suppose it, Charles—what would be the difference to you? You would be as great without your sister, but I would be poor, lonely, miserable enough without you."

"That is the sad side of the tale," said Ashby, as he vigorously applied the brush. "But some day a hero will come and carry you off. And, by the by, Philip brought with him here to-day, a fine looking youth, with the name of James. And why, I cannot tell, he recalled to my mind the man who so wronged us—perhaps it was his youth, his poverty, the struggles before him, that made me think of our false guardian, and to think of him revives harsh recollections—old bitterness."

"Now, how strange! a man likes a trouble better than anything. Nothing can revive those old sorrows to me. I have forgotten them. I wish you could, too, Charley."

"Well, I try. But oh! to think of what I've under-

gone—what I still forego. I was ambitious, Fanny; I looked high—he thrust me from the road to fame."

"Are you not on it, now? Perhaps the sad struggle made you strong?"

"This art is noble," said Ashby; "I love it. But, Fanny, it is not enough. If I could paint into my pictures some grand humanity—for life, after all is the only theme; if I could solve something, reveal something—catch some grand thought which could respond to the mighty needs that fill every heart. These pictures are ideal only—they reach the subtler, finer, more cultivated sympathies alone. But there is a deeper, a stronger, a greater quality instinctive in every breast that is human, which aspires always, which is a puzzle to itself, which lives in many hearts and makes no sign, which, when touched by him who knows its secret life, leaps up a gladness, a power, and crowns with everlasting bays the genius that awakens and gives it shape and being. If I could serve humanity in some such way as this!"

The artist dropped pencil and pallet, and with a passionate stride paced the floor.

"My head is little," said Fanny, whose gaiety had been for a moment eclipsed by her brother's earnest language; "but it is cool, Charley, and it tells you that that speech is not half so sensible as you think it is."

Charley laughed but did not reply. And Fanny, behind her light talk had a motive. She had observed with pain a growing weakness in her brother—a passionate discontent, an eager intense straining after ideal and unattainable heights. Fame was no sooner within his reach in his adopted art than it became valueless; he reached beyond into the clouds; he dreamed of more comprehensive successes

in other pursuits. His vigorous intellect continually put forth new reaches, and the higher it reached, the more intensely it aspired, while his imagination, something perverse, travelled out into the world and pictured triumphs more broad and complete, in other avenues of human effort.

"Let me see," continued Fanny, "if I have not a little philosophy, too. I'll try. Now Charley, this great human need is for the beautiful, for the exalted, for that which is lifted above the pressure of daily cares and lowly wants. I have read your art-books, so don't be surprised if I do talk so grandly. And art in all its forms, serves this noble purpose—I am sure it does, Charley—and in its divine mission (that's borrowed of course) soothes sorrow, subdues hardships, exalts the heart, and flings a final grace and charm around the harsh and stern features of life. There! I know that is all good sense, for I stole it, every word."

And Fanny laughed a low, merry, musical laugh.

"And there's that delightful Ruskin," she continued; "doesn't he tell us somewhere of a picture in which he found more than in any three books he ever read? I wish these pompous authors would remember that."

"A delightful little philosopher," said Ashby, returning to his easel. "But now will you read? If we chat too much my work will halt."

And as the artist worked out upon the canvas, that wondrous poesy of beauty, grace, harmony, those etherealizations of color, which render the art a mystery and a glory forever, in silver cadences, rising and falling like low and pleasant music, the voice of Fanny glided along the honied lines of the sweetest of all poets, the "delicate footed" Tennyson.

## CHAPTER VI.

AT that point of Broadway where there is a confluence of several streams of travel; where two converging lines of business flow into each other, and are crossed by currents that set from the river shores; where downward tides are perpetually impinged upon upward tides; where a web of intersection and entanglement is all day long wound into inconceivable snarls, and miraculously wound out of them; where small vehicles are swallowed up in mazes of big vehicles, and struggle out by dint of patience, time, and busy police skillful in extrication; where noises more various than those recorded of Babel convulse the air; where to the unhappy and bewildered stranger, men, horses, carts, carriages, omnibuses, wagons, peddlers, and dogs seem caught in roaring maelstroms, into which steady streams empty themselves all day long, and are whirled mysteriously away: at this point, under the shadow of St. Paul's, our hero leaned against the church railing, a dejected, wistful, almost despairing man.

In the very heart of so much clamor and the jostle of too much work, it appeared a most exquisite mockery that he alone could not flow in the busy currents. Here was labor battling for time, and rushing hither and thither with an impetuosity that set a golden value on every second the church clock above, so steadily and unconcernedly ticked off amid all the bustle and vehemence of the scene. Every man so bubbled over with excess of things to be done, that

it appeared as if an adventurer had but to fling himself into the midst of the battle and find a thousand things for ready hands and ready wit.

Yet Warren looked wistfully on, apprehensive of the future, uncertain of his course, for the first time thoroughly oppressed by his isolation and the difficulties that encumbered his path.

"The world is big," he muttered with bitterness, "but there appears to be no poor corner in it for me."

He turned from his position by the railing, slowly walked on, crossed the street and entered the Park. Here was comparative quiet. He walked past the fountain, and turning into one of the less frequented paths, paused by a tree, and with his gaze upon the ground, fell once more into meditation.

Ashby's three letters had not served him. He met with stereotyped replies, and promises hanging on distant eventualities. The gentlemen were all polite; they complimented Mr. Ashby, and declared they would be glad to encourage Mr. James, but labor was abundant and the need inadequate. There would be changes by and by; in a month or two it was quite possible they should be in want of abilities like his, and would then be gratified at an opportunity to employ them.

James turned from them at last, and made a bold push at the publishers.

O Quixote! O honest and chivalrous Bayard! Little did he know, and might never know, what tough things, what Malakoffs he assailed.

Well, he found a manuscript the last thing in nature available for bread and butter. In no interview did he get so far as to unroll the precious pages, for at the very

threshold of the subject he encountered negatives of the most formidable stubbornness. Some were polite and bowed him away, others were abrupt and he retreated with tingling cheeks. But not one gave hope; not one seemed to think the possibility of his being in reality a man of parts, near enough for a moment's favorable supposition. He met with condemnation and sentence, but no trial; and once he was bold enough to suggest that the unfavorable judgment was premature.

"Sir," was the reply, "we want books only by famous men."

"But famous men had a beginning. Some one gave them a hearing, gave them encouragement, gave them a chance."

Whereupon the enemy bolted from his position.

"We are full of enterprises," said he, "we cannot entertain anything new."

Warren crushed the manuscript in his pocket, and with his hat pulled over his brow, and with a swagger of almost stubborn anger, strode through the streets, resolving to humiliate himself no more.

He paused, as we have seen, with St. Paul's serenely above him, with a clamorous show-shop, obtrusive and vulgar, opposite.

It was a drama before him with a curious moral, which he began slowly to apprehend.

Broad shoulders, burly purpose, stubborn will, came thrusting through the scene, crowding modesty, reserve, timidity to the wall. Swagger was the hero. A modest gentleman in a gig strove only to obtain his own quiet right of way, and held back for fear of encroaching on a neighbor—a burly cartman, keen only for "number one," crushed

him against the curbstone, and swept on. Swift walkers in a broad straight gait turned, by force of muscle, or some mysterious force of will, the opposing current to the right and to the left. Timid, honest fellows struggled on, never maintaining an inch of ground, yielding to pressure on every side. But, stranger than all, now and then came gliding along a small keen fellow, with insinuating elbows, steering a tortuous and successful path, triumphant equally over strong and weak.

The story wearied him ; the moral he disdained. Somewhere in life, thought he, there is a crown for merit. Self-assertion does not forever pluck to itself all the growths and honors of life.

Yet he was prepared for struggle ; willing to forego ; eager for any honest emulation, no matter how prolonged the battle—how severe or desperate !

Unfortunately, he had been born with a gift too much—imagination ! And this, nursed by his solitary, rural habits, bred offspring—sentiment, romance, feeling, sensibility, ambition !

Could any man with more absurd parts fling himself in the highways of commerce ? Think, my respectable reader, of finding a South Sea Indian in your drawing-room, diamonds in his nose, gold in his ears, jewels upon his breast and fingers. The glittering savage might dance a fantastic measure upon your carpet ! The wild movement, the full melody, the passionate abandon—how startlingly out of place in your high-bred but rather tame atmosphere ! You would hand him over to the nearest police station—passion, grace, beauty, jewels and all !

And imagination in the marts of trade is no better served. It is a bird of a strange feather, and every one

flings a stone at it. Ah, Warren ! better have spun your gay and beautiful tissues in your old sylvan places. Here, my boy, it is all steel, nerve, endurance, sharpness—a quick, intense life of the senses, but none of the sensibilities. You shall learn to see far, see well, and see shrewdly ; your penetration shall become both microscopic and far-reaching ; but in the chambers of your fancy shall live the ghosts only of the grand visions that peopled them once.

With some half vague perception of these things, but with a much keener sense of present wants, and dread of the night, whose shadows were already gathering, Warren stood by the tree in the Park. There was a tide of dark passions rising in his breast. As the flood on the sea-shore, inch by inch, creeps up, and whelms in its dark depths the rocks and glittering sands ; so this sea of passion came wave on wave, slowly rising above the hope and honest courage which so far had inspired him. This bitter gloom that gathered upon his brow, this sullen apathy that closed around his heart, were unusual to his healthy blood. But sorrows, perhaps wrongs, had been accumulating upon him. The day's failures had aroused him to a sense of his true position, and brought home for the first time a perception of the misfortunes that had befallen him, in their true significance.

He was poor even to beggary—hungry, proud, alone ! born to better things, unused to these harsh struggles of life, unskilled in those tricks and tortuous shifts by which one half the world succeed in retaining a hold upon life.

He knew not which way to turn. All avenues seemed closed to him. He was ignorant of all trades and all professions ; without experience ; unable to adopt any plan of conduct, because unacquainted with the practical machinery



of the world. He was fresh from the schools ; Virgil was still echoing through his brain ; a fire of emulation was in his breast, fresh lighted at the pages of Plutarch ; dreams and big shadowy desires swelled upon his imagination. But alas ! for these things at the foot of the ladder ! For the life into which he was so suddenly flung his whole antecedent career unfitted him. A master of abstractions, seeing the world only through his imagination, he had supposed life a splendid arena, into which the lusty gladiator leaped and swiftly won the crown. He had studied the top of Olympus only—the glories which crown its head thrilled and inspired him ; but he had never known or dreamed of the foot-falls, precipices, chasms, morasses, which impede the struggler at its foot, and so often prove his destruction and death.

In this gloom and uncertainty, it is not surprising that Warren began to speculate upon the darkest possibilities. He had stepped from the train into the strange city only the night before, with a certain courage and assurance which sprang from his inexperience ; and in the brief period since, he had fallen from a height ; he had suddenly been impinged upon the sharpest kind of experiences. The concussion was so severe, the shock so sudden, that if his courage forsook him for a moment it is not surprising. But there was true metal in him, and if the forsaken lad, without food and without shelter, as he leaned against the old tree in the Park, sunk into depression and despair, do not believe there was not still springs of energy and resolution within him, capable yet of some worthy and heroic effort.

The sun went down, and Warren, arousing himself, walked slowly along the path, heedless of his course. But a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

"I have found you. For an hour I've been on the search. Well ! no success, I see."

"None, Mr. Giles."

"Of course. I was not so green as to expect anything else. Come !" Slipping his arm through Warren's he led him on.

"You'll find, Warren, that we poor fellows have to scramble in this world even for the crumbs. There is no help for it. By some deuced mismanagement a lot of fellows have got all the money, houses and precious things, and they industriously work to keep the rest of the world out of them. But didn't Ashby's friends help you ?"

"With promises—yes. Of course I did not confess the pressing nature of my wants."

"Of course not ! That would never do ! To let a man know you are really in want of the thing you ask for, is degradation, isn't it ? It is so much better policy to let his inclination cool by the example of your indifference."

"I was not seeking a gift," replied Warren, proudly. "I desired something reciprocal—a chance to labor where labor was in demand."

"Noble idea ! In the nicely adjusted affairs of this world, how prettily it works. Reciprocation, by all means ! Yet not always, I fear. Sometimes there are clerks who browbeat their employers ; servants who are tyrannical ; apprentices who beat their masters ; journeymen who, in mere caprice, discharge their faithful foremen !"

"You are satirical."

"Oh, no ! Most of the subjects that we look at are like fine mirrors—we breathe upon them and cannot see them clearly. This delusive vapor must be rubbed away."



"The simile I suppose is a good one—but I can see no clearer."

"Well, Warren, you are a gentleman, and are entitled to the dignities. But I anticipated your discomfiture, and am prepared for it."

"How?"

"By a day's work—a rare thing, for idleness is an inheritance of mine, which no profligacy can rid me of. I cannot labor for the morrow while I have sufficient for to-day. This is an ingrained perversity, which I can preach against as well as anybody else, but cannot cure. Well, I was bankrupt, so were you, and"—

"Mr. Giles," interrupted Warren, whose dark humor had left him in an unusually irritable and sensitive temper, "Mr. Giles, if you could forget my poverty, which by accident only you became aware of, I should esteem it a delicate attention."

Philip stopped abruptly, and lifted his hat from his head.

"I wish I could understand it," said he, "but I can't. It is impossible to foresee when and how this delicacy in men like you will spring up. Jupiter! I should no more dream of being sensitive about a little poverty, than of being offended at my nose in the glass."

"Never mind," laughed Warren, "I appreciate your motives"—

"And I do not thank you for the half compliment. I am not content to be considered a bungler. However! I was without money (as a species of polite fiction I will suppose that you were not), and I resolved to obtain some; for it occurred to me that some of us might be hungry by night, and Moses' breeches pocket could not be depended on a second time. I found a sketch in my room, not more than half done. This I set to work at in earnest,

finished it, in my crude way of course, rushed with it down to the auction shop, where anything is salable if you offer it fifty per cent. below its real value; and here I am, independent! There is silver in my pocket. Come, shall we sup together?"

Warren experienced a sudden rush of emotion. He could not speak, for his gratitude and his thanks got snarled together in his throat, and broke out unexpectedly in his eyes.

"Philip," at last said he, "this is too generous. Why, I am a stranger to you, but you are more than a friend to me."

The clouds lifted, the world looked brighter, and Warren felt the old healthful courage and hope welling back into his heart.

"It is most extraordinary that I should have fallen upon a man like you—I might have starved had I not."

"Might! If you are going to torment yourself with possibilities, where will you stop? Starve, you say? How inexplicable it all is! Now, you are not a vagabond. You have the respectable trick, the air of society, the manner of a man born to a bank account. You are not cut out by nature for the life of an adventurer; this starved, homeless sort of thing does not sit upon you with the true cut. You are an actor, my lad, out of your line, and so I feel some disquiet. I cannot understand how a gentleman like you should be so suddenly thrust into poverty and isolation, and I readily perceive that your inexperience, your inability to cope with the masterly details of vagabondism, would under some circumstances lead to disaster. So, Warren, as you have no natural right to be an adventurer, I really wish that you would justify your appearance in that character."

"You want to know my history?" said James.

"A clue, Warren. The vaguest possible hint, on which my imagination can hang a story."

"You have proved your right to know something of me, I admit. Yet what can I tell? I have no family; my mother died years ago, my father recently, and abroad. I suddenly felt myself poor and alone. My relatives made me feel my dependence; I was impetuous, honest, and disdained the humiliating cap. That is all."

"Enough!" On those words I hang a thousand things, and will aid you defy your enemies forever. These relatives! There is nothing human that can so stick a thousand blades—by Michael! Warren, look!"

He stopped abruptly, and stared in an excited manner at a young girl of the working class, who came with rapid steps in a direction toward them.

"What do you think, Warren? Look at her."

Warren looked, but had nothing to think. It was a neatly-dressed, pleasant-faced girl, intent only upon the road before her.

"Who can she be? Look at her closely, Warren? Doesn't it strike you that she resembles me a little, eh? Enough, now for a sister!"

By this time the young girl had nearly reached them, and had become aware that she was observed with more than usual attention. She started, quickened her pace, and attempted to pass swiftly, with her eyes upon the ground.

"It might! It might!" exclaimed Philip with deep vehemence, and he strode up directly in her path. Warren caught his arm and attempted to prevent him. The girl gave a sudden spring close to the wall, and now alarmed and trembling, attempted to run. Philip lifted his hat.

"What are you doing?" whispered Warren in his ear.

"Young woman, pardon me. I am respectful, and mean no wrong," said Philip, with an eagerness that aroused rather than quelled the apprehensions of the girl. She did not answer, but dropping her veil and drawing her shawl closer around her, attempted once more to glide past. But Philip stepped closer.

"Philip," shouted Warren, getting angry, "don't insult the girl!"

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" exclaimed she under her breath, and with her alarm increasing every moment. Warren seized Philip and attempted to drag him away. Several persons stopped, and stared with blank curiosity. The girl, now quite beside herself with fear, sprang by them with a shriek, and fled swiftly along the pavement.

"I tell you," said Philip, in an excitement of manner entirely unusual, "I have a sister somewhere. I've hunted for her up and down, far and near—some day she'll pass me as that girl has. Her face started me as I glanced at it. Warren, it might be so."

Warren had been unable to conjecture the cause of Philip's extraordinary conduct, but this speech, in recalling his story, explained it at once. But by this time a dozen persons, attracted by something unusual in the manner of Philip, gathered around him. In Broadway a dozen persons' in a knot intent upon any subject is a nucleus for a mob, and our adventurers, in an instant, almost, found themselves the centre of a crowd, through which suspicious rumors began to circulate. It was whispered that an attempt had been made to rob a woman, and the charitable spectators catching hastily at the least shadow of accusation, condemned them with an alacrity that would have edified any lover of abstract justice. The mob began to

crowd close upon them, but Philip was now thoroughly cooled, and himself again.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed he, in a sonorous, half-mocking tone, "your attentions are too pressing. The world is big enough for us all, so please give my friend and me elbow-room."

Two or three laughed and fell back, while Philip, with Warren by the arm, pressed forward. He emptied his jests right and left, and his hits, which were coarse and rollicking, were relished heartily. The tide of feeling was quickly turned in their favor, although one fellow forced himself near, and intent only upon his savage instincts, struck at Philip over the shoulder of another. Philip saw the assailant, and his blood, fierce and turbulent when once aroused, rushed in a hot, red stream to his cheek. He darted at the fellow, and seizing him by the throat, flung him twenty feet backward into the street. This bold act, in its strength and address, delighted the crowd, and completed Philip's triumph. There was a complete revulsion of feeling, and their suspicions and accusations of robbery were as quickly forgotten as aroused. The adventurers soon shook themselves free, and walked rapidly on.

"Ah, my old weakness," said Philip; "it seems that I cannot control it; a hundred times a month I fancy some face passing me is the long looked-for face. If I see one who looks abandoned, lonely, the impulse to address her and learn her history is irresistible. This is not the first adventure that has resulted from my headstrong conduct—perhaps some day I shall be rewarded. God grant it!"

"God grant it!" fervently echoed Warren.

"And now," said Philip, "to sup! Shall it be a splendid

chop? Here lives a fellow whose skill I've tested; let us go in."

"I yield," said Warren, "but it is only postponing the hour of starvation."

"Are you going to spoil our appetites by evil prognostications?"

"No," said Warren, "but is it not clear that I should not again depend upon your generosity? From what I've learned to-day, work offers little hope for the morrow, and this is the last time Mr. Warren James can accept the charity of Mr. Philip Giles."

"I have a mind, boy, to send you into the street supperless. Charity! If what I offer you is charity, the only road to escape mendicancy is out of the world. Mutual dependence, mutual favors, mutual support, encouragement, help, are indispensable—try to stand alone, if you dare, and see if what I tell you be not true."

"There is a flaw in your logic," said Warren.

"Show it."

"Between you and me it is not mutual—I receive only and do not give."

"Is the story told because you've dipped into the first chapter? Wait! The balance will be adjusted in time. Now tell me what you will do to-morrow?"

"Find employment, by some means; or if it prove impossible, sit down on the curbstones and die."

"I forgive that bit of absurd sentiment," said Philip, "and ask for particulars. To whom will you apply?"

"I do not know. Can you advise me?"

Philip leaned his head for some moments upon his hands, and ere he spoke the smoking chops were placed upon the table before them.

"I will think while I eat," said Philip, and with an appetite as hearty and vigorous as the whole make of the man would naturally indicate, applied himself to a duty which so frequently, in his case, added to its pleasures the charm of novelty. He was successfully imitated by his young companion.

"I think," said he, but not until the chop was devoured, and a plentiful supply of ale quaffed enjoyably in its company, "I think that we must go to Charley again."

"No, sir," replied Warren.

"Then I'm puzzled. You wouldn't turn actor?"

"No," laughed the youth.

"Nor painter?"

"I have no taste for either."

"Nothing but the pen, eh?"

"Literature is my choice, but outcasts cannot choose. I will labor at anything. The greatest of mortals began his career by holding horses."

"Then you must keep trying, that is all. Victory cannot be achieved at the first blow. Content yourself with any lowly beginning."

"I must," said Warren, "and if to-morrow nothing better offers I will take any humble place—a cheap clerkship, literary hack-work, or anything I'm tempted with, if it's only honest."

"And there is always this privilege," said Philip, "you may lie low and look high."

The talk over the chops ended, as we have seen, in the adoption of no definite plan. But Philip again urged Warren to advise with his friend Ashby.

"You see, my boy," said he, "that Ashby has got the social balance. Whatever I may say to you is sure to be

tinged with vagabondism; it will be more reckless than politic; it will come colored with an experience that is enough to turn respectability into stone with horror—for men of my cast are Gorgons to the pretty ways of society. We are as bad as Bottom's lion among the ladies, the most fearful wild-fowl living."

"I like the artist," said Warren, "and should esteem his friendship. But I am scarcely willing to ask for his further aid."

"Let us talk with him at least. I will drop into his studio to-morrow alone, and see what hints I can glean from him. And now let us walk. We shall find misery and beggary enough under the gas-lights, to make us both feel like kings."

## CHAPTER VII.

“WILL they be sure to come? Isn't it time?” And Fanny ran about readjusting things which had been adjusted a dozen times before.

“I told Philip the hour,” replied Ashby, “and he promised not to let the dishes cool by any delay. I am interested in this castaway youth, Fanny, and we are to enter into deliberate consultation to-night, as to the means of outwitting the enemy.”

“What enemy, Charley?”

“The world. We have mastered it, but there are some, it seems, in as desperate condition as we were once. There! I think I hear Philip's ponderous step. True. Here they are.”

It was a charming scene into which Charles led his guests. In the centre of the room was the spread table, white with snowy linen, tastefully set; a vase of flowers in its centre; lighted candles at each end. The whole room was warm and pleasant in tone; fresh flowers on the hearth; pictures on the walls; red damask curtains to the window and a carpet of the same color on the floor. The room was large. On one side a screen of canvas stood several feet from the door, closing in a portion of the space for habitation, and removing what otherwise would have been an effect of gloomy vastness. This screen was an outburst of Ashby's capricious fancy. It was a glorious *pot pourri* in the way of art; a congress of scenery from all the known portions

of the globe, thrust together with a delicious abandon and daring violence of contrast that made the brain swim to see it. Arctic and equator, occident and orient, were fraternally locked together, and led each other a fantastic dance through a thousand bewildering mazes. It was like a dozen panoramic pictures, interblended with every possible license, coiled up, down, and around the surface of the screen. Opposite the screen a partition which only ascended partially the height of the room, cut off other apartments, and which also exhibited Ashby's labors, but in a less capricious way.

But Warren's eye, quickly observing all these things, discovered a fascination of another kind. Philip told him of Fanny as they came along, but how could he expect to find so bright, lithe, joyous a creature like this, and such a little cabinet home, in the corner of an artist's studio? His first glance at Fanny was one of surprise; his second—and that was after she had spoken—was one of pleasure. And from that moment his eye involuntarily followed every movement. He checked himself several times and looked away; he blushed more than once as he thought he saw her brother's sharp glance fixed upon him—but there was magnetism in Fanny, and his eye wandered back again as the needle to the star. Fanny indeed was a gay and sunshiny little lady; her smile was gushing and warm, her voice so low and pleasant, her eye so bright, darting and mischievous—there was so indescribable an effect of light and sunshine about her, that Warren, when she passed on a dozen little errands from room to room, felt when she disappeared a shadow upon the scene—when she flitted back again, a full glow of summer sunshine.

And once around the table! Fanny the charming mis-

tress, dispensing her official attentions with so much grace; so sensible in the few words she spoke; so light and merry in a dozen gay encounters with her brother.

"Mr. James mustn't be discouraged, must he, Charles? If you only knew, sir, how hard a struggle it was with Charles in the beginning, I am sure you wouldn't mind your failures."

"A struggle, indeed," replied Ashby. "We were orphans, without money, friends, and I without a profession—cruelly wronged, and cast upon the world penniless. Well, sir, starvation was awkwardly near, I assure you."

"If you had seen Charles when he got his first commission," said Fanny; "the wildest creature! He was mad with delight—did the most absurd things! It would have alarmed you for his wits."

"Fanny cried, and I shouted," said Charles, with a smile at the recollection which was a little sad; "then we danced with delight—danced around the tables, the chairs, up and down the room—danced until Fanny sank upon the floor exhausted; and then we laughed in concert until our delight broke out in some new way; and so, like a couple of idiots we gave way to our childish outbreaks of pleasure until it was nearly morning."

"It was a big commission, Mr. James—a hundred-dollar picture. Poor Charles before could only get very small sums from the auction men—not a tenth the value of his pictures."

"He was a genius," said Philip, "and of course was sure to be known. I recollect but one decided success in my life, and I do not recall any great enthusiasm felt upon the occasion."

"What was it?" inquired Warren.

"An elephant in a pantomime," replied Philip, gravely. Fanny clapped her hands, and laughed with great glee.

"Do not mock me, Fanny. It was a success quite remarkable in its way. I was congratulated upon the felicity with which I managed the trunk, the elephantine-like movement of the legs, the undeniably natural management of the tail. It was triumphant. I've tried kings, heroes, ghosts, tyrants, and other human resemblances, with a result only one degree removed from starvation. I never succeeded in being the least natural until I stepped out of humanity."

"Philip," said Ashby, "has an odd foible. He is fond of self-depreciation. It is not a kind of vanity, as you might suspect, baited for praise, but he positively takes a delight in his own undoing."

"I suspected it before," said Warren.

"Now, shall we to business?" inquired the artist. "What are you good at, Mr. James?"

"I do not know," replied Warren, flushing a little. "I am very inexperienced in everything, and sometimes I fear my only stock is hope and ambition. We who are country bred so rarely can plumb our own powers; we know so little of the strengths we are to encounter, the proportions we are to rival, that—and this occurred to me to-day—I may have greatly mistaken myself—have interpreted taste as power—mistaken mere appreciation for a gift to create."

"Have you brought manuscripts with you?"

"Yes."

"Prose, I suppose?"

"Tales, mostly."

"Mr. James," said the artist, "are you inclined to

believe that Philip, here, and I know more of the world than you?"

"I do believe it, sir."

"Have you any confidence in our judgment?"

"A great deal."

"Then would you be willing to exhibit to us some test of your powers, that we, knowing the difficulties in all the paths of art, how poor the reward of mediocrity, how wretched the fate of incompetency, may advise you as to your future understandingly?"

"You mean"——

"Read us your manuscripts. Let us constitute here and now a tribunal. Fanny shall be one of the judges, and teach us how to be clement; and a woman has a feminine way of seeing things, useful in deciding a question like this."

"The ordeal would be severe."

"No; it would be very lenient."

"I have my manuscripts in my pocket, but I am afraid they will excite your contempt only. That I could not bear."

"It is a good thought, Warren," said Philip; "screw up your courage; if there prove three grains of wheat in as many bushels of chaff, be sure we'll find them out. Besides, one of your judges, by the look of her eyes, is already halfway to judgment in your favor."

"Do you mean me?" said Fanny, pertly.

"Certainly. Why, your heart is in your cheeks; you would not dare to pronounce judgment if the lad's sentences were as clumsy as Mr. Hawley's."

"Mr. James," said Fanny, gaily, "I'll not be one of the judges, but your attorney. I'll watch and see that they do

you justice; I'll play Portia, and confound their bad designs."

When Fanny spoke of Portia, Warren thought of Basanio, and perhaps looked the thought, for Fanny blushed.

For amid all this banter, Warren was fast succumbing to an influence the most subtle, penetrating, delicate in the world. Fanny! Why, if she spoke to him, he tingled to his finger ends; if she looked at him, the glance shot like an arrow into his heart.

So, with a flushed cheek, and a heart half of fear half of pleasure, he assented to the proposal. If they commended, what a triumph before Fanny; if they condemned!——

But they would not. There was poetry, high thoughts, subtle fancies, grand ideas in his pages; and when Fanny heard them, would they not awaken admiration, respect?—the declension was easy—admiration, respect, interest!!!

"Let me read them," said Philip; "I have the trick of emphasis;" and Philip spread out the pages. They had risen from the table; another was rolled out upon the floor; they gathered around it, and Warren prepared for the ordeal.

The sketches were brief. Several of them were read without comment.

"Enough," said Philip, "prepare for judgment."

"Guilty or not guilty?" inquired Warren, briskly.

"The fellow has something in him," said Philip; "but it is crude enough. He has imagination, but does not know how to bring it forward. He will learn, but must be put in harness."

Philip and Charles had lighted cigars. The artist smoked on for a moment in silence.

"I like you better, Warren, for the test," said he, slowly. "I believe in you, but I believe in what is to follow, rather than what is. I see in your work indications only. I advise you to go on—determination will win all."

"Sir, these are the sweetest words I ever heard."

"They are honest words," said Ashby.

"I am sure they are."

"You must begin at the beginning—learn your trade from the foundations upward. I advise you to accept any simple humble employment, for genius will rise above these accidents of the day, and assert itself in the face of all odds."

"And these manuscripts?"

"Burn them!" said Philip.

Warren turned very red, then white, and shot a glance at Fanny. She was looking quietly at the floor, and tracing out the figure of the carpet with her foot.

The artist puffed out two thick volumes of smoke, and through the cloud that enveloped him came the sentence—

"Burn them!"

"No, no," exclaimed Fanny: "you are cruel to Mr. James."

"I appoint myself executioner," said Warren, jumping up and running to the candles.

"Give the signal."

Fanny ran up to the table with unaffected interest. Ashby quietly smoked. Philip took out his handkerchief.

"One."

"Two!"

"Three!"

The handkerchief dropped, and in an instant a flame shot up from the written pages. The room was cast in a sud-

den glow; it paled; the ashes fell thickly upon the table, and the poet's treasured labors, teeming with prodigal beauties, to which his affections had clung as if they were his offspring, were nothing but smoke and ashes. Warren secretly sighed—then laughed—then suddenly tingled in cheek and ears, for a sweet breath floated by him.

"A cruel judgment, Mr. James," said a voice close to his side: "they were very beautiful indeed, and Charley has often told me that my judgment is good."

"What is wise and just sometimes appears cruel," replied Warren.

"But why was it wise and just?"

"Make that inquiry of the judges," said Philip.

"I do," answered Fanny.

"Because young writers write with their imagination in a blaze—they forget that moderation of which Shakspeare spoke."

"And at first echo only what they have read," said Charles.

"So let Warren begin again, eschewing books, and coming down from his stilts."

"You see," said Warren, "how just they are. Will you believe," he added in a low tone, "that I am more than consoled, because there is some one to pity me!"

The hours sped charmingly, up in the pleasant attic-parlor. Warren forgot his sorrows and cares; he was translated to a new atmosphere, initiated into a new world. The life that he saw was new, fresh and fascinating, utterly different from the tame days of boyhood. The freshness of feeling, the sparkling wit, the fine fancies, the strange life so refined, and yet so removed from conventional restraints, the genius and joyousness that animated it—it was all subtle



enchantment for Warren. When the parting came, he walked home with Philip in a silent ecstasy.

And that night Queen Mab was with him, and in her fairy state galloped through his brain, setting him afloat upon a lover's dream.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WARREN now set to work practically and systematically. His romantic views were quietly put aside, his ambitions stored away under lock and key. With a wisdom which deserved applause, he consented to put his foot first surely upon the lowest round of the ladder, and to climb slowly and deliberately upward. This, perhaps, was humiliating to the genius that rushed into the heart of the town, with some vague expectations of finding the world ready to fling itself at his feet; but if Warren had nursed in his rural solitudes a big overgrown egotism, his brain was sound at bottom, and quick to learn; and so he shuffled off his extravagant dreams with an alacrity that evinced they were only of the surface. A sensitive youth may become introspective—if imaginative at all, he is sure to be so—but *self* is rarely burnt in. It is only the man long versed in the world, and for a lifetime experienced in a devotion to the I that sits within, that becomes hopelessly absorbed in this passion. If a youth, indeed, be a self-lover to the grain, give him up! Unite no fate with his, build no hopes, look for no honorable fruition—he is a dead sea to you and the world!

Warren made many swift discoveries that awakened him to a true perception of his acquirements and his abilities. Philip, indeed, helped to clear the mist from the glass, and to show him his real position. He learned that he was

crude, raw, unripe, and so calmly resolved to wait and mellow—to hang in the sun and mature—to gain fullness and completeness by the slow processes of expansion, observation and knowledge.

He obtained a position on a daily journal—a paragraphist, reporter, collector of inconsiderate trifles; and dove into vast hills of newspapers with the skill and scissors to extract telling items, which is a sort of gleaning that requires a quick eye and a slow temper.

But the discipline was good. He learned the best part of every man's education—life and the world. He absorbed facts plentifully, and belonging to the imaginative class, he turned them up in a ruminating way that digested and fused them.

This is the exact difference between wise men and fools. Your genius takes up his facts, and by solution they pass into the very stock and grain of his brain; but let your dull craniums bolt what they will, the matter lies dead, unused, clogging the very life of the brain. The soil is too poor to extract the nourishment and take up the juices offered to it.

"My dear Warren," said Philip, "you have only to stick to the helm, and your fortune glides to success and power. Turn neither to the right nor to the left; know your powers and use them, your mark, and walk directly on toward it. There is a lecture for you. Do you reject it because it is my precept and not my practice? Then tumble all the wisdom of the world into the sea—for the world and I are alike. Besides, it is a little too much to expect all things—perfect theory and practice in the same mortal. No, sir, my advice is—catch all the nuts you can, even if a monkey pelts you."

Warren's avocation brought him into contact with the celebrities of the town—the wits, poets, novelists, dramatists, puffers, actors, artists, and a Bohemian crowd of skirmishers on the confines of literature and art—quick-witted, active, gay fellows, who made amusement an æsthetic or fine-art; whose means were inscrutable, whose habits were reckless, who mingled in a strange way honorable instincts with dishonest practices; whose virtues were impulsive and of the generous kind, but whose morals were lax; voracious in getting, heedless in giving; to justice impregnable, to generosity warm and quick; prone to slay with the tongue, and given to envy and the bitterness of jealousy; intense egotists and self-worshippers; trip and glib with the tongue; keen to detect, and knowing to the very core of worldly knowledge; with marvellous abilities in the mere direction of microscopic observation; sharp of teeth, fierce of claw, merciless in their strength to pull down, "like rats without a tail, do! and do! and do!" But never build, fashion, create! Such as these, Warren encountered continually; they were thorns that pricked him; they stabbed under their kid gloves and their hail fellow; they sneered, shot arrows, and stung him at every turn. But Warren through all was calm and strong; there was a secret power within that knew its time. These were guerrilla fellows, quick and active in the bays of the shore, but our hero knew they could not sail the high seas, and profoundly confident of the hour when *his* sails should unfurl, and into the broad, free, grand main of literature he should steadily and surely advance, he patiently bore their depreciation and contumely.

But that literary Titan, Hawley, did not neglect him. When Hawley discovered that Warren could, even in a

small way, speak through the columns of a journal, he cultivated him, dropped in upon him continually, shewed him manuscripts, talked about his essays, dwelt upon his books, made long confessions, with one subject the everlasting theme—self.

One day he broke into Warren's presence in extreme exasperation.

"An ungrateful country, sir! A dishonorable people! A community unworthy the blessed boon bestowed upon it!"

"What people, Mr. Hawley? What country? and what boon?"

"Sir, you did not come to my lecture last night. You, too, like the rest of your countrymen, are degenerate."

"Why, Hawley, we showed bad taste, perhaps, in not going to your lecture, but scarcely bad morals."

"An empty house!" resumed the lecturer, contemptuously smiling at Warren's sophistry; "not thirty people there! A national, patriotic, noble lecture—and not thirty people!"

"Unfortunate for you, Mr. Hawley, I confess."

"And after my magnificent praise of your country in my History. Here, sir, in the very first chapter!"

Out came the inevitable volume. Warren shuddered, and looked around for a way to escape. But the Titan's hold upon a man was deadly; a wasp with his sting in your cuticle could be shaken off easier.

"There, sir," after reading a pompous passage, and returning the volume to his pocket. "That's the way I have written about America. I have defended you in the *salons* of Paris, in the clubs of England, on the continent—everywhere. I loved your country."

His voice broke down in sudden pathos—he hunted for his handkerchief, and got the History back again, instead.

"Yes, I love your country. These pages bear witness to it. At the risk of my life in Paris, pursued by the enemies of Louis Philippe, hated because of my republican sympathies, I still dared all for your country and democracy. This is my reward. An empty house—the neglect of the press—the hatred of rivals. Sir, posterity shall do me justice!"

"Posterity," remarked Warren, "is a court of appeals for so much injustice, that when the court sits I fear Mr. Hawley's grievances will be far down a long calendar."

"You are splenetic, sir."

"'Pon my word," laughed Warren, "I am in a capital humor."

"Can you defend the conduct of your countrymen?"

"Defence is for the guilty."

"Sir, I am persecuted—I am the victim of a conspiracy—pursued, hunted down, by your native organizations. They know that I have abilities to be feared; that I am a historian, and shall record with impartial pen their unrighteous doings. The failure of my lecture was an exhibition of their malice. Sir, my letters are intercepted, my manuscripts stolen. I am followed by a double who turns up everywhere getting my money, fulfilling my contracts, and obtaining my rights—in brief, sir, I am tracked by the spies of the tyrants abroad I have so mercilessly condemned, while I am the victim of a Jacobin organization at home, which has sworn to crush me."

Warren began to feel that the man was mad.

"I tell you," said he, drawing near Warren, and whispering in an excited tone, "there is a dark plan to ruin me. Pocket-books are dropped in my path—gold temptingly

put in my way—the scheme is to lead me on to some error—then the dungeon—destruction!”

Warren was startled at this exhibition of fear, weakness, perhaps insanity. He looked into Hawley's eye. It appeared steady; there was no evidence of that lunacy which lurks in every madman's eye. But it was clear that on one subject, at least, his mind was not balanced. Warren made haste to change the theme. He spoke of Ashby.

“How is Ashby?” exclaimed Hawley, whirling his glove with sudden celerity, and shifting from the grievance with an ease that surprised Warren.

“Well, I believe.”

“And Fanny?”

“Well too.”

“A charming girl, very. But don't do it; give it up. Ashby will never consent.”

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Warren, attempting to hide his confusion by a sharpness of manner.

“Charming, I know; pretty—lively! But take my advice. It won't do. Give her up. By the by, when you see Giles, compliment him for me on his Polonius. But give up Fanny, you know?”

“Sir, Miss Ashby and I are almost strangers. You have no cause for these strange hints.”

“My dear sir, love is delicious, but poverty is terrible, say what they may about love in a cottage. And you'll not succeed, you know.”

“The devil I won't!” This was emphatic, perhaps, but genuine.

“Oh, dear me, no,” said the Titan; “so give up Fanny.”

“Confound it, sir! Oblige me, if you please. Do not mention Miss Ashby again so freely, I insist.”

The Titan smiled, whisked his glove, shook two fingers at Warren, suddenly felt if the History was safe, then, with a rolling motion, stepping always forward on his toes, he tripped out of the office.

Warren's gaze remained fixed on the door for some moments, musingly. What did Hawley mean by his allusions to Fanny, and how could he, of all men, know of feelings which had been only remotely and vaguely surmised even by himself. He had seen Fanny but twice since the evening they first met. How should Hawley suspect anything, not being present on either occasion! His manner was strange, too. At the mention of Fanny's name, his face and bearing underwent a change. He forgot his rage, his griefs, his History even, and alluded to Fanny with an expression which Warren felt was nothing less than leering and sensuous. There was occasion to recall these circumstances afterward.

Only twice since the eventful evening when his manuscripts were burnt before her face, had Warren seen Fanny; but love grows apace. The very day he secured his present position he hastened to the studio to acquaint the artist of his success. Ashby's interest in his welfare demanded this attention, but the adventurer perversely mused more upon Fanny's congratulations than those of the brother. There were ladies in the studio when he entered, a bevy around a picture—brilliant women given to fashionable æsthetics. Patrons, no doubt, came to buy the artist rather than his pictures, shrewdly perceiving that a distinguished creator of art was eminently a more recherché ornament for their drawing-rooms than pigments in gilt frames. So they sought to hang him up for show at their grand receptions; and succeeded sometimes; for

Ashby, the historian must confess, had as much vanity as the most of us, and liked admiration not a whit less than the reader does.

Ashby shook hands hastily with Warren, and sent him in to see Fanny. Propitious fate! His heart thumped, his cheek was hectic, and yet he ran in with a brisk step. Fanny shook hands with him frankly, and asked if he had good news.

"I came, Miss Ashby, to thank your brother for his concern in my behalf, and to tell him that at last I have an opening."

"He will be glad of that."

"It is a lowly beginning. I had hoped for something better."

"Why, Mr. Warren, you will be just as happy. It is sweet to climb up step by step. I found that out by watching Charles."

"Happiness is often hope, and I have now so much to hope for!"

He could not help looking into Fanny's eyes meaningly; and Fanny, in turn, could not help a flush that came into her cheeks.

"Oh, very much to hope for," said she; "for Charles thinks that you are sure some day to make a name; and that, I believe, is what you are all so fond of. But I confess I cannot understand it."

"That is strange."

"Oh, no; it is best to think of being merry and happy. When Charles is in good spirits I am delighted; but up in this attic, so far away from the world, what does it matter whether we are talked about or not? Charles says I cannot see things. Well, I never shall."

They rattled along in gay talk until the painter joined them, and when Warren went away he walked on air. His heart was never so light and happy; there never was such sparkle in his blood and brain; his thoughts were swift, fluent and buoyant; his whole being tingled with new sensations; fancy leaped into his eyes, and he saw glorious visions; his imagination grasped the range of possibilities, and led him forward into a future where all was won, all his own!

Our young adventurer's secret passion pricked him to redoubled exertion. The necessity to accomplish was now intense. He flung himself into the work with fire and zeal, and soon saw the road widening. Success is sweet when love waits upon the issue, and Warren hailed each new advancement with renewed hope. So passed the days. He had taken an apartment in the same building with Philip, and with this eccentric gentleman many idle hours were passed. They were fond of walking through the gas-lighted streets, and sometimes far toward midnight they paced the pavements, while Philip poured out his free and quaint speculations. Fanny was still a far-off star. It was rarely that Warren dared approach her; sometimes he met her in public places with her brother, and the few words she uttered left their sweet tinct in his brain for days afterward.

It was strange how this new life was utterly separated from the old. His career seemed to date only from that memorable night when he stepped from the Train into this unknown city, and into the heart of his new purpose. All that had gone before was rolled back into such remote periods that he rarely recalled the history. He thought only of to-day and to-morrow. Childhood and boyhood were closed volumes—perhaps soon to be reopened.

## CHAPTER IX.

**D**OWN through the window of the artist's studio the moon poured a flood of light ; through the window of Fanny's parlor attic came also a breadth of mellow, tender light. To and fro from room to room, through the moonlight and through the intervening gloom ; under the stars and sky that looked down through the artist's window ; through the shadows, the open door, the dusky pictures, from parlor windows to studio walls, walked gay and pleasantly, Warren and the painter's sister.

Lovers of course ! Not three months gone, and warm impassioned lovers. The flame, lighted on that evening that Warren first saw Fanny, had spread into a conflagration. First it ate into the edge of Warren's heart, and swiftly spread inch by inch to the core ; then there was a spark in Fanny's bosom caught from the flame of Warren's, which smoldered at first, but at last broke into a brisk and honest blaze.

As Warren drew nearer to the heart of Fanny, admiration and respect widened, yet modified, his passion. He found her a woman of that stamp whose hearts open up to heaven, and catch an impress which to men sometimes seems something more than mortal. Yet it is only purity. Fanny was a woman with all the true parts of womanhood—fresh, dewy, tender, gentle ; veiled with the veil of modesty, and blooming with the bloom of virtue ! There was about her that fine subtle essence which poets dream of in vestals, and this subtle quality chastened the passion of the lover, and

at the same time deepened it, for it anchored it in the sure ground of faith and reverence.

But Fanny, for all this, was a woman, and caprice and coquetry bubbled on the surface. She could blow hot and cold, and with variable humor in one instant thrill her lover into bliss the most ecstatic, in the next thrust a thorn in his complacency.

A lover in the hands of a skillful woman is always like Gulliver among Lilliputians. A thousand web-like filaments woven out of caprice and the variable bewitcheries, bind him a submissive captive at her feet. Fanny was a high-spirited, merry, fascinating little brunette, and with all her proclivities to mischief and the small coquetries, as delightful a piece of roguish, but true-hearted femininity as ever put nettles in the pillow of a fortunate lover, or industriously tortured the heart masculine.

Up and down through the moonlight and through the dusky shadows, the lovers walked.

"Now Fanny, hear me," said Warren pleadingly, "you are too cold—too distant. Don't say those sharp things. I love you—how much ! I hunt for words to express how much, for there is no language warm or earnest enough for me. I could do extravagant things"—

"Why ? Do sensible things—and talk them."

"Do you love me ?"

"Your love-making, Warren, is like the catechism. It is all question by rote. Why not begin at once, and say, who made you ?"

"You can jest, I cannot. Do you ever think seriously, at all, Fanny ?"

"Of grave subjects, but I cannot, however much you may wish it, include you among them. Now, Warren, don't

exact anything of me but what I am. I am gay, lively, a little unmanageable, but my heart"——

"Is mine?"

"Not yet."

"Yes, now and forever. Ah, Fanny, you are beautiful, pure, tender, lovely—I bless the hour that I first knew you."

"Are you sincere?"

"I am."

"And believe in what you say?"

"Yes."

"You are not talking poetry, now—not talking from your imagination?"

"From my heart."

"I am a little inclined to believe you."

"Be altogether inclined."

"Now confess—how many times have you been in love before?"

"Never."

"Impossible! You must have had a sweetheart by the time you were in your teens."

"Pshaw! This is the beginning—the first—the only passion."

"Will it last, Warren? First loves are easily rubbed out."

"Till old age, Fanny; through life here—let us hope through life hereafter."

"Well, Warren, I can make no promises for long periods. I like you a little now, and hope not to tire of you too quickly. Now one serious word."

"Excellent. I like to see you serious, for it gives new charms to your face. Your gaiety is so uniform, your smile so constant, that a frown is a new sensation."

"I wonder," said Fanny with sudden demureness, "if every woman must listen to so much nonsense?"

"Nonsense! True love! I cannot be wise, steady, cool, precise, Fanny! I am full of ten thousand impulses, and am impelled to say and do something—I know not what. My spirits are light as air, and would do something fantastic. Folly is a lover's privilege—the proof of the passion in him. Ah, Fanny, upon the shore of this great sea we gather shells, blow bubbles, play with the ripples that break upon the sand, stretch out our arms with an eager effort to embrace the very air—and long still to put from shore, to embark upon the deep and into the wide expanses of this sea of love."

"Now I know," said Fanny, "that you are a poet, but not a lover. Your passion is all in pretty words. I will not trust you."

She broke from the grasp of his hand, and ran behind the curtains of the window. He followed, and pinning her in a corner, against the panes, with her face between his two outstretched arms, until the face, turned upward, was close to his eager eyes.

"Love," said he, "is always fantastic; it deals in pretty things; it is all air, light, color, caprice—a dance of the heart. It aspires to words; it hunts up and down for choice phrases; it is such folly that love alone can pardon. Confess the truth where you are, or I'll do mischief."

"I defy you!" said Fanny, her eyes sparking and flashing in the moonlight.

"You will not yield?"

"No."

"Your cheek is not six inches off; you are at my mercy. I will not spare you. So yield, or I shall pluck a harvest."

A gay, roguish twinkle of her eye, a movement of the body, but no reply.

Come, I will count three. Remember, if at the third you do not say yes, your cheek is mine—fairly. One!

"No!"

"Two! Three!"

A sudden, lightning, tortuous twist of the body, a sudden, dexterous spring, and clear from the arms and hands of Warren, she leaped, and darted off into the studio, flushed with success, gay with laughter.

"Fairy! sprite! Whatever you are, you cannot escape me."

"A parley," she cried.

"Well."

"Warren James' love, I confess, is light, capricious, and nothing more."

"Call it what you will, but confess that you accept, prize, return it."

"Why, have I not confessed it? Why do you ask for repetitions of the same story! I do not understand this restless passion. Is not true love, serene, calm, placid, profound and still?"

"Rewarded love is all this."

"Why cannot you be at rest and believe me? Have some tenderness, Warren, for my instincts of reserve."

"But my passion rushes into words; I ask and ask if so much happiness can be mine. It is an exquisite and subtle pleasure to hear from your lips again and again the precious words which confirms my peace. Fanny, I am poor, humble, low; but ambition now urged on by love, shall push me into honorable place. I'll be worthy of you, Fanny, worthy of your brother. Labor is henceforth sweet, and

success will be glorious. It is not three months since I was driven to town, an outcast, poor in everything—now see the change! Fanny, I am full of gratitude, as well as love."

"I am glad to hear you say that. And now, Warren, you know I tell my brother everything, and he knows of our affection. But he inquires always into your history. He dislikes mystery, and Charles, my guardian as well as my brother, is entitled to my obedience and confidence. Will you tell me something of your past?"

Up and down through the moonlight and through the shadows, they walked arm-locked.

There was a pause for some moments. Warren breathed heavily.

"Not now," said he at last; "some day all. But not now."

"Nothing now? Have you no family—parents?"

"No, Fanny."

"Who was your father?"

"Once a merchant, afterward only a poor gentleman. He died from home—and I am alone."

"No brothers nor sisters?"

"None."

"But relatives, certainly?"

"Few. But as Hamlet says, a little more than kin, and less than kind. I have deceived you Fanny, and it is clearly my duty to undeceive you. Yet I hesitate. My life now is utterly distinct from all that went before. When I first came to this city it was with the resolution to begin my career here as if my life begun here; to bury my old identity; to lock out the past forever; to cover up the old paths that no man might trace me forward or backward."

"This is very strange," whispered Fanny.



"Even my name is not my father's. Warren is the name I have always borne, but the James which you know me by is pure invention."

"Oh, Warren, this is sad! this is grief! Mystery is so rarely honest—so rarely leads to happiness."

"Am I not clearing it up for you? Now that you are mine, you shall look back and see all that I see. But Warren James must still be my name to the world. Perhaps when I slip a ring upon this finger, it will be as Fanny Hoffman!"

"Hoffman! Hoffman!"

Fanny started, as if the name touched a nerve.

"Warren," exclaimed she with passionate earnestness, "what is it you say?" She flung her arms upon his shoulders, and looked eagerly into his face. "That is a name full of terror to Charley and me. Who was your father, Warren?"

"You surprise me. How can the name of Hoffman affect you?"

"Your father?" exclaimed Fanny with an eagerness that became vehement.

"Roderick Hoffman."

"Ah, Warren," and Fanny gasped, clasped her hand to her side, then burst into tears.

This passion was so sudden and inexplicable that Warren could only look in astonishment. But steps were now heard in the passage, and Fanny with great haste began to dry her eyes.

"There's Charley—not a word to him, Warren. I must tell him, I suppose. But not now, not a word."

And with astonishing calmness, for women are always capital little actors, she ran to meet her brother.

"Warren is with you," said the artist. "Young gentleman," he continued, laughing, "I am not sure that I ought not to throw you out of the window. Fanny is my koh-i-noor, and I see you are determined to capture her."

"I have been dazzled by the gem, I admit," replied Warren.

Fanny hung behind her brother in the shade, but Warren could perceive that she was pale, and in some strange anguish of mind. She cast upon him a beseeching look, as if desiring him to depart, and although impatient for an explanation of her singular outburst of feeling, he bade sister and brother good night.

As he felt his way down the long, dark stairs, he heard steps in one of the passages. They drew nearer, and presently, Hawley, whom Philip had christened the Two-fingered Titan, emerged into the rays of the moon which pierced through a well-light above. His head was uncovered, and his bald pate glistened in the moonlight.

"Hi!" exclaimed he, with the same peculiar expression, which Warren had observed in him previously when alluding to Fanny, while he extended his inevitable two fingers, "Hi! It won't do, my dear sir. Give her up. Charming, I know, but give her up. It won't do ye see, so take my advice"—

"Sir," said Warren stiffly, "please do not offer your advice, for I shall not take it."

He turned upon his heel, and hastened down into the street below. His surprise at the discovery of Hawley in such a place at such an hour was soon lost in far greater perplexities. Fanny's mysterious consternation and grief at the revelation of his name, filled him with an uneasiness which overshadowed everything else.

## CHAPTER X.

MRS. MARY VANBERT was a distinguished lady of fashion, a munificent supporter of the metropolitan charities, and a noble patroness of literature and the arts. Mrs. Mary Vanbert's fame was blown in every ear. Her establishment was magnificent, her parties unapproachable, her wealth marvellous. She was a lady of the most cosmopolitan tastes, and her entertainments were *recherché* and delightful to an enviable extreme. She was proud of magnates of all sorts; politicians were her rapture; successful poets her mania; famous artists her delight. She hunted for a celebrity with an avidity only equalled by the zeal evinced by the benevolent in searching out the needy. Her passion was for great men; her gaze was always upward; her wealth and energies were employed in painting the lily and gilding refined gold.

There was once a Christopher Vanbert. Christopher Vanbert's fate was singular. When he lived, in such obscurity was he held that his existence in society was only a tradition; when dead, his virtues were blazed to the world with an industry that put his name in every man's mouth. For Mrs. Mary Vanbert was grateful. No woman, perhaps, ever had such abundant cause. Christopher Vanbert had performed his duty to his family in a manner that rendered him an example to all husbands, and the admiration of society. Let me embalm his history as a beacon for the world beyond Murray Hill.

Christopher was your good apprentice; that is to say, he saved his money, and made more. He was ambitious, but his dreams were of bullion. Who shall quarrel with his golden visions? In his dark little office in South street, candles burned early and late; and here he labored and forged his mighty plans; here schemes matured that drew those steady golden currents into his coffers. Time, energies, health, were yielded to his noble purposes; in the end, life itself. Here in this dark little office, he schemed and worked, while wife and daughters danced their round of pleasures. He labored, they spent; and although in their expenditures compelled frequently to yield to his restrictions, yet they secretly thanked heaven, who had given them such a husband and father! and hoped for the day when his labors would enable them to expand into an existence as brilliant as their imagination could desire.

It came, and with it Christopher's crowning duty to them all. When the treasury was heaped, he suddenly died, and left his vast sums to their unencumbered use. Exemplary citizen! Devoted husband! Nothing nobler was ever recorded in the courts of society. The West End thrilled to its utmost limits with sympathy—and admiration! Christopher Vanbert became henceforth a household text. How many a young wife's eyes moistened with the sweet dream; how earnest became thoughtful mother-in-laws as they impressed the lesson! To die and leave your family rich—the sermon was preached from Washington Square to Murray Hill, and thousands, to display their appreciation of his noble career, gathered cheerfully at his funeral.

The period of mourning no sooner past, and the chrysalis broke, the butterfly took wings. A grander house, a bolder style; life, pleasure, fashion, the world, in its gayest

hues ! Dear Christopher Vanbert ! Now that he was gone, and his devoted wife and children left to pursue pleasure in their own unchecked way, it was a beautiful sight to observe their gratitude, and their tenderness for his name ! It was edifying to visit the costly tomb-stone erected with so much Christian pleasure to his memory.

It was Mrs. Vanbert's reception. I am not skilled in upholstery, or I would describe her magnificent rooms. There was splendor, for Mrs. Vanbert had money ; taste, for Mrs. Vanbert could buy it ; and there was a brilliant assemblage, for Mrs. Vanbert's wealth and tact could command it. And moving amid the throng of distinguished people is a face and form familiar to this story. For Mrs. Vanbert's latest found celebrity is our artist, Charles Ashby. He stands near the lady, and she distinguishes him.

It is not too much to say. Mrs. Vanbert is a Duchess, at least. Her manner is considered very fine, and we will not quarrel with it. The lady has tact, and she has had the advantage of meeting a good many first-rate people. She patronizes, it is clear ; she condescends ; she looks down loftily ; she acts the Duchess to the life. Mrs. Vanbert secretly thinks so. Sometimes she complains of fate, for she believes that My Lady or Your Grace never so clearly belonged by nature to any woman ; and that rank is a commodity not purchasable, is a cross which she strives to bear with Christian resignation. Mrs. Vanbert's manner, as I said before, must be admired, but she is really a woman of vigorous intellect in the direction it tends, and if there is occasionally a demonstrative emergency rather startling to my fastidious Clarence Fitz Clarence, her best friends pardon it with alacrity.

There is nothing of this kind to pardon in the Misses Vanbert. In approaching these young ladies I am at a loss how to distinguish or separate them. It is true that Miss Sarah Vanbert is in pink, and Miss Susan in blue ; nor are their features so similar as to in any way confound them. But beyond these differences, I pledge my reputation I can discover nothing. Both are high-bred in manner ; they have the repose ; they are accomplished, it is confidently believed ; but Susan or Sarah, Sarah or Susan, close your eyes, and hurly-burly, who is who ! They will listen to you upon any theme you choose—for this let them be thanked—they will reward your philosophy, wit, pleasantries, with a smile which has been impartially bestowed upon the entire circle of their acquaintance. Their minds—this is a theory, I know, but speculation may be allowed—their minds (let us have what faith we can) are of that evenly balanced placidity that no emotion can disturb, no thought can ruffle. Collected, cool and monotonous, their well-bred thoughts move in such fixed grooves that they inspire with envy that unfortunate class whose impulses continually betray into indiscretion—and nature.

Mrs. Vanbert's foible was respectability. In this she was not original, it is true, but her passion for this bugbear of civilization was rather more intense than usual. Mrs. Vanbert had a most exquisite appreciation of virtue in high life—but virtue short of broadcloth was the incomprehensible. Orthodoxy in religion, good-breeding in society—she did not conceive of more or less. Excepting money.

After all, Mrs. Vanbert has been described many times before. The type is common. And they have virtues which most of us can afford to study.

Charles Ashby, escaping from Her Grace the Duchess, we

find standing by an alcove. He is conversing with a lady. Their talk is animated.

"I have never been abroad," exclaimed Ashby, "and I am ashamed to talk of my pictures to one who has seen the masters; and need I tell you, Miss Thelton, how I thirst for Italy?"

"Why, sir, I have a belief," is the lady's reply, "that you will find your best skill from the nature which your pictures show you study. After all, sir, these great men had nothing but their own genius to go to, and I fear that modern greatness must do the same. If you sit down before a canvas, will you not borrow the art? but if you sit down before nature all that is grasped is your own. Am I right?"

"I believe so. Yet mind in contact with mind, is the necessity of all performance."

"Well, sir, I would prefer a tuft of grass painted direct from nature in the true spirit, than the glories of a Murillo at second hand. Pardon me, Mr. Ashby, if I am bold; but we, that have been abroad, fancy ourselves so wise!"

"The fancy is justified. And wisdom, indeed, comes that way. 'Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits'—you recollect—and wise old Shakspeare knew."

"In modern times, Mr. Ashby, the wit can travel, and the body stay at home. If Moore could paint Persian life so wonderfully from books alone, a man can sit in his library and transport himself to any scene he likes. Authors are magicians, and do such wonderful things for us!"

"Imagination is the magician. Books are dull or full of life, mainly as we have the power to awaken them. I have a friend who laughs at my pictures. There is nothing in your pigments, he says; I find in your canvases exactly

what I take to them. *You* are only convenient machinery, the merit that I find is in the subtle harmonies I possess—in my quick eye and open heart."

"His philosophy has a little truth, I think. Insensibility is so common, how can we think otherwise? You know, I suppose, Mr. Ashby, that I am country bred. My life has been passed among hills, which I have seen so often that I love them, and have wished often for an artist to appear and sketch them. I shall take the liberty some time of suggesting a subject, when you lack better. Yet really, sir, I think you will find in the localities I allude to, scenery worthy your pencil."

Ashby bowed, and was about to reply, when Miss Vanbert swept up and carried off the lady, with a smile and a smooth apology.

Ashby watched them depart, and lingered pleasantly upon the brief interview. A thorough bred woman is a charm always to a man of taste. Ashby was impressible, and the charmer was a woman of society and life; intelligent, travelled, and possessed of that very rare thing, good utterance. Her sentences tingled in Ashby's ears like pleasant music; her accents gave a refined grace to very simple words. The lady possessed beauty, but it was not remarkable. A tall figure, fresh complexion, dark and fine eyes, good, refined features, rendered her claims, in this particular, equal to those advanced by most women. And Ashby's inclinations were for women of society. High breeding, courtly manners, polished wit, were the only things that appealed to an imagination, which in the mere sphere of his art was wild, free, and his enemies said absurdly fantastical. But this anomaly in his taste, was not without precedent. Artists sometimes run after the bold,

and thirst for exuberant vitality untamed in drawing-rooms; but many of them, notwithstanding German pipes, German theology, and progressive morals, hang upon the skirts of society, and lay down their hearts upon drawing-room tapestry. Ashby admired women like Emily Thelton without abating his love for Fanny. His sister's bright and sparkling characteristics were charming—but what man in his love-dreams pictures beauty and graces like those home-bred ones he has been familiar with from boyhood?"

"I am glad, Mr. Ashby, that you've met Emily Thelton," said Mrs. Vanbert; "she is a girl we all admire. Have you seen Major Thelton?"

"Unfortunately, madam, no."

"A gentleman of the old school. He is a favorite of mine, a remarkable man, I assure you—as polished as sunshine, and as hard as a rock. But that is only power, Mr. Ashby. He has done so much; his benevolence is incredible; his wealth the most extensive. He has travelled moreover, and knows nearly every great man in America or Europe."

"You interest me, Mrs. Vanbert, greatly. I am pitifully ignorant, and had not heard of Major Thelton before."

"How surprising! I declare it is quite incredible. He is a noble man, and Emily is so accomplished."

"I admire Miss Thelton as much as you do Major Thelton, her"—

"Father."

"Oh! not a young gentleman?"

"Dear me, no. There are no sons. Emily is really a genius. I am informed that she intends writing a book. Ah, Mr. Ashby, how blessed are those upon whom Heaven

has bestowed the gift of genius! What would I not forego to be able to write one line like—like Tennyson!"

"A wonderful gift."

"Or to paint! One picture like yours, Mr. Ashby."

"Madam, our poor art would be honored. But in the patron of art, Mrs. Vanbert, there is much to envy."

The patron of art glanced complacently at her walls, and led Ashby off to a panel to admire a new purchase. The lady was exacting in her praise, and although ordinarily given to good sense, her comments upon her new pet were amazingly extravagant and absurd. They were a jumble of art terms, caught up at second hand.

"And, Mr. Ashby, I must see you soon, for I've set my heart upon one of your dear pictures as a pendant. I have only one vacant panel. The genius of Mr. Ashby shall fill it."

Ashby found the Vanbert wearisome; he sighed with relief when he succeeded in escaping from her. Twenty minutes later he stood by a window watching Miss Thelton at the remote end of the room, when, upon turning at a word near, he discovered an elderly gentleman quietly observing him. Ashby bowed. The gentleman, smooth and urbane, returned the salutation. He was rather below the middle stature, but very erect in bearing. His hair and whiskers were grey; his manner calm and studied; his features immovable and of rocky steadiness. He took from his pocket a snuff-box, for he adhered to the honored habit of the last century, and politely offered it to Ashby. It was declined.

"You will pardon me," said he, "with slow and measured accents, "if I mention my name. It is Thelton."

"Major Thelton!" exclaimed Ashby with surprise

"Why, sir, the title adheres. My friends find it convenient, I suppose."

"I have the pleasure of slightly knowing Miss Thelton, your daughter," said Ashby.

"I observed you in conversation with Emily, and something, sir, in your manner, recalling one I had met before, induces me now to beg the pleasure of your name."

"Charles Ashby."

Major Thelton was just carrying a pinch of snuff to his nose, when his hand stopped midway. His features, over which he exercised an iron control, did not move, but an exact observer would have detected, as Ashby spoke, a quiver of the nerves about the eyes, and a contraction of the pupils. There was a smile upon his lips which did not change, but the eye shrunk inward, and the lids partially closed. This was all momentary, and deliberately applying the snuff, which for several seconds he had held suspended, he resumed:

"I am glad to find I was not wrong. But it is clear there is no reciprocal recollection on your part, Mr. Ashby."

"I confess, there is not."

"It is so long ago!" said the major, and took more snuff.

"When I was a lad, perhaps," suggested Ashby.

"Yes; and you then had a sister, I believe."

"And have now, major."

"And one parent?"

"A mother, sir. But she is dead. Your recollections are not at fault. Yet, sir, I cannot recall either your name or your person."

"Perhaps, sir," said the major, dropping his voice very low, and with his eyes fixed upon his snuff-box, "you recollect Mr. Roderick Hoffman."

Ashby gave a slight start, and his quick blood sprang to his cheek.

"It is a name, Major Thelton, I am not fond of hearing." He made an effort to speak lightly, but scarcely succeeded.

"No," said the major, with an ominous shake of the head.

"He did us cruel and bitter wrong," exclaimed Charles.

"That was the story," said the major, and stared more fixedly at the snuff-box than before.

"But fortunately, sir, I have recovered from the blow he inflicted. He is dead, I think. I try to forget him. Were he living, my hatred, perhaps my revenge, would not rest."

The major tapped his snuff-box musingly for a few moments. Then with that manner whose polish could not be surpassed, he begged of Mr. Ashby a few words in the dressing-room.

"This meeting is very extraordinary, Mr. Ashby; and I must confess that the orphan wards of Mr. Hoffman had passed from my mind. And now, sir, my sympathy for their hard fate will not suffer me to withhold from them any knowledge appertaining to their case which I possess. I suggest the dressing-room, Mr. Ashby, as, affording us greater privacy."

There was candor and frankness in Major Thelton's words, but in his manner a something which instinctively put one on the alert. The smile was smooth, but the accents cold, hard, monotonous. Ashby, however, bowed an assent to the suggestion, and they went together.

"My knowledge of you, my dear sir," said the major, upon entering the room and closing the door, "was as the ward of Mr. Hoffman. My business relations with that gentleman at that period were very intimate. And like you, I am his creditor—heavily."

"I did not know there were other sufferers."

"The blow nearly crushed me. But I was then an elastic man; I recovered; and I need not tell you, sir, that at the present moment I am quite indifferent to the severe losses inflicted then by a friend, and confidential debtor."

Major Thelton took snuff with unusual vigor; and Ashby bowed.

"But, sir, at the present period my business operations ramify throughout the Union. My correspondents are in every city. And this vast extension of my transactions, has enabled me, sir, unexpectedly to obtain a very reliable and very remarkable piece of information."

Another application of snuff, and another bow from Ashby. For our young artist, quite unable to experience admiration at the greatness of Major Thelton's commercial operations, could only bow his polite assent to his imposing statement.

"You will recollect," said the major, "that Mr. Hoffman, upon the exposure of his affairs, took flight."

"Yes."

"And that it was afterward reported that he died in a southern city."

"That was the report, I believe."

"Well, sir, an agent in my employ, who formerly had served Hoffman as clerk, while travelling for me in the South, met his former employer, and immediately wrote to me that the report of the death was false."

"Concealment, I suppose, to further new villainies."

"I will not judge," replied Thelton, with Christian forbearance.

"Well, sir, can his life or death affect me?"

"It may—much."

"Please explain."

"We are both his creditors. If he lives, he accumulates; it is his passion and his talent. For my own debt, I forgive it; but yours was your patrimony. Why not force him to restore it?"

The old gentleman patted his snuff-box, and smiled upon the artist with ineffable sweetness.

"It is too late," said the artist. "I have no heart for the battle. I only ask now that he do not cross my path. If I should meet him, I should be capable of some passionate revenge."

"I commend your spirit, Mr. Ashby. But I shall take the precaution of instructing my agent to watch him, and keep me informed of his movements."

"And now, shall we return to the parlor?" said Ashby.

"Yes; yet permit me, sir, to beg a favor. I am a country gentleman, and have my rural villa. I should be glad to welcome an artist of so much celebrity to my country home. The scenery is admirable, and would please you, I sincerely believe. Can we hope to see you at Wood Hill?"

"I receive your invitation in good part, sir, and may venture some day to recall it."

The major was polish and sunshine as the artist bowed and withdrew. But scarcely had the door closed upon him before the smile hardened into the rock, the features settled into stone, the eyes sank inward, with contracting pupils; and so cold, hard and stern he tapped and tapped the silver lid of the snuff-box, which, in the silence of the room, was not unlike clods falling on lids in the grave. Then, still musing, he slowly descended to the company, but as he stepped into the rooms, sunlight again broke upon his features.



## CHAPTER XI.

THE sun poured into the artist's studio brightly. Ashby, in the velvet cap embroidered by Fanny, and in the old velvet coat in which he had worked upon his first pictures, and now retained with a pleasant affection, was vigorously painting sunlight into his canvas scarcely less bright than the rays that fell at his feet.

And Fanny, drooping a little, sat a little way off, and watched her brother with a longing interest not usual to her sparkling ways. She was even pale. The head drooped like a bending flower thirsting for drink; the eyes kept tracing and wandering up and down the broken bars of sunlight that pierced through the window. Nor was the brother at ease. He applied the brush with an earnestness which was half passion. There was a frown upon his brow, which, to the tender-hearted sister, was like a sharp blade; and his lips were compressed in a manner which Fanny always knew meant a stirring of old bitterness. For a good half hour she had been trying to speak, and upon the subject which she felt was the cause of her brother's dark humor, and which now had become unexpectedly interwoven in her future happiness.

"Charley," she ventured to say, and the accents were so appealing that the artist laid down his pencil.

"What's the matter, Fanny? You look sad and pale. Bless me! don't cry!"

"There is something on my mind, Charley," said Fanny,

speaking hastily, but the moisture welled up and wet her eyelids.

"Well?"

"I want to ask if you are not now successful?"

Unskillful Fanny! She touched the inflammation, and up jumped the ambitious youth in a hot flurry.

"No success, Fanny, worth winning. What are pictures? They reach the few, tickle the dilettanti, put into small raptures a buzzing drawing-room—that's all. I want broad, hearty life; to touch the world from cellar to attic; to reach hearts of all sorts, from fine purple to rags. Only great books can do this. And I cannot follow my desires because I am poor—because a villain has robbed me of my birthright. I must stick to the trade that brings me bread and butter."

"Oh, Charley! every word you say pains me. We were happy once. That was before you got fashionable. Why, when we had nothing but bread and cheese to eat we were the merriest people anywhere. We were independent, up here in our far-off attic. Or if we went to the country, I could ramble about with you, unheeded by all, watch you sketching; walk with you the cool evenings—those happy hours, Charley, which greatness has killed! Oh, if you could only come down to me and be content again!"

"They were pleasant then, because I lay low, dreaming of high things—and dreams of course are pretty. Now I must grasp, mount obstacles, get upward somehow."

"Ambition, Charley, was then a fine healthy impulse; now it is a disease."

"Pshaw! What can a little girl know about it?"

"Our little heads keep cool. And I shall never get giddy, Charles, until I become as ambitious as you. I wish that



I could induce you to keep from the world; to give up these splendid people, who put your blood in a tumult; to come back to the old, free, pleasant life. Well, you won't! I see it in those lips. And I've no influence, now. You will soon be in a puzzle what to do with me. If you go on as you have for three months, you will forget me altogether."

"Fanny Ashby is a trifle selfish," said the artist, who paced the floor in a restless manner. This unkind thrust called up fresh moisture to Fanny's eyes, but her brother did not see, did not heed the deprecatory murmur that broke from her lips in reply.

"But, Charles," continued Fanny, after a minute's silence, and with a desperate effort to lead the talk to the theme upon which her mind had dwelt from the beginning, "there is one other subject on which you think too much, and frighten me. Unforgiveness is such a sin!"

"I know what you mean. Meekness and all that is for parsons. I do not forgive."

"Then, Charley, to be a great man is a great misfortune. If it embitters, what can be the use? You will call me a foolish girl if I tell you what I think. But I will. I thought you truly great when you laughed one day, and said, 'Never mind, Fanny, let him go. If he likes money better than honesty, let him have it.' When you said that, Charley, you were greater than you are to-day."

"I did not know the breadth and the depth of the wrong," replied the artist gloomily; "the pains, struggles, desperate efforts which since that day I have experienced! How many times did starvation threaten me! What gloom upon my path! what humiliating things! thrust by the mere necessity of money among people and in paths I hated—a school teacher, a porter even. And a mother's

death, too. Perhaps he caused that. And I scarcely more than a boy, left with you to care for—you who should have had schools, play-days, and the happy things of girlhood. And all these because of one man. And more: thrust from the great paths of life, from knowledge, and a career—Fanny I curse him and his race."

"Ah, you are mad. I do not understand you. Something is wrong, and I cannot cope with it. This passion, Charley, is so strange!"

Fanny uttered this in very despair. She clasped her hands upon her knee and rocked to and fro. Her brother's discontent was a puzzle, but its growth her quick eye and clear head detected long before. Unskilled in the subtle phases of character, it was a formidable mystery to poor Fanny. It seemed a disease, a madness, a hallucination, that one day he would awake from, and then their old peace would return. And how could she understand it better, or perceive that it was only *vanitas vanitatum* proved for the ten thousandth time? The cool, honest, gentle girl had pursued no bubbles to find them air; had climbed no height to find thorns instead of figs; had drank no cup to find bitterness in the drugs. I call for pity! I ask for it where it is not bestowed, but alas! so needed; I demand it for that crowd of mortals whom men call famous. Think of men pursuing always will-o'-the-wisps; grasping them to find them air; through bush, and bog, and brier, with eager pulse and panting heart snatching at the hunted phantom and finding it only vapor! And so Ashby the painter, through long years the eager aspirant, is offered the crown, and finds it—nothing. It is unsubstantial, air, it cannot be felt, and the mockery brings fever, and the dark spirit unrest. The bauble again glitters afar off; the insatiate

desire, fired by its unreal triumph, maddened by the baseless fabric it had pursued, plunges wildly into new contests.

"How can you talk of no career, Charles?" said Fanny, "are you not known?"

The artist only stamped his foot upon the floor, and thrust his hand into his breast.

"And your increasing hatred of that man. Oh, Charles, to what are you coming? I used to be merry and happy. I am not now. It gives me such pain, this discontent—these bitter feelings for the dead!"

"He is not dead," said Ashby.

"Who?" There was such sudden and thrilling earnestness in Fanny's voice, that Ashby wheeled quickly around before her.

"Who is not dead, Charles?"

"Roderick Hoffman."

Fanny jumped to her feet, and with a sharp cry sped from the studio, through the little parlor, into her bedroom. Then tears came leaping from her eyes.

"Warren has deceived me!" she cried, running to and fro up and down the room with a wild look of pain. "Is he false? Oh, can it be?" and fresh tears gushed from her eyes while she wrung and beat her hands.

Fanny was not quick to suspect, but it was clear that, if her brother's story was true, Warren had deceived her with the statement of his father's death—and deception on such a theme—deception in one upon whose truth all happiness and all hope were ventured, was death to all her splendid dreams. Could Warren be dishonest? an adventurer? a schemer?—Was he like his father, at whose hands she and her brother had suffered so much? These questions pressed upon her heart, and their

startling probability wrung cries of pain from her bosom. If she had been deceived, then love was nothing—to trust him again would be impossible—her life must roll on apart unmated, alone and dark.

But the very extent of these apprehensions proved their own cure. It was impossible for youth to picture possibilities so gloomy; her heart rebounded by its own instincts from this extremity of suffering. "It cannot be!" cried faith and love; "it is too terrible!" said hope—and her heart gently swung back into its old serenity and trust.

"I do him wrong," said she. "He must be honest;" and she thought of his manner, his voice, his look; "he must be honest," she repeated, "there is some great mistake."

This last word she seized upon with delight. A mistake! How likely! How clear! And she hugged the thought close, and began to smile again.

## CHAPTER XII.

"COME, I am not in the play to-night," said Philip, standing in the doorway of Warren's room; "so let us walk out under the gas-lights. I have a thought that pricks me until I unburden."

Warren assented. His mind was on Fanny. He could think of nothing but her mysterious agitation, when they parted last night, and had puzzled himself into a fever of perplexity; and the surprise of finding the studio door locked an hour before, and brother and sister away, filled him with disquiet. His answer to Philip was, therefore, abrupt.

"You are catching the manner of prosperity, Warren," said Philip; "your sentences are shot off like a man's with whom time counts value as commodity."

"Busy men learn to be abrupt," said Warren, impatiently, "and idlers must bear their cuffs. Well! Let us walk, for I can take humors of all kinds easily."

Philip took the arm of the restless young lover, but as they reached the top of the first stair-case, Philip stopped suddenly.

"One moment, my boy. Let me see." And walking back, not to his own door, but to that of the ancient Todd, he knocked lightly. The door was opened a few inches, and the yellow turban appeared.

"Safe?" said Philip.

"Safe!" echoed the ancient Todd. And the door was closed. Philip came back to Warren, with his eyes on the ground; then, quickly wheeling on his heel, deliberately walked back again. The knock was repeated, and the ancient Todd, crowned with the ancient turban, came as before.

"Appetite?" said Philip.

"Appetite!" replied the Todd, and again the door was closed. Philip walked a few steps toward Warren, but cast glances back at the door. He was excited somewhat; there was a faint flush to his cheek, and a sparkle to his eye of some significant meaning. He rejoined Warren, but had only taken three steps down the stairs, when he again turned, and retraced his steps.

"Why Philip, you are inscrutable. What does all this mean?"

But Philip, with a wise and momentous shake of the head, ran back to the same door, and repeated the knock. The ancient turban was as prompt as before.

"Willing?" inquired Philip, with marked solicitude.

"Willing," said the ancient Todd, who confined herself to echoes. Philip now more cheerfully returned to Warren, and they walked down the stairs.

"Life," said Philip, pausing at the first landing, "is the philosophy of ramification. Answer me that."

"Being true, the sequence?" said Warren.

"I am illustrating the principle by a new mode," said he, slowly descending. "I am broadening my hold upon the world by a process which is simple multiplication."

"You are in the pleasant puzzle way," said Warren: "I am dull at solution. Explain."

They reached the street, and Philip locked his arm in Warren's. They walked a square in silence.

"Now," said Philip, "look around and tell me what you see?"

"In a city," said Warren, "what one sees is only the gradations between much and little."

"You see *waste*," said Philip, "on every side! Lives created big with power to be, sinking down to death, disease, moral graves; souls by tens of thousands flung cheaply on dung-hills; hearts dying in corners; capacities withering in the shadows of dead ignorance. Imagine a miracle. In all the cellars, attics, hovels, and hideous holes of this town a sudden influx of light and opportunity; poverty driven off; vice sent back to the hells; a quick expansion of hearts and brains into the higher developments of being. Fifty thousand mortals into whom have gone, chemically, how much starch, lime, phosphorus! morally, how much secret capacity for good, whose aggregate of love and tenderness would make troops of angels! mentally, such range of abilities, cunning to do and to create, whose accumulation would mark its vast value in the channel of every art and every science!—fifty thousand mortals saved for happiness, knowledge, use and Heaven, by such a miracle! Do gold and jewels lie in the streets? Let them remain, for they cannot add one jot to the world's wealth, or the world's blessings—but here about us the streets are encumbered with lost humanity—wasted brains, every one a miracle of creation; wasted hearts, every one with a birth-right of love and goodness; wasted souls, losing hereafter! Warren, what we see, goes near to startle a man! Shall we tread down gold and jewels like to these, or make some effort to save them?"

"The picture makes one shudder. Life sometimes appears so terrible. A man is shocked if his own schemes of happiness come in."

"Yes; but some of us items may do something toward rescuing items. At least I have tried."

"Explain."

"Well, last night, I found in a door-way a half-starved girl. I thought at once of my sister. Should she be somewhere on the earth in the same terrible plight, I argued, would not some humane fellow give her shelter, home, happiness? Wherever she might be, suffering like this, I had no power to aid her—and then down in the bottom of my heart I began a compromise with Heaven. It may have been a wrong impulse; for a vagabond like me has not been skilled in those niceties of the churches; the rules and laws that govern the high roads of religion puzzle fellows who grapple at a subject both ways, with brain as well as heart. Well, I took the child in, and the consolation is, that if my sister suffered as that poor girl did—and why not?—then perhaps the justice above will rescue her in some such way as I have done. Would it not be plain equity?"

Warren confessed, that according to human perceptions, it would be nothing but equity. He said this with a secret smile, but his voice was husky; he hemmed loudly; he felt a moisture under the eyelids. For the simplicity of this honest vagabond was the most exquisite and delicate thing he ever met. A tender thought like this might be expected in a woman or a child, but from a fellow battered about in a harsh world, it was strange, and grotesquely beautiful. He admired the vagabond with all his heart. He had seen before his noble solicitude for the fate of his sister; but who could have told him that the cherished recollection could so

humanize, soften, purify a heart which had no other link to his kind. Warren, who was hearty and generous, applauded his friend. He even emulated him, and forgetting Fanny, looked to see if there were any outcasts near deserving of a similar pity.

"And where is the girl?" he inquired.

"Under the wing of the ancient Todd. It is a clear case of genuine suffering. The poor thing has no parents or kindred; she is alone utterly. I will train her to some happy, prosperous career. She shall be one wretch snatched from the wastes of the world. One brain and heart, created for so much, may now work out its true destiny and completeness. Warren, it seems now as if I lived double—more, as if I lived, through this link, in the life of all humanity. I feel a creator."

"I envy you. Will the girl consent? These wayward creatures will not always accept the boons offered them."

"The creature, I confess, is suspicious of all bipeds. It is not strange. She has found them wild beasts. It is my task to teach her hope and faith. So far her experience has been the iron tread of the strong upon the weak—the new revelations of justice, tenderness and sympathy will be to her like an awakening in paradise."

"But you are poor."

"Was! Now, wealth is mine. Do you see? Heretofore, capricious idleness has kept my purse in a perpetual ebb; now, a motive to do, already makes me pant for labor. You shall behold a wonder—Philip Giles stepping forth to accomplish."

"I should like to see the girl," said Warren.

"Wait. Let the admirable Todd do her duty. I thrust her into the arms of the ancient lady. 'Guard her!' said I,

'protect her!—wash her!' You shall see her after the miracles of soap and water—halloa!"

Philip's shout was full of astonishment. A figure was swiftly gliding along the opposite pavement, close under the shadow of the houses. Philip's ejaculation was scarcely uttered before he sprang forward upon a rapid run. It was a short race, and the flying figure, now unable to escape, clung with both hands to an iron railing, and turned a staring, defiant face up to the pursuer. It was a young girl of about fourteen years, whose pinched features looked out of thick masses of matted hair; a starved, weather-beaten, ragged creature, whose only instincts were hunger and resistance.

"How is this?" cried Philip; "has the ancient Todd been sleeping? You mean to run away, eh?"

"Yes," said the girl defiantly.

"Why? Have I not explained? Have I not promised you food, clothing, bed, happiness? Come, young woman, you must not defy your good fortune. I have recovered you from poverty, crime and suffering; remain with me and your future shall be sunshine."

"The girl, without reply, merely stared at the speaker.

"Were you not hungry?" said he.

"Yes."

"Did I not give you food?"

"Yes."

"Why, then, not remain with me?"

"I am not hungry now," said the girl, simply.

"But you will be to-morrow," said Warren. "This gentleman desires to place you where you will never be hungry again; where you will have good clothes, and many comforts."

"I don't want to work," said the girl doggedly.

"Work!" cried Philip. Warren pressed his arm, and whispered him to be cautious.

"The girl," said he, "has evidently experienced somebody's philanthropy, and does not wish to renew it. We shall learn more. Were you ever put to work, my girl?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"I don't know. It was very hard. It broke my back, and I was hungry too, and whipped, so I run away."

"Confound it," said Philip, "if I could throttle the fellow who so misused the name of philanthropy, I'd live and die in the belief of being a hero. Now, my girl, can you not see that I do not belong to any such work-driving class? Work children! You shall toss flowers and make bubbles while the sun shines; play, little one, according to my philosophy, is the true thing for childhood."

Still the girl shook her head and clung to the railing. She had been fed, and hunger was now too remote to arouse apprehensions. She had clearly experienced work-house benevolence, and philanthropy was to her imagination some vague and traditional horror. She feared restraint of all kinds, and those into whose hands she had fallen heretofore had proved jailers only, and victimized her with utilitarian charity. She had been caged up for show, and regulated by machine system; which to these gypsies of the streets, in the wild taste for freedom that grows upon them, is no less a horror than downright imprisonment. Warren saw these probabilities, and repeated them to Philip.

"Then what persuasion can reach her?"

"I really do not know."

"Girl," exclaimed Philip, "I am not a philanthropist. I am only a man. I have no pet theories. I never invented a system. I do not dream of forcing you into preconceived shapes, as South American Indians flatten heads. My desire is to transplant you to a better and happier life, where you may grow and flourish, restrained by no laws but those of nature. Think of it, girl."

"What can she understand of this?" said Warren.

"True." And Philip, leaning against a lamp-post, sighed. Then suddenly he shook with laughter.

"I forgot the magician," he exclaimed; "here is money—silver! This is the universal magnet. Girl!" He held up a silver coin between his fingers. "Come with me, my girl, and this is yours."

The girl loosened her hold upon the railing. Her eyes dilated, she bent forward, her features grew sharp with eagerness. Philip frowned. This eager avarice in a child chilled him with unpleasant sensations. Yet, was it not the natural consequence of a starved, struggling life? In the many things to be taught, and the many things to be alleviated, this passion would be put away from her; so he resumed:

"This is yours, and one like this every week, if you will come with me. At the end of a month you shall go, if you then determine to go."

The girl, to whom money seemed a good which justified all risks, and would compensate for many evils, nodded compliance, and Philip dropped the coin in her open palm. And then seizing her hand he proudly carried back his trophy, doubly valued now, because captured for a second time.

"Jupiter!" exclaimed he to Warren, "is this not delicious?"

A romance of one's own creation for home enjoyment, eh! And somebody for the ancient Todd to think about, too. Warren, now for money. I'll flood the town with bad pictures—I'll do things to make my audience weep, the pit amazed. It is nine o'clock. Please to observe the hour and date of my new leaf."

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE lover, Warren, counted the hours that crept slowly toward the moment when again he could see his Fanny ; and Fanny, with vast more cause for impatience, with mingled hopes and doubts, stitched and read and mused in the little attic parlor, and wondered why he did not come. There is a little mystery to be explained, thought Warren. I hope he can clear it all up, muttered Fanny, and from hoping began to feel sure. But still there was a mist, a cloud between them. Both felt it ; both feared it. Mariners tell us often of the little cloud no bigger than the hand, which gradually enlarges, and darkens the heavens. Tempests brood in the mist, and soon the winds roar, the waves rise, the ship struggles, labors, and sometimes, amid the crash and battle of the elements, rides upon the storm a helpless wreck. There is a little cloud upon the horizon of my story, in the bosom of which I see the portent of a lowering tempest.

Fanny stitching, reading, musing in the parlor attic, was more alone than in the early time when Charles was a hard worker, and had but one companion. It is a pitiful thing in life that prosperity is not always a blessing. When Fanny and Charles extemporized a dinner with their stray change, and laughingly said they would have to fast on the morrow, no just observer would have called two creatures with such pleasant hopes and elastic spirits, unhappy. And now when commissions

were plenty; when Charles got in the papers (so dreamed about in the early days); when they were sure of a month of dinners, come what would; when people came every day and told the artist he was great, and praised his pictures to his face without stint—now, in the midst of all this prosperity, Fanny's heart was heavier than on the poorest day of their lives, and Charles lost the beautiful glow and healthy spirit which used to animate their little household, and render Fanny the happiest sister in the world.

Is there exact compensation, after all? For what we gain with one hand, do we pay with the other? By inexorable nature can we attain to no good without the loss of something once possessed? is power won by the price of happiness? wealth by the coinage content? Rub our eyes and look around. Alas! it's all see-saw; all that is gained by one elevation is lost by another depression. Temporal treasures are won by the barter of the finer and spiritual parts; for gold and silver we give health; for distinction we part with home affections; for power we eagerly bargain peace and conscience. Our household gods go one by one to gain these coveted things, and through all our struggles the book of life is still balanced, and nothing gets to our credit. A good many of us, perhaps, feel these truths. But we are like Macbeth. We have started on a career of aggrandizement, and to return were as tedious as go on.

Little clear-headed Fanny would have been glad to have seen her brother's genius a good deal less, to have brought him back to his earlier sweet and calm content. His expanding powers swept him further and further from it. This genius promised indeed to be the fatal gift; as it grew, as it became known, as he felt it striking deeper and more powerfully within him, it absorbed all other feeling; it rose

like the tide, space by space, creeping upward above heart, affections, until with a sullen rush it spread, a waste of wild and turbulent waters, swallowing many lowly but noble things in its depths.

Fanny, sitting alone, first trying to read, then trying to sew, then leaning backward and thinking of Charles, thinking of Warren, jumped up to escape the oppression of thought, and went into the studio. It was a pleasant atmosphere. The pictures looked down from the walls and filled the room with placid beauty. Why did not Charles feel it so, and under the influence of the beauty created by himself, fall into smooth currents of feeling and thought? The art, indeed, was of that abstracting kind, that it took the creator out of the world, out of his griefs; artists had often told her so. Then why had the charm lost its potency with her brother? Was he not born for a painter? Why, his genius was so decided that rivals acknowledged it. And to this inborn power is wedded always a passion which delights only in its exercise. That Charles should evince his vocation so clearly, and yet develop a discontent so marked, was a mystery that made Fanny fairly beat her head in despair.

Perhaps some of my readers are as puzzled as Fanny. Yet I think the solution will not require a conclave of learned heads; indeed, a plain hint of the real cause has already been given. Charles was discontented, not from too little success, but from too much. So long as fame was afar off, and glittered before him a glorious vision, he labored for it with a hearty courage; at last he reached out his hand and grasped it. It proved nothing; he could not touch it, taste it, wear it, feel it; it was all unsubstantial. The struggle filled him with desires which reality could not



satisfy; the race put fever in his blood, and the prize was fruit that quenched his thirst with ashes! Hence, he looked elsewhere; he saw glory in other fields; he was now athirst, and complete, triumphant success alone could supply his intense desires. Art appeared circumscribed. He longed for some grander arena. He aspired to poetry, literature, statesmanship. His desires came upon him in a multitude, and tormented him with their conflicting demands. Yet these avenues of distinction appeared closed to him. He was chained down to his art, and could not escape the destiny he had drawn upon himself. All this was melancholy weakness, folly, disease. His mind was out of joint—let us hope that time will set it right.

## CHAPTER XIV.

FANNY alone in the studio, walking restlessly to and fro between the pictures, heard the door abruptly close. She turned and saw Hawley. The Historian stood with his back to the door, and shook a salutation with his two fingers and his glove. Fanny, with her honest impulses that didn't stop halfway with anything, hated Hawley. Perhaps she had good cause. She always avoided him if possible, and if they met she was sure to break away from him in anger. If he addressed her, in ten seconds there was a burning spot in her cheek; and escaping from him into her little parlor, her foot would strike upon the floor, her hand beat the air, with a vehemence utterly surprising. The Titan was polite; he would bow, smile, and word some far-fetched compliment. But in the very midst of bow, smile, and compliment, the red spot would begin to glow upon Fanny's cheek. Sometimes bow, smile, and compliment would be prematurely abbreviated, and Fanny would dart from his presence, and in her chamber burst into some violent phrase of anger. That Hawley really desired to conciliate Fanny was clear enough; that he signally failed was no great mystery. For Fanny had a woman's eye and a woman's penetration. Smile, bow, and compliment could not blind her; behind the smile she saw a leer; bow and compliment were veils to a covert sensualism; in the eye lurked a coarse, searching expression that always lighted that sudden fire in Fanny's cheek.

"Ah, demoiselle," said he with the leer and the smile, and the sensuous glance, "you are charming this morning. How glad I am to find you!"

And he tripped over to her side, and complacently smoothed his long beard. Fanny looked around alarmed. Her fears and womanly instincts sprang up quickly; her dread of him, always great, became intensified, for there was a boldness in his manner unusual. The sensuous glance was now unconcealed. He scarcely attempted to qualify his admiration with words of respect.

"My brother is not here," said Fanny, running backward from him.

"I am rejoiced. It is what I have desired. I have longed for a sweet hour with you, beautiful Fanny."

"Mr. Hawley, please to go. I do not wish to see you."

"Your sex, delightful Fanny, put on coyness charmingly. Yet love is what you all covet."

"Sir!"

"You are an Andromeda, my dear, and look for Perseus; a Hero that waits for Leander. And you have filled my soul with admiration. Think of me as Perseus, coming down to you on a cloud; as Leander swimming the Hellespont."

The Historic lover, with his bald pate and enormous beard, his whisking glove and tripping step, flung himself into an attitude of admiration. It was a pose that would have astonished the gods. Fanny laughed, and with her quick sense of the ludicrous caught the ridiculous phase of the scene. And fortunately. For Fanny's anger would have been no bulwark; passion would have emboldened the fellow. Ridicule was the only shaft that could reach him. And some of us are like the Historian. We can stand up

bravely before battering rams of mere passion, and yet be brought down by a little delicate arrow from the quiver of wit.

The Titan shifted his position, and even his bearded cheek was slightly tinged.

"Ah, beautiful Fanny, do not mock my admiration. The great of the world can love as well as the pigmies."

"Why, Mr. Hawley, I should think your History could afford no time to think of such follies."

"You transcendently mistake us, my dear. Solace is the necessity of minds like mine. From the queens, the princesses, the beauties of every age, who sweep through my pages with their glorious pageantry, I turn to fix my admiration on a delicious little brunette, whose cheek is brilliant, whose eye flashes love and the gay humors of Thalia, whose bosom heaves with only tender and gentle dreams."

"The little brunette," said Fanny, with sharp and decided emphasis, "has no tender dream for grand historians. Mr. Hawley, please to go down-stairs. I will not listen to this absurd talk. You are mad."

"With love, divinity."

"Oh, where can Charley be?" exclaimed Fanny under her breath.

"The artist's sister has inspired me," said Hawley, fumbling in his pocket.

"Sir, I dislike you. Why do you talk to me in this way? I have given you no cause," and Fanny beat the floor with her foot.

"Yes, my dear, you are the cause, though innocent perhaps. Do not frown upon me. As Richard wooed to the lovely Anne, so do I to you. In his language I say, 'thy

beauty art the cause.' " As he was invincible to her scorn and anger, so I must be to yours. As he won her reluctant love, so I hope to gain yours."

"Mr. Hawley, if you do not go, I'll cry for help. I'm no such vain, silly woman as that Queen Anne. Had I been her, I think I would have stabbed him on the spot, as he bade her do." And the little brunette paced the floor in a royal passion; anger was mastering her judgment again, and she forgot her real defences, wit and ridicule.

"No, charmer, it is impossible," he exclaimed; "there is no such cruelty in your heart."

"Will you go?" said Fanny, vehemently.

"Behold," said the Titan, drawing a pamphlet from his pocket, "the proof of my passion. I have abandoned the historic style. I have come down to shepherds and their loves; to Phyllis and Corydon. I have piped here tender strains. Will you read them? They will show how my heart is with the lovely Fanny—and evince the versatility of my genius. I too can descend from the high style. Alas! now I can only write on the divine passion. To-day I shall commence an essay on the Loves of Olympus. The passions of the gods; the amours of Jupiter and the rest. If they could love, why not I?"

This seemed so much like madness, that Fanny's anger cooled, but fear took its place. She was alone with the madman; his passions were inflamed; no aid was near. How could she escape?

"Behold me, admirable Fanny," exclaimed he, falling on one knee; "I love you, and lay my genius and fame at your feet. When the History is published, wealth shall be ours. Now I am persecuted, hunted down; I have enemies who would destroy me. But love keeps up my heart. I

shall conquer yet. Consent, adorable Fanny. Your beauty puts me on fire. You must be mine. I seize your hand."

"Hawley! Fanny!" said a voice at the door. The accents were full of surprise; it was Warren who had entered. The Titan precipitately scrambled to his feet. Fanny gave a cry of pleasure, and ran rapidly toward her lover, but paused midway. *Was* he her lover? Was he not her enemy as well as the mad author? no more to be trusted than he? Warren saw the hesitation, the reserve, the embarrassment, and with the hot impulse of a true lover got angry and jealous directly. For the passion of love carries in its train all the other passions. What lover is not selfish, exacting, jealous, capricious, blowing hot and cold, easy of offence, quick to anger?

Warren turned upon his heel and would have gone, but Fanny passionately called him back. With what cold politeness he came! How stiff his bow! How fine and polished his sentences! How admirably he maintained his dignity, with a lordly indifference to everybody's feelings! A lover sure of his love will play more antics than a savage before a mirror.

Hawley was embarrassed of course. He whisked his glove, found his hat, pocketed his pamphlet, and backed himself toward the door.

"Farewell, demoiselle," said he, and kissed his two fingers. Fanny's little brow grew black. "How dare you!" said she, and planted the finger nails in the palm of her hand. But the Titan was insensible. The smile, the bow, and the compliment again; and then with a gracious nod to Warren, he disappeared.

"Fanny, what does this mean?" said Warren. But bless me, it was Fanny's turn now. How dare he get jealous of

her, because addressed by such a fool. Couldn't he see that she hated the man? He ought to do so; if he was half a lover, he might have seen enough for that. Besides, was he not himself a deceiver? There was something to be explained, or else they must separate forever; and not easily to be explained either, Fanny thought—with a certain species of satisfaction. She was ready for a quarrel, as ready as he, and with real cause. Jealous of her, indeed! why, if he meant to be so absurd, she could teach him that the right to quarrel lay with her.

And so our lovers ruffled their feathers, and were ready to fly at each other.

"So it seems you have an admirer," said Warren.

"Poor fellow," said Fanny, "how can I help it?"

"He wouldn't presume, if not encouraged," said the generous youth.

"That's a slanderous remark," returned Fanny.

"Of course I have no right to complain; a lady can have as many admirers as she pleases." Warren spoke with a chivalrous air that would have delighted you. Yet Fanny found cause for offence.

"If that is true," said she, "let us drop the theme."

"With pleasure," returned the gallant lad. "Good morning, Miss Ashby."

"Good morning, Mr. — what shall I call you, sir?" Fanny's malice was a home-thrust. Warren paused, with his hand on the door.

"If I have no name, Miss Ashby, how much easier it will be to forget me."

"I didn't propose to forget you," said Fanny.

"Of course if you take up other admirers it will result in that, or at least my absence will give you occasion. For

I am not a woman, and must have a whole heart or none."

"Warren, you are too absurd."

"Pardon me, if I do not see it."

"That fellow is mad; a fool," said Fanny, who was getting warm.

"Weaknesses, I have learned," said Warren, who so far was admirably cool, "which never disqualify a man."

"Which remark insults our sex."

"I meant it only as a compliment; I wished to show your generous hearts."

"Then emulate as well as admire us."

"Virtues of that kind are too lofty. It is our miserable necessity to love only lovable women. It is our miserable weakness that we cannot consent to hold a place in any woman's affection, where another has an equal right."

"This is mad talk!" said Fanny; "it has neither sense nor justice. Because I have been persecuted by a fool, must I bear this! You to revile, accuse, condemn, when you have deceived me so."

Fanny spoke with deep feeling. But Warren knew of no deception but the concealed name. And it nettled him to be accused of deception there, when he had unburdened himself so freely to her. Fanny alone knew anything of his past history, and she should have been the last to complain of deception.

"I cannot understand your charges of deception, Fanny. When last we met I told you all. And you were then full of love for me. But the moment I spoke my name a change came over you. I feel that change existing now. Your love is cool. You meet me with sharp words. Your manner is distant. You are as unlike the blooming, happy Fanny as imagination could make you. I will say nothing

about this Hawley. I do not care for him; perhaps he has only persecuted you, or at least I could believe it so if your manner was not so changed."

Fanny stood squarely before him.

"And you do not see that you are the cause of that change. Is it possible? Warren, Warren, unless your language on that night is explained, you are lost to me. I must shut up my love, my grief, my passionate regrets, for how can I trust a man who could so deliberately mislead me?"

"What does this mean?" passionately exclaimed Warren. Politeness, gallantry, chivalry at last succumbed, and our sarcastic youth was as much in earnest as Fanny. This scene is so painful to my readers that I must hasten it to a close. Quarrels are so very sad. We, who never get angry with the people we love, nor say unkind things, and coo and bill forever without a harsh note in our household songs, must look with displeasure and astonishment at this exhibition of naughty passions. It is true, my dear madam, that Mr. Belisarius is the most provoking and unreasonable of men, and it is a little more than an angel could bear to hear his growls forever, and never, kindly of course, show him how absurd he is. But it is certain, madam, that you never quarrel, although Mr. Belisarius insists with such trials to your patience that you should; and I am not surprised that you are shocked at Warren's foolish conduct. Nor does that charming young woman who now looks upon my page, and smiles at what I say about Mrs. Belisarius, whom everybody knows is a terrible scold, ever frown; there are no harsh words to Henry if he fails to come in time for the opera; no bickerings, misunderstandings, pouts, tears, cold looks, reconciliations, between her and Henry. They

are the most loving couple; and of course she wonders what could put that obstinate spirit in little Fanny. Besides, if we ever do quarrel, you see, it is about sensible things. Gentlemen, upon your honors, which one of us ever got jealous of a fool? and without a cause? Ladies, upon your faith, which one of you ever kept back the little explanatory word that would set all right, and provokingly wouldn't speak it because pride was up, and you would not make the first advance? Not one of you, I see.

Dear me, I fear that Fanny and Warren are very unreal people, after all; and their quarrel is quite unnatural; and that there is a blunder in the art of my story.

But they *did* quarrel, that is the historical truth, and theory must yield to fact. Warren could not see any guilt in the concealment of his name, nor understand why Fanny put so much stress upon that word, deception; and Fanny, unwilling to reveal the real relation she and her brother stood to his father, for fear it would separate them beyond hope of reunion, exasperated at Warren's ridiculous jealousy, trembling lest he really was guilty in deceiving her about his father's supposed death, endeavored to lead him on to explanation, but only led him further into a maze of misconception. And so my charming lovers quarrelled outright. Words flew like bullets; Fanny was sharp and quick; Warren witty and sarcastic. Sharp words and witty words are light to speakers, but rankle deeply. And the end was that Fanny burst into tears, and Warren in a great rage rushed from the studio.

Whereupon I am tempted to read a homily. Yet when I reflect how rare are scenes like this which I have just delineated, it would appear a labor of supererogation.

## CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Warren bolted out of the door, and ran swiftly along the passage, an earnest, pleading cry went after him ; but he did not hear it. Fanny, with an impetuous revulsion of feeling, was frightened at the extent of the quarrel ; in an instant she wished everything unsaid ; the words that followed him into the passage, but which never reached his angry heart, were these generous ones, " I am to blame ! Warren, come back ! "

The echo of his steps ceased. Then Fanny struck her little head for a fool's, and heaped passionate blame upon herself, and said over and over again that she might know he was innocent, noble, good. " To doubt him for a moment ! " said Fanny ; " it serves me right ! " And how did she know that he had spoken a word but the truth ? His story was certainly more likely to be true than that mere rumor which Charles had repeated, and it was her duty to believe him honest in face of everything but absolute proof. As for his foolish jealousy, why all men, she had heard, would get jealous very ridiculously, and it was only evidence of how much he really loved her. " I am foolish ! " said Fanny, passionately ; " my temper is bad ! I am a wicked, petulant, miserable, unhappy woman ! " and bitter sobs broke from her bosom, fresh tears wet her cheek. A noble little woman, say I, and wipe my spectacles. Why, she is taking all the blame upon herself ; not a murmur against her lover ; not a whisper even in the selfish corner

of the heart, where most of us keep up a secret self-worship. Just such a true, noble little woman that lights up your household, and mine, and tenderly takes the blame of many a little " affair " all to herself.

Fanny wandered about the studio and the little parlor with restless steps. A magnanimous, generous little woman, that laid upon her own heart all the reproaches for her present unhappiness—still she was not a courageous, resolute little woman. She did not know how to think of the loss of her lover with resolution or calmness. Her impulsive, quick, earnest, loving heart was courageous in sacrifice, but not courageous in endurance. Any humiliation, patience, forbearance, labor, trial, with love as the reward ; but Fanny was not composed of the stern, stoical stuff which can lock its great sorrows in its bosom, and make no sign. And so this mere shadow—this mere possibility of separation and estrangement, was grief she could not control.

It was a relief when she heard her brother's step in the passage, and she greeted him with a pleasant surprise when he entered with a step lighter and brisker than usual.

" Pack, Fanny," cried he, " and farewell to city walls for the summer. The woods, the hills, the lakes—my fingers itch to be at them."

" This is so sudden, Charles."

" An invitation from Major Thelton and his daughter. Did I tell you about them ? We met at the Vanberts. The major knew me—knew us all, it seems—when Hoffman was our faithful and obliged servant. He told me of his country-place ; and now the splendid old fellow sends for me and you, Fanny, whom he declares he recollects, to come for a month or two."

"Major Thelton? You did not speak of him, Charles."

"No? Nor of Miss Thelton? Perhaps not. But the old gentleman wants some home scenery on his walls, and begs me to help him bring it about; and Miss Thelton politely trusts that I will accept her father's invitation."

"It is not pleasant for me to go with you, Charley. I should not be at ease with your friends. I should like the old way so much better; a little cottage where we live with humble people, and are independent; then our free, happy rambles, you sketching, I roaming, or reading to you as you sketch! No Major Thelton's!"

"Pshaw, Fanny! We were children then. That could not last. We now must go out into the world. I really cannot refuse this invitation, sis, and so please don't object."

"Must I really go?" said Fanny.

"Of course, sagacious Fanny. The invitation is explicit. You will simply visit old friends, and I cannot leave you here, that's clear, and renders further argument impertinent. And we go to-morrow."

"So soon!" exclaimed Fanny, hurriedly and in confusion.

"So soon," said the brother, who did not see her confusion, nor heed the consternation expressed in her words. She thought of Warren, and saw new dangers; this sudden departure in prolonged separation, fresh misconceptions, wider differences, might erect obstacles never to be surmounted. Again she condemned her impetuous temper; again her heart was full of generous yet bitter reproaches.

And Warren, with a secret consciousness of being in the wrong pushing him on to unjust thoughts, did not display, it is the historian's duty to confess, a spirit so generous as

Fanny's. The shame of his absurd jealousy stung with a close hot sting in his heart, buzzed in his ears, rung in his brain, and nothing less than a violent rage could rid him of it. He hunted for justification, and at first was glad to find it in accusation. It was so unreasonable and capricious for Fanny to charge him with deception, that he declared it was enough to prove that she really did not love him. And what if Hawley was half mad—was it not a matter well fixed in love-history, that neither taste, judgment, good sense, nor propriety, govern women in the bestowal of their affections! He would not have thought a second time of his being there, he thought, had she not appeared so embarrassed when he entered. He was half inclined to admit that he got angry with unnecessary celerity; "but it made me mad to see that fool at her side, upon his knee, clasping her hand." The youth, it seems by his own confession, was in a rage at the audacity of the man, and vented his humor upon the lady. This was lover's justice! It is very common, I believe, with those who run about mad with the wounds of Cupid. The bow clangs, the arrow cleaves, the heart is reached—then, hurly-burly, up with folly, put justice into motley, sense into Harlequin, and let carnival loose! A hundred little imps came tumbling out of the corners of the brains, and the nooks of the heart. These are Cupid's own battalion. Their antics astonish grave men whose love follies are only history. They dance before the eyes, distort the vision, twist the judgment, snare the wit, bewilder the reason, and lead heart and brain a grotesque and fantastic reel. A lover, therefore, may be pitied. Light in his brains is prismatic; he sees things only in false tints; he colors every event with hues of his own. I should be glad of any better clue than this

to a lover's caprices, and obstinate want of common sense. Why should he delight in quarrels, let me ask, and so persistently stick thorns in his peace of mind? Is it that the enamored Peter likes to show his power? Does Julia serve her lover like her bird, and with string to her wrist, toss him off to see how far he will fly, and then pluck him back again? Ah, young lady, sometimes the bird escapes! Be sure your grasp is firm, ere you begin the pleasant torture.

Warren was in a tumult and heedless; his impatient temper carried him swiftly through long reaches of the city. For a time it was passion on passion. Imagination played upon every trifle, exaggerated every word and incident. A straw became a conflagration: the whole affair assumed proportions absurdly disproportionate. But there is ebb as well as flow. Warren literally walked his temper down, and then gradually shifted into another current of feeling. At last he saw his absurdities, and what is better, took a more generous view of Fanny's conduct. When fully himself, and not under a dominion of passions unusually powerful, Warren could be fair, just, magnanimous. Reaction rushes to extremity, and the lover was full of self-upbraiding and vehement regrets. What madness, he asked, had he committed? Fanny was his life, his dream, his rapture, his light and peace! What headstrong insanity prompted him to peril his life's happiness? Harshness, anger, injustice, cruel words to Fanny! It seemed in his cooler blood impossible; and our changeable lover was as eager now for reconciliation as once he appeared for a quarrel. And that is the real secret of all lovers' tiffs. The delicious consciousness under all the hot blood and fiery words, that it is only a play, that there is to be a rapturous kiss and make-up in the end, prompts the actors in mere

wantonness, to their shrewish parts; they scratch and tear each other with a frisky malice, the real secret of which is the delight of power, possession, and the unreserved right to maul or make as they please.

When Warren had walked through his gradations of temper it was so long after nightfall that he abandoned all thought of seeing Fanny until the morrow. The morrow brought its duties, for Warren was now a busy man; items and paragraphs had expanded into columns; it was no longer delving into leadened columns of news with eager scissors; if he pounced upon contemporaries it was with bristling pen. No paragraphist, reporter, insignificant little man, but editor, slasher, one of that mysterious clan that pour out leaders, and are oracular to the top of wisdom. Of course not at the top of the ladder; in no wise yet "our responsible." But one of the corps; having proved his ability to write well, write readily; with a supply of facile sentences, and the tact which makes editors.

And so when he bounded up the stairs toward the artist's studio it was past meridian. He did not think or care for the time; he was full of the olive leaf he was bearing to Fanny. So full that he was a little blind, and flung himself so eagerly upon the artist's door that he rebounded as he found it closed, and firmly resisting his movement to enter. He tried again; it was bolted as well as locked. The painter's slate upon the panel was gone; the blind light above was closely shut.

A strange bird in baggy trousers, velvet coat, long hair, came shuffling along the passage. To Warren's inquiry he replied:

"Ashby is off. He and his sister left for the country to-day."



"For the country? Impossible!"

"Yes, he's gone, and late too. All the boys are gone nearly; I am about the only one left, and I lock up to-morrow."

The odd bird flapped away, and Warren was alone. Then his heart went down heavily, and he leaned against the wall in a sullen dismay. This sudden departure bore but one solution. His folly had brought terrible consequences; a blow had fallen, madly pulled down upon himself; it was clear that the quarrel was final, or there would have been messages, letters, a less abrupt and inexplicable departure. In this way he argued, and the startling fear pressed upon him that Fanny was lost forever. The thought chilled him to the core; he felt flung suddenly back from happiness upon the world again; alone once more; worse than alone, with the memory of all that was gone, forever to set its contrast between possibilities of happiness and certainty of wretchedness. When he stepped out from his early life into the wide, heedless, unknown world, there was courage; belief in splendid realities; dreams that lay sweetly coiled up in the fancy. These mitigated hardships and rendered the severest struggle a bold and hearty toil. Therefore, he had not been utterly alone; his heart had always been his courageous friend and supporter. Now there was nothing. Alone again, and no courage, no dreams, no rich hope, no magnificent future! All these had centered in one delicious passion, love, in the wreck of which there went down all that had rendered life valuable.

He tried to hope. Yesterday's few angry words could not so utterly ruin his happiness! His punishment was terribly severe for such light cause! So he desired to think, but remorse gave keenness to his fears; consciousness

of wrong, with swift logic, linked this consequence with the cause.

He walked slowly and silently down into the street. He thought of Philip, who had proved himself his friend a hundred times, and with a strong impulsion to seek solace and advice somewhere, he almost instinctively moved in search of him. Warren was impetuous and young; grief reached him quickly, hope followed close upon the heels of despair. All feeling shifts, catches new light, bursts into new forms; clouds trail, sunlight follows; through the heart of a gay lover emotions speed as swiftly as light and shadows over the meads. So Warren soon began to catch at hopes. Fanny could not have cast him off without defence, explanation, opportunity for redress! In the changing drama of life, happiness could not be utterly lost, with time, courage, and honest purpose to win it back again! That way his dream now tended; yet still it was exquisite pain to reflect upon the long weary days, which at the best must separate them. Heretofore, a day's absence had been borne with impatience. He hastened to her always with eagerness, parted with reluctance; clung to her side by an attraction impossible to resist; was drawn to her presence by a magnetism which subjugated his whole nature. So loving her to lose her, thought he. So loving her, to deserve to lose her; was the bitter reflection.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THERE was a merry clamor in Philip's apartment as Warren knocked at the door. The occupants were so employed in their mirth they did not hear the summons, and Warren entered unbidden.

Philip, in a humorous garb of the stage—a misshapen coat, quizzical hat, absurd wig—was rehearsing a comic part to the hearty delight of the ancient Todd, and the adopted vagrant. The dress, face-making, odd intonations, extravagant language, were all broad, farcical, well devised to put a theatre in a roar; and they filled his audience of two with the most unbounded glee. The girl was boisterous; she laughed wildly; her whole body caught the spirit of the mirth; her hands were red with the exertion of spontaneous applause. The ancient lady only shook. It was so long since she had known occasion for merriment, she appeared to have lost the very tradition of laughter. The unused faculty could not awake, and the only response to Philip's grotesque display was a vibration of the body, not unlike the undulations of well-shaken jelly.

Philip was aiming to gratify his protégée. It was one of his many singular ways of obtaining a hold upon the girl; and the part, moreover, was one he was to act that night, and he was not unwilling to test its comic capacity by a home trial. The eccentric but single-hearted gentleman desired more than to supply the girl with food and clothes. "I must make her contented," said he; "the poor thing would

be wretched enough locked up alone with the Todd; she would be sure to prefer an exciting life in the streets to any such dull decency. I am enough of a vagrant myself to understand that."

His plan to make her contented would have astonished a board of philanthropists. That was because he was innocent of a system, and had in view not the glory of himself, but the happiness of the girl. He began by amusing her; he told her stories extravagantly humorous; he read plays, semi-acting them as he read; and not forgetting the culture so necessary, uttered moral sayings in quaint and pleasant phrases, and stimulated a desire for knowledge by hints at those wonders of the world that lay beyond her ken. And, oddest of all, he lifted the girl up to his own level. No appearance of superiority on his part; no smooth patronage; no pretty tableaux, with the philanthropist on a pedestal and gratitude at the foot; nothing, in fact, but honest simplicity.

"Please go on," said the girl, as Philip's antics ceased upon the entrance of Warren.

"A critic has slipped upon the scene, my dear," said Philip, flinging hat and wig into a corner; "and though I defy criticism, one likes to make himself a fool only in wise company."

"Let me retire," said Warren, "if I cannot remain to be merry with the rest."

"No; it is ended," said Philip. "Susan, here, was a little flat, and the ancient lady so rarely lets a pleasant thought into her fine old brain, that I played the clown to tickle them. They do not go to the theatre, you see, and I tried to bring a little of the gaiety of the theatre here."

"I have seen nothing so amusing," said Mrs. Todd,

"since my dear Richard was alive. Ah, sirs ! he could be merry too."

"We are now the happy three," exclaimed Philip ; "since Susan came we have been as merry as bells. See Madam Todd ; she is a dozen years younger ; she has something to live for, and likes Susan now with all her heart. Ten years has she spent in that attic in utter loneliness ; a pittance for support ; long days, nights, years, alone, with nothing but the memories of dead husband, children, friends. Hi, Warren ! an enormous amount of sorrow creeps away into the corners of the earth."

"Yes," said Warren.

The ancient lady made no answer, but in a resigned way folded two red, hard, knotted hands upon her lap.

"As for Susan," said Philip, "she is a splendid girl. If I and the lady can make her contented now. You will stay with us, Susan, eh ?"

"Yes," said Susan, frankly. The girl had a pleasing face ; her eyes were clear and honest ; her lips were sweet and gentle. It would appear as if Philip's benevolence was not to be thrown away ; she indicated a nature that would bear culture, and reward the efforts of just philanthropy. The ancient Lady presently rose with dignity, took Susan by the hand, and with a profound courtesy of the stamp that belonged to the last century, to each of the gentlemen, withdrew with her charge.

"Here," said Philip, looking after them, "my tricks bring down the house. On the boards they escape into unsympathetic air, for I am not an actor in favor with the world. Now I wish it was not so, for I desire to put money in my purse."

"You are a better artist, I think, than you admit to yourself."

"No ; and my acting, what there is of it, does violence to my taste and judgment. I heap up effects in a broad and massive way, and stumble coarsely through things which my intellect penetrates, but of which imitation can obtain no delicate hold. If I were only a Frenchman."

"Explain," said Philip.

"Their blood is the true dramatic. The best of us Saxons are blunderers. With your Frenchman the art is most subtle and exquisite. He speaks, and you are charmed ; he moves, and there is a picture. Your French actor takes snuff with a grace to witch the world with snuff-taking ; he snuffs a candle in a way to make you feel that snuffing candles is the poetry of life."

"Now, Philip," said Warren, "will you lend me an ear to an affair of mine ? Ashby and his sister have disappeared."

"What do you mean ?"

Warren explained.

"It is not strange," replied Philip, "they go every summer, sometimes to the Housatonic, sometimes to the Catskills, or whatever way promises material for Ashby's canvases."

"But this is remarkable, and perplexing. They have left no word, no address, and went so suddenly. Only yesterday I was there and not a whisper about it. The fact is, Philip, it is mysterious."

"I don't see it, unless there is a love affair. Halloo !"—he caught a glimpse of Warren's face, which was changing color—"by Venus there is a love affair ! Well, Warren, I can find my way along a plain road, and can see the cause of your perplexity. And you have fallen in love

with Fanny—natural ; and they've run away—decidedly unnatural ! What does it mean ?”

“ I am tormented with surmises,” rejoined Warren, who kept a close lock upon the secret of the quarrel ; “ I am full of fears and doubts, and experience a feeling, which, more than I can explain, fills me with apprehensions.”

It is unfortunate that Warren was not more frank ; but the impolitic youth did not perceive that he was rendering his friend's advice valueless, and embarrassing his judgment, by withholding all the essential facts. Warren was like advice-seekers common to all experience, who, in order to appear right, will suppress those considerations which alone can render opinion safe or advice applicable.

“ Ashby's address must be with somebody,” said Philip musingly ; “ he is too public a man to bury himself in the woods beyond reach or communication. Of course, then, it can readily be obtained. And what then ? Will you follow them ?”

“ I can write,” suggested Warren.

“ True ; Cupid sends his arrows by post daily. Well, my lad, I agree to find the clue. And so you are a lover ?”

“ It is not easy to help loving Fanny Ashby.”

“ That is only the half of love-making, and an easy half. I have got that far not less than forty times with as many charmers. The difficulty with me has always been, not to fall in love myself, but to induce the lady to take the agreeable tumble with me.”

“ Then I have been more successful than you,” said Warren ; “ that is, I believe so,” he continued, “ but this unexplained departure casts a shadow on my hopes.”

“ How did you manage it ?” exclaimed Philip. “ The art of love-making I ought to understand, for the play is a good

school. Yet my experiments have been fruitless enough. Eloquence in my cases could do nothing ; devotion, sacrifices, attentions, respect, good-temper, wise-sayings, humble manners, sighs enormously doleful, smiles of admiration, tears of despair—nothing ever got me so far as a first kiss. After all it must be good looks.”

“ I cannot explain,” laughed Warren.

“ You see,” said Philip, “ I am a failure ? In everything ! For no lack of shrewdness, let me say, and that belief I'll die by ; but from the clear reason that I am made up cross-grained.”

“ Your philosophy is always a puzzle.”

“ There are men who flow in currents ; their prows set always toward the havens ; they glide smoothly upon the waters ; there is harmony between them and all things. But there are others who veer and drift sidewise, who shift into eddies, are caught in pools, strand on sand-bars, and at last break up upon the rocks. The difference between these is *grain*—or vulgarly, luck ! I am your fellow hewn out the wrong way.”

“ The wrong way,” cried a voice, and the door was thrown open wide, as Hawley bounced into the room. The Titan was in excitement that broke out in every joint and muscle. The glove whisked, vibrated ; the two uncovered fingers swept the air ; his legs had lost all sobriety and dignity, and hopped and popped about as if set in red-hot shoes.

“ The wrong way !” exclaimed he, “ or the right way ! It's a devilish way, and I'll cut them.”

His excitement and perturbation were so great that he did not see Warren, and our hero stepped aside with a wish to avoid him. Warren felt that he was a fool, but that fools have not necessary immunity from anger ; and the

warm blood of the young lover stirred quickly in his presence.

"Cut them!" said Philip; "my dear sir, do it! My advice is, do it."

"I mean the Ashbys," said Hawley.

"What a tax upon their gratitude," rejoined Philip.

"They've left town," cried the Titan; "they've abandoned me! Not a word! Not an invitation! Not a letter!"

"What tenderness!" suggested the actor.

"Ha! What's that?"

"To consent, my noble sir, to forget you."

"I do not see your meaning yet."

"To forget friends is selfishness; to forget enemies magnanimity."

The Historian had bounced up and down the room with almost extravagance of manner; he stopped quickly and turned sharp around upon Philip at these words, and found himself face to face with Warren. He forgot the actor and distinguished our hero.

"Ha! You, the small journalist! You are the cause, I dare say."

"If you have anything to say, Mr. Hawley, don't use epithets. To-day I am not patient enough to bear them."

"I'll write you down, sir."

"Thank you, sir."

"You have been my enemy at the Ashbys'. You are one of the tribe sworn to destroy me. But my books shall flourish; and I am in love with Fanny. I am a man, although a great Historian."

"Two propositions in one sentence," said Philip; "I take issue with them both."

"Confound it, sir, I address this youngster."

"Confound it," said the youngster, "don't address me in that way."

"Hang it, sir, I am chief contributor to the Caustic. I'll fulminate thunder against you. The Ashbys were my friends. I admired Fanny. She, a princess, was coy, but kind. They're gone. Their purpose is to avoid me. It is plain that I am persecuted. I'll write you all down, sir."

"In love with Fanny," said Philip, loudly; "a hawk in the nest of a dove! My blood is thin from poor feeding, and I do not get angry quickly; but to mention Fanny's name in that way tempts me to hang you by the beard."

"He must not speak of her in that way again," said Warren.

"No! Not mention her! My life is full of great purposes, but I can embroider upon its edge these charming trifles. Not mention Fanny! Look out for the Caustic!"

Up and down the room again, shaking, tripping, hot with excitement and rage, his hat in hand, and wiping the thick perspiration from his bald head.

"This is too absurd," said Warren, flinging himself in a chair, and taking up a book.

"I'll defeat you; I'll drive you from literature; I'll put you in the Caustic; and I shall win Fanny."

"Fanny!" roared Philip, "why she is tender and beautiful; she's dewy and fresh; her heart is a merry, yet a warm heart, full of honest blood and sweet feeling. Who should mate her? A youth, I say—green branch upon green branch—fresh heart to fresh heart. A man with gentle blood, tenderness, love, pleasant fancies, sound brain and noble nature—a fellow who has appreciation for others!

—who has eyes for others!—who looks outward upon the world, and lives through human sympathies! Are you? Epicure, so much in love with yourself that pelican-like you feed upon your own blood? so enormously self-worshipping that a noble-hearted girl is a morsel you seize to tickle your own palate? You!” roared Philip, who had lashed himself into a rage, and now snatched at a climax, “You!—you!—curse you!”

Philip’s climax was an oath, but no flat, meaningless anathema. He poured it out with a round, swelling concentration of rage and contempt that startled the Titan as if a thunderbolt had burst upon his head.

“Fresh persecutions,” said Hawley, in a feeble way, whisking the glove with an uncertain, vacillating air.

“Which you can’t escape.”

“And from imbeciles.”

“Well!” thundered Philip.

“A paltry journalist,” continued the Titan.

“Bah!” said Philip.

“A low actor,” retorted Hawley.

“Let me get at him!” shouted Warren, jumping up;

“I’ll tumble him down-stairs.”

“No,” said the actor; “tongue against tongue. I’m good at epithet. If he is more than ten seconds reaching the bottom, I’ll open my vials of wrath. He’ll think the grammar mad, and English hot grape.”

The historian did not wait to test the actor’s capacity, but hastily twisted himself out of the indignant company.

## CHAPTER XVII.

SUMMER vacation is peopling valleys, mountains, sea-side, with rural pleasure-seekers from the city. The town is hot, dusty and dull; and so our gay court butterflies escape from the close borders of brick walls to cool shades and breezy hills. Nature trips into fashion, and there is a rush from saloons, drawing-rooms, courts, counting-rooms, of thousands eager to embrace the new dictum, and render worship to whatever is crowned by the mysterious ruler of West Ends. Fashion, the High Mightiness, is an autocrat few of us are bold enough to defy, and I simply obey the rational behests of that respectable sovereign, who rules by the cheerful consent of the world, when in these August days I shift my story from the dusty town to the flowery woods and pleasant valleys.

We wing our way from city limits, and smell the grass and the blossoms already. How sweet and delicate the air is! The eye, long offended by the motley colors of the town, is ravished by the gentle harmonies of green and blue, and the tints of brown and purple. This is not a sky sharply blue above the houses, but a soft canopy blending with the distant hills, atmospheric, ærial, and tenderly beautiful. There is a river winding its silvery sheen far above and below us; it disappears amid swelling hills; then re-appears, tortuously ribboned amid meadows and meads. It is a mirror of the skies and the flowers; there are

dreams in its bosom; we peer down into its placid depths, and picture ourselves rocked in vales of beauty, catching upon our upturned hearts visions as calm and peaceful as these. There are far-off hills, sleeping in haze; there are little cottages, sparkling like white shells dropped amid wide reaches of green; there are ruminating kine in the shades of willows, knee-deep in the shallow water; there are low chirps and soft lingering melodies, and the sweep of swallow wings, and far-off mellowed barn-yard calls, and pleasant lowing of udder-filled cows, and rustling of forest leaves, and musical rippling of waters over rocks! Long abstinence renders us sensitive to these rural charms; they come upon us like low music; they are harmonies that flood us with a sweet peacefulness.

Charles and Fanny are in the country; in this very valley, perhaps, for on the brow of a hill, whose top is a pile of rocks, wildly cragged, torn and hewn, there is an artist with folio in his lap, sketching the scene. It is clearly Ashby. His hat is by his side on the rocks; the wind plays freely with his locks; his collar is thrown open; there is negligence and care in his attire. But the lady standing near him, watching the pencil as it swiftly transfers the picture to paper, is not our merry Fanny. She is taller than Fanny; there is more repose of manner; her face is not so fresh and charming, perhaps, but a fine, womanly face. Her dress is a walking costume, quiet in tone, and a wide straw flap that shadows her features, gives them a pleasant and gentle expression. This is not Fanny, but still the artist is Ashby; and thirty or forty feet distant, curled up on a flat rock overshadowed by a cluster of cedars, is Fanny herself, the merry-hearted. Merry-hearted, I am afraid, was an injudicious phrase. She looks in fact, a trifle

sad. Her hat is in her lap, and her fingers idly play with the straw, while her eyes look away and are fixed it would appear, upon the beautiful valley. Yet we, who wear the fairy's cap, and so become invisible (it is our trick to flit about Fanny and the rest of them, looking into their eyes, with ears at their bosoms, catching their low heart-murmurs, slipping into their secrets, following them hither and thither up and down the dance of destiny) we with our magic caps, can hop upon the knee of Fanny, and peering into her eyes, see that it is not the valley, nor the hills, nor the river their gaze rests upon, but a picture more remote than they, and strangely enough, nearer still. Need I say more? are we not all lovers?

There is animated talk between Ashby and the lady. Is Fanny neglected, or has she slipped away because she likes to be alone? She clearly does not heed them, and finely as Charley talks sometimes, there is a home eloquence about her heart which is sweeter than choice phrases and neat philosophy. Yet Charles was once a big world to her little heart; his career, his hopes, his fame, his sayings, comings, goings, doings, these made the chapters of life. When the artist spoke, Fanny's was the ear; if it were murmuring, exultation, art, philosophy, the brisk, gay, Fanny was the only companion and respondent. Not always with ripe appreciation it must be confessed, not always with that subtle sympathy which to the poetic or philosophic talker is the spirit which evokes his power. Limitations of sympathy naturally restrained the flights of the poet-artist. Thoroughly good listening was so rare, that when it came, he gushed forth a willing fountain. The artist had a fluent tongue, a delicate fancy, rich feeling, and to these a comprehensive intellect. Fanny never conceived the whole breadth and

fullness of these qualities. She heartily believed her brother to be a great man; but greatness was a vague undefined thing in her imagination. That it required anything more than love and tenderness, never entered her cool head or warm heart.

But his new companion is one who touches his powers more skillfully. There is no turbulence or strong enthusiasm in her appreciation. She is quiet only because her nature is wide and deep. She is travelled and well read; her intellect is large and receptive. Cultivation and breadth of feeling give her that range of mind so rare in women. She has a love for intellect as intellect, art as art, and delights in the subtleties of philosophy, poetry, science, and all the keener experiences of human genius. She has no power to create, do, or say; her mind is only receptive, and it is this which renders her to a man like Ashby a companion so delightful. Her knowledge and appreciation of his art make her a pleasing critic. The touches which the artist loved, the qualities into which his feelings went the most warmly, these never escaped her just appreciation. She possessed an eye and taste for his art, a keen intellectual relish for his philosophy, a warm admiration of his genius and his ambition. With a woman for a friend like this, our artist's discontent almost disappeared. The opportunity to give voice to many vehement thoughts was a pleasure; and the consciousness of contact with an intellect which could understand, measure, follow him, not only afforded him the keenest pleasure which a man of intellect can experience, but called into action many faculties which before had been only imperfectly exhibited.

Fanny has left her seat upon the rock, and is slowly picking her way down the side of the hill, and so, in our

invisible magic caps, we may listen to the learned talk for which Fanny has no taste.

"The view from this rock, Mr. Ashby," said the lady, "I have always thought the finest of any in the valley. You must really put your sketch upon canvas."

"I shall not fail to paint it, Miss Thelton."

"I thank you. Your pencil seems to me to have caught the spirit and tender beauty of the scene. Artists must love their art."

"Use and necessity make the best of us traders."

"But your imagination cannot be dull in these pictures. There may be mercantile necessity at the beginning; but you soon fall in love with your task, and forget the barter."

"Some of us, perhaps, do. It is only when the imagination is warm and glorious, that heart, brain and feeling can transfuse themselves into the pigments, and create those performances which we like to think will prove immortal."

"The thought of genius always," said the lady.

"Yes; and without the thought, art would become as mechanical as sign-boards. There are books, Miss Thelton, which are only books; pictures which are only color; but there are also books and pictures into which the life and nature of their creator have passed. To these the heart of humanity links itself forever; responds to them; is subdued unto them; gathers new life from them. Those of us who work always in the glow of imagination fuse into our pictures this sublime essence, and give to inanimate things a human sympathy."

"It is that quality which renders your art a mystery," said the lady. "The greatest charm of pictures is not exact reproduction."

"It is a blunder at the very threshold of art," inter-



rupted Ashby, impatiently, "to suppose that art is imitation. I have no patience with the fools who founder in this dull error. There are even artists who know no better. If art were imitation, photography would soon shut up our studios."

"I perceive your meaning, Mr. Ashby; yet please explain yourself more fully."

"Of course you know the old art-story of the painter who elaborated a curtain so skillfully upon his canvas that his visitors were deceived, and desired the curtain to be drawn from before the supposed picture; and you laugh when you hear the story. It is so clearly a mockery of art that the most ignorant instinctively feel it to be so. They perceive, perhaps without knowing why, that all the highest requirements of art have been overlooked in a paltry attempt at servile imitation. Can I illustrate my meaning better? Wax is a better imitation of flesh than marble; you may be momentarily startled into the belief that you see a living figure in a shop-window, but there is not a marble in the Parthenon that could trick you into any such cheap astonishment. Art, let me say, reproduces not the servile forms of nature, but her spirit, grace and poetry; it hews aside the grosser forms in which she envelops herself, and seizes the central beauty; its main office is to create through distinctly different mediums sensations akin to those produced by nature in her original forms. Its imitation is only in effects. Take yonder elm. I may catch its grace in a charcoal-sketch, or elaborate every leaf with exact fidelity upon the canvas, and produce only a distortion. Am I plain?"

"Yes," said Miss Thelton; "but I am not surprised that all do not consider it so closely."

"That is because consideration of any kind is so uncommon—absolute thinking is so rare."

"The aggregate of thinking is wonderful, Mr. Ashby. Think what has been accomplished in every direction."

"Each mind evolves its quota of truth, I suppose. Most of us are facets, and reflect only at angles. Now and then there comes one who is many-sided, and thinks at all points, and for his pains the world calls him a fool. It is a theory of mine, Miss Thelton, that a mind which is equal on all sides, exactly balanced in its parts, must, in the affairs of life, be always unbalanced."

"Your philosophy will be puzzled to set that right," laughed the lady.

"I think we are far enough in abstrusities already, Miss Thelton. I am a little fantastic in my speculations sometimes, but do not willingly oppress my friends with metaphysical hair-splitting. I will endeavor to explain my meaning, however, in as unlearned a way as possible. Dick sees a question from one point of view, let us say; Harry sees it from another. These men differ; both are honest; each is a rock in his own belief. There is no confusion of light to either; no crossing of cause and effect; no multitude of elements. Each sees in a straight line. But up comes Jack, who is all-sided—whose mind is of the character that travels around a subject. Well, he sees Dick's truth, and he sees Harry's truth, and probably sees truths blind to both. He is with both Dick and Harry; he vacillates from one to the other. If the question is religion, he sees Catholicism in the light that Dick, the Catholic, sees it, and Protestantism in the light that Harry, the Protestant, sees it; and, of course, as I said before, the world brands him as a weak fool."

"Justly, Mr. Ashby."

"Why? There must be exact truth somewhere, I suppose. Then this exact truth must present different aspects to different men, only because, to return to my old simile, it reflects at different angles. Hence all opinion is merely *exparte* knowledge. Your thoroughly comprehensive man is above partisanship; then he has all opinions—that is, he has no opinions. He grasps Dick's logic and Harry's logic, and is both Dick and Harry."

"If truth is exact, why does he not grasp that?"

"He does. He grasps it at all its angles; he takes in Dick's opinion which is *exparte*, and Harry's opinion which is *exparte*, and has no opinion simply because opinion is only one side of the question."

"If I follow you rightly, then all opinion, so far as it goes, is truth."

"Mainly. Every wide-spread, maintained opinion must have truth at the core, or it cannot live. There may be errors on the surface—husks that partially conceal the grain; but if truth did not present itself to the human mind in this one-sided way, generations of men could not honestly differ upon the important problems of life. In eternity there will be no victory of one opinion over other opinions, but the fusion of all opinions into one complete, masterly, all-sided sentiment."

"Your opinions, Mr. Ashby, amuse me. I will do my best to see in the same light you do."

"I do not talk to amuse you, Miss Thelton. I like opposition sometimes better than compliance. And these are mere fragments of observation, which I throw out freely to you, because"—he hesitated, and pencilled absently on the margin of his folio.

"Your sentence is not finished, Mr. Ashby," suggested the lady.

"How shall I finish it? Emily—pardon me if I call you so—do I appear a happy man? Accuse me of egotism, vanity, but please answer."

"You have more than common blessings."

"Gifts, perhaps, but scarcely blessings. In my art I have been successful, and attained a point I once fondly dreamed of. And what then? Ambition has grown with success, and my art limits my powers; it chains me down to the æsthetic; it affords me opportunity to reach the world through its half-developed sense of the beautiful, and that is all. I desire more."

"I am surprised, indeed, Mr. Ashby," said Emily, "What profession affords a career so serene, absorbing, happy as yours?"

"Happiness is the sense of power; it is action; it is life on a grand scale. Big events are upon the stage of the world; nations, human destinies, human passions, compose the drama. Great men fill up the grand parts; *we* put in a bit of the upholstery, supply a little decoration, perhaps, and are unheeded in the dazzle of the pageantry, and the bustle of stirring incidents. This subordination does not please me."

"An ambitious man never ceases to look upward, it seems," replied the lady. "But I cannot understand how an artist who talks of his art with such enthusiasm, and paints with such true genius, can be discontented, or seek for any success not obtainable in his profession. And you underrate it, Mr. Ashby. Raphael, Rubens, Murillo, Titian, are better remembered than thousands of kings and statesmen who have filled the world with their clamors, but now are only fading memories."

"I am something more than an artist—see how I talk of myself, but it is an egotism you encouraged—and I have discovered too late, that my real vocation is a wider field. In art I am far from being Raphael, Murillo, or even Claude. Nor is it the time or the country of art. The people look upon us as upholsterers or decorators, and any real perception of the dignity or significance of art is rare and exceptional. No! I ought to write books, plunge into philosophy, turn statesman, cultivate oratory—in either of these there would be elbow-room."

"In anything, in short, but the one art you follow. If you were an author, Mr. Ashby, you would envy the glory of art; if a philosopher, pant for something nearer to human sympathies; if a statesman, embittered by the calumny and hatred that attend power and place; if an orator, your grief would be that your creations lived only upon your lips, and must die when you die."

"Then discontent would be my lot in any career?"

"I am afraid that it is the disposition of the man, and not the fault of the art."

"You condemn that disposition?"

"Oh, no. It is an infirmity of noble minds."

"Sometimes it consumes and destroys; it is well calculated to darken any career, and to render all unhappy that come within its bane."

"Sometimes it is a cloud that in the end disappears," replied his companion. "These restless passions are followed frequently by golden repose: they are ebullitions of youth, which in time settle into strength, grace, and calm maturity."

"They are evil spirits, Miss Thelton, but I think I see the power that can lay them."

"What is that?"

"Sympathy."

"A noble word," said Emily, averting her face.

"But leads to a nobler word," said the artist, taking her hand.

"Where is Fanny?" said Emily, hastily breaking from his side, and walking toward the rock where Fanny had been seated.

"She has descended to the path," said Charles. "But Miss Thelton"—

"Let us follow her," exclaimed Emily, and she hastily began the descent. The artist followed, whistling softly, and with a puzzled look.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE rocky plateau upon which our little party had gathered, presented a jagged, abrupt palisade toward the valley. The descent for forty or fifty feet was down a seamed, riven and wildly irregular wall, with few and oddly distorted growths in the deep crevices of the rocks. There were footholds for the climber, and a worn path even, that wound among the jagged projections. But the descent soon grew less precipitous, and dipped with an easy slope into a forest, and then by successive depressions reached the valley. Paths leading by easy grades from the foot of the hill, wound through the wood, and ascended the rocky heights. There were many little points of interest habitually visited by the lovers of the picturesque; among them, mountain rivulets cleaving their way down through dark channels, between boulders, amid wild screens of forest brush, with charming cascade leaps, densely shadowed pools, and dark turbulent currents in the rocky bottoms of narrow gorges. There were also little lakes, or ponds, picturesquely hemmed in with net-works of trees, fantastically interwoven in wild and inextricable patterns; the surface of the pools reflecting the tangled web, and seemingly tempting the green and merry forest branches to disport with humorous antics before the coquettish mirror. The paths, too, were so pleasing, sometimes gently leading over smooth grassy surfaces, under rich canopies of fretted greenery; sometimes running at the foot of a rocky pile, whose cragged, broken, disjointed sur-

face, looked like fragments flung there by the Titans—like broken pillars, fallen stones, and capitals from some gigantic temple, rudely up-heaved in a fierce ruin, with moss and vines softening their harsh angles, with the seams and stains of time and the elements sadly touching them with sere and yellow age, and with misshapen growths grotesquely crowning them with wild and fantastic shapes.

Fanny had a love for the picturesque, and was fond of a free, long ramble through forest paths. She stepped lightly and with sure foot down the rocks, and carelessly idled along into the forest. She sat on rocks and played with the mosses; wandered from the paths toward the rivulets and listened musingly and pleased to the incessant flow, bubble, and silvery monotone of the waters. She found flowers to pick, curious mosses to gather, leaves red-dyed in their own heart's blood, and delicate grasses; she discovered trees that pleased her semi-artistic eyes, with bits of foreground scenery that she would have delighted to have painted had she been an artist; and every now and then unexpectedly finding openings that looked out upon the valley, rendered all the more lovely for the half-veiled, fleeting glance.

If a little sad sitting upon the rocks, with the melancholy distance rocking her brain dreamily in its tender haze, the old cool sweetness came back upon her heart as she wandered through the wood. She soon began to hum a tune, a low pleasant tune, and occasionally the music burst into a round and swelling melody. On her knees searching for moss or blossoms; or on a rock smilingly beating an accompaniment to the tumbling cascade; or with white arms wound around a branch and bending forward over some deep, wild dell; or coiled up on the sod at the foot of a tree, with head backward against the trunk, and

eyes musingly fixed upon the swaying tree-tops—here in the shadows of these old trees Fanny's content and light-heartedness came back with their old fullness. Too elastic and hopeful to be kept sad long, upon any theme, the peaceful atmosphere had its charms; gay and pleasant thoughts began to sparkle up from her bosom; her step became tripping and light. She sometimes stopped abruptly to think of Warren and the foolish quarrel, and smiled to think how love delighted to ravel and unravel these little meshes; or if she looked serious for a moment at her lover's supposed deception, she shook it off with an emphatic assurance to herself that her lover's honor was the sun behind the cloud. And so true-hearted, simple, loving little Fanny, as she tripped, and mused, and sung in the forest, hopefully wove the history of her love, and mockingly snapped her fingers at the sprites who seek to thwart the dreams of lovers.

The forest where Fanny spun her dreams, stretched down into the valley, and reached the banks of the river. There was a road which followed the course of the stream, a hundred feet or so from its banks. The forest led down to the road, leaped the sandy pathway, and continuing on paused only at the alluvial limits of the stream. There the trees were dense and green, interlocked in mazes of branch and leaf, and thrust, with inclining trunks and pendent boughs, far over the surface of the current. Fanny, heedless of her direction, approached the river bank. The silver sheet glancing through the trees caught her eye; she sprang down the wooded slopes, crossed the road, and ran toward the shore. The road, let us say, led from the railway station a mile below, and not half a mile above curved prettily before the grounds of the Thelton mansion. The house, Wood Hill was the name, stood on one of the lower

range of hills, and the chimneys could be seen above the tree-tops. Fanny had taken scarcely twenty of her light steps down the wooded slope, when a foot upon the gravel of the road prompted a backward glance at the traveller. A backward glance and sudden cry! She could not mistake that form, step, movement, and in an instant she was running with both hands extended.

Surprises we all know are delightful. But these sudden meetings, even with the most undemonstrative people, are apt to be a little theatrical. We of the Invisibles can turn our heads; it is but a moment; we may look now, and there is Fanny, fast held in the hands of Warren, leading him rapidly to the quiet, unwatched bank of the stream.

"Oh, Warren," cries Fanny, "and you are here! How did you come? So unexpected! so delightful!"

"Then you forgive me," exclaims the simple Warren.

"Forgive you," laughs Fanny; "we were a couple of fools!"

"I think we were," says the youth, Warren, "but I have been unhappy, Fanny. I thought that you were justly angry. I feared that I had lost you forever."

"No doubt you deserved that fate," exclaims the roguish Fanny, "but I take mercy upon you."

"Then this is the happiest moment of my life," bursts out the youth, and still holding Fanny's hands, he begins to kiss them passionately.

"To think you should be jealous!" said Fanny, whose eyes danced with pleasure and happiness.

"And of a fool!" said Warren.

"And such a fool," cries Fanny, and laughed with glee.

"Oh, Fanny," exclaims Warren, and draws her close to his side. "I love you Fanny, so well, so deeply, and I

trifled with your love." His eyes were full, his heart was full. He wound his arms about her neck, and smoothed back the locks, and looked down into her eyes, and was a lover.

"There, Warren," cries Fanny, breaking from his embrace, her cheeks burning with the touch of his lips, "sit down here and tell me. How did you find us out?"

"Oh, easy enough. Your brother left his address. And I could not rest, could not write, could not wait. It seemed to me as if my happiness depended on seeing you—on flinging myself at your feet."

"Pshaw!" said Fanny.

"Well," retorted Warren, "those were my feelings. The possibility of losing you made me ten times more in love with you. Which was a pity."

"Now, why?"

"That I should love you better for loving me so little as to drive me from you."

"I must try and get through the meaning of that sentence," said Fanny, and mockingly began to spell it over.

So our lovers prattled on in their fond, foolish way. Warren was seated on a stone, and Fanny was at his side. The river gurgled in the little eddies at their feet; the trees waved and clashed their green pennants above them; the sun pierced through the branches and flecked the grass with shattered sunlight; the air and the river hummed low melodies in their ears and their hearts. It was a pretty scene. And the lovers were all sparkle, light sentiment, bubbling passion, foolish fondness. Love ran rioting into mirth; hearts danced into gay words; gaiety itself tripped into pathos; and pathos took sudden refuge in little follies.

I dare not tell you the silly things they said and did. Fanny forgot her grief, her doubts, everything but the present pleasure. Neither talked of the past, but wove their garlands, spun their delicate fancies, and tricked out their great passions in light humors, and playfully masked strong feeling with vivacious levity.

It was a pretty scene, I repeat, our childish lovers blowing their bubbles, and sporting in the flowery web of love. Oh that I were a lover! That I were young again, and could react the merry, tender, sportive dalliance! What is life worth to us, who are too old to be lovers? Neither dignity nor the grey in our locks, nor dull propriety, nor all the respectabilities, can make us forget the charming time. Ah, the color, the dazzle, the glow, and the glory of life to a lover. The air is gala. Ribbons flutter in the sunlight. There is music, march, cheer, flourish, glitter; the world is a pageant; the time is holiday; the heart is a carnival, and beats happy measures to the glad music.

Then, we of the Invisibles, who have been lovers once, may dance on the green at the tryst, like elfish Pucks before the lovers. We can see the fire sparkles shooting from eye to eye. We can listen to the great throbs in the bosom; catch the light words that spring from lips to hearts; sport in the glittering mirth that plays lambent about them and tenderly catch the dewy, tremulous accents of low and earnest sentiment.

In the midst of the pretty play, a shout comes wafted down from the hill.

"Why that's Charles," cried Fanny. "I declare I forgot him. I'm a truant, you see, and have run away. He will be glad to see you, Warren."

"I wish I could be sure of that."

"Don't doubt! Never doubt! There is his shout again. Come."

"I could have sat here for the day," exclaims Warren looking wistfully at the place. "Why it is the happiest hour I ever knew. And you are mine, Fanny; you are mine!"

"But hear Charles—how he calls. Don't let us linger." And Fanny impatiently leads Warren away.

"One moment," says the lover; "a moment, an instant longer. Let me be sure that I do not dream. Let me know, never again to doubt"—

"Do come," cries Fanny. But Warren stops and clasps her cheeks between his two hands.

"Tell me, Fanny. Am I of all the world so blessed? I cannot believe it. It is madness to believe it. I am sure there is error. Happiness so exquisite is not the lot of man. Are you really mine?"

And Fanny only laughs and darts a glance into his eyes which brings the heart to the throat, and shakes her locks, and looks so mischievous and charming, that Warren, at a loss what to say or do, blurts out a vehement expression of admiration, and with a sudden response to the shouts of Charles, darts up the slope toward the road, with Fanny by the hand.

## CHAPTER XIX.

AS Warren and Fanny ran heedlessly into the road, they were almost precipitated upon an elderly gentleman, walking quietly along the road-side path. It was the serene, the polished, the steady Major Thelton, autocrat of the valley, first gentleman of the county. A collision was so near that all three checked their movements suddenly, and stood facing each other.

"Major Thelton!" broke simultaneously from the lovers.

"Roderick!" burst from the lips of Thelton. That gentleman's self-possession momentarily lost its poise by the suddenness of the encounter and the surprise of a discovery.

"Not Roderick, Major Thelton," said Warren. The brow of the youth was dark, his voice fierce.

"Of course not Roderick," replies the Rock, who is balanced and serene again, "but Warren. You will pardon me if in the surprise of our meeting I addressed you by your father's name."

"It is not singular," replied Warren, swelling angrily; "the name, no doubt, haunts you."

Fanny, utterly bewildered at the singular turn of this encounter, dropped silently back a few feet, and listened with wonder and alarm.

"But I desire to remind you, Major Thelton," continued Warren, "that my name is no longer Hoffman."



"It is difficult," said the major, "to keep informed of all the aliases an adventurer may assume."

"I do not wish you to be kept informed."

"Then of what do you complain?"

"Be ignorant altogether. You brought shame upon the name of Hoffman. Can't you forget that you ever knew it?"

"Your friend, Miss Ashby," said the polite major, turning to Fanny, "is singularly choleric."

"I am," vehemently replied the youth, "I confess it. I have not your coolness nor your cunning, but something perhaps of your malice and hatred."

"Oh, Warren!" said Fanny, in a warning tone.

"Miss Ashby," said he, with a distant and studied air, "I beg your pardon. I offend against propriety by the exhibition of passion in a lady's presence. But I assure you the provocation I have received is enough to justify me."

"There is Charles calling again," said Fanny, who was terrified at her lover's mysterious anger; "we ought to join him, Mr. James."

"Then," said the smooth and unruffled major, "permit me to resume my walk. My presence disturbs your arrangements."

"The lady will excuse us," said Warren. "It is so rarely we meet, that I for one am not willing to forego the interview. There are too many things in my heart burning for utterance."

"You will pardon me, I hope," said the major, "if I cannot afford you the pleasure you desire;" and bowing with sustained politeness, he renewed his walk.

"What is the matter, Warren?" exclaimed Fanny.

"I can explain nothing now," replied Warren; "there is Charles's voice once more, and close at hand. Run to him, Fanny, and leave me here. I will see you shortly; but say nothing until we meet again. Now, good bye."

With a wave of his hand to Fanny, he turned and ran rapidly after the major. In two minutes he was by his side.

"I am not rid of you yet," exclaimed His Serenity, with a hard, sharp way, in which there was not a remnant of his former smoothness and sunshine.

"No! We are now alone, and can speak freely."

"Well?"

"Major Thelton, you broke my father's heart!"

"This is pathetic," said the major, and took a double pinch of snuff.

"Terribly pathetic, indeed; but of course you have only a sneer. There are others who have sympathy, and still others indignation."

"A play, sir?" politely inquired the major.

"You will some day find it none. I know something of you, yet not all. I know that my father's disgrace and ruin sprang from you, for in a letter written from his exile, on his dying bed, he accuses and condemns you."

"That was ungenerous."

"How?"

"I supposed your father to be magnanimous and just! I am shocked to learn that he could seek extenuation for himself by the condemnation of others."

"His name was blasted, and yours is honorable. Yet no man knows so well as yourself that if justice were done the world's opinion would be reversed. The blow that fell upon my father fell also upon me; his disgrace, his shame,



his wrongs became my heritage. What could I do but endeavor to shake that shame and disgrace from me? I began life as if there had been no past, and cut myself apart from the name, the history, and many of the recollections of what had gone before. But one thing remained. From your connection with my father's fate I *did not* separate myself. I swore, among other things, to tell you one day what I tell you now—that Major Thelton is a successful deceiver, but there are some who know him."

"Have you come back to tell me this?" sneered the imperturbable major. "It is mild and harmless, believe me."

"Yes! And one thing more. If ever I become rich and powerful, I shall as surely pull down Major Thelton from the pedestal where he stands, thrust him as low in disgrace and ruin as my father has been, and lifting up that father's name, place it high and honorably before the world."

"Pleasant and Quixotic," smiled the Rock, and furtively attempted to display a little sunshine, but the hard, cold, cruel granite showed through grimly and dark.

"It is this which I have threatened to tell you. Be pleased to remember it."

And with a lordly bow, Warren turned his back upon the affable Thelton, and strode away. And the affable Thelton, musingly tapping, tapping the snuff-box, sent a scowl of such fierceness and malignancy after the retreating form, that could the agreeable major have shed darkness as well as sunshine, the very day would have been eclipsed.

Warren walked away excited and flushed, but soon became calm, and even contented. His heart was lighter for its ebullition of bitterness, and there was a species of

sweet retribution in being able to unbosom himself before his enemy. The occurrence called up a few tender recollections, and sometimes he paused as his head dropped upon his breast pensively. But these feelings were rapidly dissipated, and the lover's swift thoughts flew to Fanny.

He walked along briskly for a quarter of a mile, and turned from the road through a lane to a farmer's cot.

"Did you find your friends?" inquired a pleasant voice, as he stepped upon the wooden porch. The speaker was a white, tender-faced girl, of sixteen years, with a look of habitual sweetness upon her features. She was of a slight, active, graceful figure, open, tender grey eyes, long Saxon curls. There was a gentleness, delicacy, ethereal lightness about the girl, which gave grace and charm to her manner.

"Only one," said Warren.

"How could you expect to find them," said the girl, "among the hills?"

"Yet I did. My knowledge of their address was limited to the town; but I knew that Charley Ashby would be sure to have his sketch-book out somewhere."

"Oh!" said the girl with a brightening face, "it is the artist and his sister! Miss Ashby!"

"Do you know them?"

"They're guests of Major Thelton. I saw them there. I go to Major Thelton's sometimes to please Miss Emily."

"Mary!" said a hearty, pleasant voice within.

"Well, uncle."

"What about Major Thelton, eh?"

Warren and Mary entered. Two persons were seated in the room, each with his pipe, and each the centre of a little aromatic smoke-cloud. It was a pleasant interior. Over the low wide windows a few vines clambered. The floor was

covered with carpets made of colored rags; the ceiling was the smooth-hewn beams of the upper floor, with muskets, fishing-rods, canes, and other treasured articles stretched along the timbers, supported by wooden pins. In one corner was a large and open "dresser," or buffet, with its glistening display of gay crockery, and brilliant metal; in another corner an enormous clock, which reached from floor to timbers, swung its wide and ponderous pendulum. Framed colored prints were hung upon the walls; the big fire-place was filled with fragrant bushes and flowers, fresh gathered. On the high wooden mantel were ranged shells, a few stones of mysterious beauty, and extravagantly gilded vases filled with pressed and dried grasses. By one window was a little table littered with the paraphernalia of a woman's work-basket, its confusion of needles, pins, cotton and taperies covered by a pile of white muslin, in the yawning seam the magic little implement of woman's labor glistening undrawn, indicating how recently white and skillful fingers had wrought the subtle labor. By the other window, one on each side, and face to face, two smokers labored zealously at their pipes. One was a broad, hearty, genial fellow, whose face glistened with the sunshine of his heart; the other, a small, slender, dark, silent fellow, with a perpetually bitter curve to his lips. The low, horizontal rays of the evening sun came peering into the room, and with their yellow hues, tinted charmingly the atmosphere of the scene.

"What about Major Thelton, Mary?" was repeated, as Warren and the girl entered, by the broad, pleasant-faced one whom Mary called uncle.

"Only that Mr. James' friends are at Major Thelton's. That's all, uncle."

"I have discovered my friends, Mr. Hall," said Warren, "but now am more anxious to lodge with you than ever. I have many reasons. You will consent?"

"I think we must, uncle," said Mary.

"Of course!" said Uncle Hall, with a hearty puff by way of emphasis.

"What is the estimation of Major Thelton's character among your neighbors?" said Warren.

"He's an honor to our race."

"They don't," sharply broke in the other smoker.

"He really is, Varley, though"——

"They don't," said Varley, crushing his teeth on his words, as if to cram them with bitter emphasis.

"A few, perhaps, Varley. But really, my boy, most of us like him. He is generous, and gratitude animates us all. That's your opinion, Mr. James?"

"Bah!"

"Now Varley, that's wrong, and you don't really feel it, either. Major Thelton has got his faults, I suppose, and who has not, Mr. James? There is some that's good, you see. But each of us has his bright side. There ain't so much wickedness in the world, as people say."

"A great deal more," said he addressed as Varley, with a snarl.

"No! no!" said the other cheerfully, "it can't be. I'm sixty-one years of age, just. Three days over. And I've met good hearts, plenty of them, and kindly words and deeds, and many a noble act. And that's true, Nat Varley."

"Cheated, and didn't know it. Humbugged. I'm older than you one year. What have I met? Selfishness! wrong! tight hands! cold hearts! deceit! avarice! hatred!" Every

word came bolted out between puffs of smoke, rasping and biting.

"Ah, the old dispute," laughed Mary, "and every time you argue it, Uncle Robert, I think you differ more widely than before."

"Yes, we differ, Mr. James. It's natural, I dare say. Varley thinks the world is a dismal affair; but in my opinion, it does honor to its Creator. And for human nature, Mr. James—who made it? I just ask that question of any Christian that's unbenighted. Who made it? Perhaps it did get pretty bad in them old times. But who came to make it better? I just ask that question; and I say, secondly, what do you see? Don't mothers love their little ones? And don't you see husband and wife love each other up hill and down, for better and worse? To be sure. Beautifully, Mr. James; and plenty of kind deeds under the rose, Mr. James; and gentle words and charity. You see, Nat Varley, if you snarl at the world, you may get a snarl back, but just try and smile upon it once, and then, bless you, it's as handsome behaved as anything can be."

"I don't see it."

"Yes, Nat, now, you really must. It can't be helped. Just let people see right before them the true thing, and they go to it direct. People's hearts are a good deal better than their judgments, and sometimes it happens a good man does an unhandsome thing, because he gets arguing the subject, and when a man argues about what's right, it's all up with him. First thing, the heart says plain enough what's honest. Then the head begins to twist. Then the heart tries hard to stick to the manly, upright side. But the head obfuscates it; snarls it; reasons it out of plain honesty into the swamp of dishonesty; and in the end so

blinds the right that the wrong is done. But do I say that human nature is bad for this? No, I don't. I tell you there is a heart in every bosom, Nat, and if you only just keep the head away from it no harm's done."

"What's the use of a head?"

"Can't find out. To invent mischief, and set people by the ears, I suppose. An honest hand and a big heart is enough for me."

"The fact is," said Nat, "that bad heads and bad hearts are everywhere. See! Don't I see? Cheating, lying, and the devil! It's a pity the world can't be burnt up."

"Ah," said grave Uncle Robert, turning to Warren, "don't mind him. It's his liver."

"What!" said Warren.

"Bilious!" replied Uncle Robert. "That sours him. He can't help it. He means well enough, but sees things through the jaundice."

These remarks were addressed to Warren in a loud, side whisper, with thumb and finger jerking over his shoulder at the object of the comment. Varley, although clearly within hearing, stolidly puffed at his pipe, and apparently did not heed.

Mary, imitating the benevolent philosopher's manner, with thumb and finger jerking over her shoulder at Uncle Robert, whispered laughingly to Warren. "It's his heart! He means well enough, but he can't help it. That sweetens him."

"True enough, Mary," said Warren.

An extraordinary volume of smoke suddenly puffed from the lips of the cynic. It was an irritable puff, and indicated that some warm feelings were stirring up within.

"It's rich on the poor," he suddenly puffed out, with a

volume and irritation that corresponded with the preliminary discharge of smoke.

"The rich are as good as you and I," said Uncle Robert.

"They'll trample upon you," said he of the liver.

"No, they won't," said he of the heart.

"I hate them," said the Liver.

"I know better," said the Heart.

"They'll lie, they'll cheat, their hearts are as small as their purses are big. Bah!"

"What would we do without them?"

"Be happier than we are," snarled the Liver.

"That's impossible. What do I need?" replied Heart.

"Common sense," said Liver.

"Well, I'm happy, you see, and if that comes without sense, what's the use? Now your sense, Varley, is bitter."

"The world makes it so."

"Bad temper, rather."

"Bah!" said Liver.

"It's true," said Heart.

"It's all wrong," said Liver, puffing with fierce rapidity.

"Nothing wrong but yourself," laughed Heart.

"It's rotten," repeated Liver.

"Admirable!" retorted Heart.

"Let me get out of it," said Liver vindictively.

"Stuff! You know you like it!"

"I hate it!"

Now the battle was at its height. Clouds of smoke enveloped the combatants; pipes were wielded with reckless vehemence; heads bobbed, shook, pitched, charged, retreated; volleys of epithet poured from each side, and each faction desperately strove to spike the guns of the other.

Mary clapped her hands, shook her curls, and laughed gaily.

"Oh, sir," said she to Warren, "it is always so. They have the best natured and finest battles in the world. Uncle Robert says he only quarrels for the principle of the thing."

"Then a word with you, Mary, while the contest lasts," said Warren, drawing her one side. "You know the Theltons?"

"Oh, yes. I often see Miss Emily. Why she visits us here, and even asks me up to Wood Hill."

"Then would you carry a message for me to Fanny Ashby?"

"The artist's sister?"

"Yes."

"This moment, Mr. James, if you ask it."

"I do ask it," said Warren.

At this moment a crash from the battle-field, and one of the pipes lay shattered on the floor. Mary ran forward laughing.

"There," exclaimed Heart, shouting with laughter, "you must give up, Varley. Victory is mine. Now get down on your knees and confess that it is an honest world we live in."

"What shall I do for a pipe?" growled the cynic, and began gathering up the pieces

## CHAPTER XX.

MRS. VANBERT said that Major Robert Thelton was the good genius that turned everything into gold. And Mr. Vanbert was so experienced in that sort of alchemy that Mrs. Vanbert ought to know. Mrs. Vanbert did know, and tapped her left forefinger so emphatically with her fan when she uttered the charming compliment, that everybody was convinced at once.

But Major Robert Thelton's mode of turning everything into gold was perfectly practical and respectable. Reduced to its simplest rules, it was to keep and to get, and a more masterly and successful application of those rules was not afforded in the whole State. The major's scent of a good investment was remarkable, and the knowledge he evinced in navigating amid financial storms was a matter of ecstatic admiration with every ambitious student of the science of money in the country. Indeed, it must be admitted, that some of the ingredients used by the major in his alchemic miracles were skill, judgment, and a keen knowledge of commercial causes and effects. Had the major contented himself with these rare acquirements, he might have waxed rich, and remained honest. But his ambition, his passion to acquire, were more powerful than his conscience; and he not only reached to accomplish, but stooped to conquer. His enormous wealth and great successes gave him power, and he used this power to crush—to swell his own means by the life, toil, means of others. He swept rivals from be-

fore his path with unrelenting cruelty, sparing no means, black or white, to work his merciless ends. In bargains, he was shrewd enough to secure the advantage, and knave enough to hold it; from the wretch that tripped, he exacted the pound of flesh; upon the gold that came in his way his fingers clutched and grasped with fierce tenacity, yielding it neither to the claims of justice, honor, honesty, and resisting to the last the demands of the law. He was a terror to small capitalists, and men who dealt with him fortified themselves with all precautions before venturing within his unscrupulous reach. He was the more dangerous because his claws were velvet to the touch. In that smiling valley many a poor wretch hid his broken heart, and mourned the day that he ventured into the major's sunshine. Those who had experienced the rock under the lustre shrunk from his radiance as if it were deadly.

Unscrupulous skill, great wealth, clear judgment, a brain that could conceive vast plans, and an ability that could master details as well as combinations, his speculations were bold, ingenious, successful, but always tainted with crime, cruelty, wrong or oppression. New schemes sprang from his brain with prolific abundance. He built railroads, furnaces, mills, factories; opened roads, established banks, insurance companies, and joint-stock companies of ingenious and suspicious purpose. He was a party leader, and no partisan scheme could hope to prosper without his aid. He presided at meetings, assemblies, dinners of all sorts—civic, political, financial, patriotic; he was zealous in his church, and energetic in a hundred schemes of charity. He was president of so many societies, and stockholder in so many joint-stock companies, that even a recollection of all his honors would prove irksome to many men. His title of

major belonged to him by popular consent as certainly as his lands and stocks; but let us hope that the title to his goods was a little more perfect. It was obtained in the militia, won in the ardor and zeal of youth; and as a gentleman of his county influence could not do without rank of some sort, the appellation had adhered with remarkable tenacity, without much desire on anybody's part to question its validity.

It is not singular that Major Robert Thelton, with his coarse avarice and powerful love of gain, should exhibit many refinements and the higher tastes. He liked ease, elegance, and the appointments of a gentleman's household. His judgment of books and pictures was excellent; his appreciation of high-bred manners was genuine; his acquisitions of all branches of knowledge were comprehensive and respectable. He was too active, emulative, clear-headed a gentleman not to understand the value of the nicer phases of intellect, and to perceive their importance and significance in the affairs of life. We are not to suppose that he felt or exhibited any enthusiastic passion for æsthetics. His tastes were simply the cold, exact, keen, delicate fastidiousness of a dilettante. His mercantile operations evinced this cold, fastidious character. He ruined many men, but he did it neatly. No blundering, coarse mangling; he smiled, he was polite, and he run you through.

Only once had the major failed where he seriously resolved to win. He had consented to accept his party's nomination for office, and was signally beaten. The major was astonished, and his friends in consternation. Everybody had his particular solution of the problem, and we have ours. It is indeed certain that either the electors were incorruptible, or that the major relied too confidently

upon his supposed popularity. Unscrupulous wealth could not readily have been defeated from other causes, and the major might have well rested upon an influence which in other things was so powerful. In what stock company, caucus, convention, was he not powerful? How innumerable his honorary offices! The major, unfortunately, did not see that in these things it was the value and influence of his wealth; little capitalists gladly succumbed to the big capitalist, when they hoped by that means to float on the tide of his success. But with the simple-minded people there were no such motives—no policy, and wheels within wheels—and the popular mind sometimes photographs character with a fidelity that is remarkable. Major Thelton, perhaps, seemed an admirable personage to Jones, with a son to advance, or to Brown, with a scheme to develop; but with the electors, who make and unmake politicians, there prevailed a sentiment or conviction of the man's true character which exhibited itself in this mortifying defeat. The major snuffed his political ambition, and in the year of the defeat was unusually fortunate in his commercial projects.

I have sketched the portrait of the father; let me with a few touches now complete the picture of the daughter. I have mentioned that Emily was travelled, read, and that she possessed that thorough-bred air which after all is the most admirable thing in the world. Do not call her cold because there is smooth repose, low sentences, delicate reticence. A woman can have a warm heart, just affections, fine sympathies, and yet chasten them into cool propriety by the rigid rules of good taste. Emily Thelton was never so impulsive as to lose her self-control; you may call this insensibility; I call it delicacy and the balance of right feeling. Emily

knew how to excite admiration—simple tones would do it; out of her eyes would sometimes flash a spark that would ignite the least combustible of chevaliers. Did this power spring from coldness and insensibility? Ah, mamselles, it is the charms half veiled, the graces subdued, the sensibility not worn upon the sleeve for daws to peck at, but hazed and tender by atmosphere and tone, that assert the subtlest authority over the heart of man. Emily had been abroad, had seen many things and many people; she possessed her father's clear brain and fastidious tastes; she loved art, poetry, the beautiful, and added to her love of these that which poets sometimes lack, a knowledge and love of life. She could appreciate society, men and women, and the commonplaces.

This combination ought to appear charming. Think of it. Put your imagination in companionship with such a woman; she will talk with you pleasantly about Shakespeare or Schiller, and recollects that you like your coffee hot. She understands your philosophy, or tries to do so; has an eye for the beauties of landscape, and another for the harmonies of her toilet; she can admire your pictures, and arrange a dinner to fascinate a Frenchman; she has abundant enthusiasm for great deeds, can talk politics, read sensible books, and at the same time look after your household comforts; in fact has two ranges of perception, one for that which is far off, the other for that which is near; can be poetical down to a shoe-tie, and abstract to any reasonable reach of philosophic speculation. Are you not pleased? Emily Thelton was a woman of this character, and if you are a man of taste, would delight you in ten minutes.

Yet why had Emily never married? She was not so old

as the gossips said—only twenty-four, as I am a true historian. I see that you still judge of her as a woman of the world. You will not believe that a woman of society can be ideal, can dream; you do not think that she, like so many others, is waiting for a hero. If not for a hero, at least for the man who can touch and awaken possibilities of feeling and passion, who can respond to some of the great needs of her heart, which hide themselves under that serene manner, and those polished accents.

Mrs. Vanbert, who liked people to be praised if she sounded the praise; who distributed smiles and frowns and applause as Lady Bountiful distributed alms for the sake of gratitude, you see, and all that, not to mention the spiritual despotism which gives ruthless sway over recipients; Mrs. Vanbert, I was saying, patted Emily on the shoulder and distinguished her, and said confidentially in the ear of Ashby, "Emily is so presentable that it is delightful to have her in town. Yes, Mr. Ashby. She has the best manner of any young lady I know."

The best manner of any young lady, dear Mrs. Vanbert; but who, of course, can rival Her Grace the Duchess? This little sentence, by the way, was dropped in Ashby's ear at Wood Hill. The Vanberts were among the guests. The major liked open house and lordly hospitality. Wood Hill had its crowd of gay visitors every season, but the present summer only the Vanberts and the artist and his sister had arrived.

"Where are the Hufnagals, my dear?" said the major to Emily.

"I have said nothing to them about coming this year, papa."

"Why?"



"Well, no reason, I think."

"And the Carlows?"

"In fact, papa, I have not renewed our invitation."

"Why, permit me to ask again?"

"Why, sir, I think that a small company is pleasanter, and quieter."

And Emily quickly changed the theme. Perhaps a very close observer would have detected a slightly perceptible tremor, the faintest tinge of a blush, as she spoke. A very little agitation by the collected Emily excites our surprise, and those of my readers who are keen on the scent of a love story may put this and this together. Did Emily prefer few visitors and one chosen friend? Or when Charles glided so easily from his absurd philosophy into more ridiculous admiration, was she angry? There was a decided flush upon her cheek then, but different passions are indicated by the same signs on the dial of the face.

Ashby probably did not think her angry, as he thinks of that scene and listens to Mrs. Vanbert's eulogy. The Misses Vanbert had certainly very good manners. How can a mother overlook the graces of her daughters to languish so much praise on another? Was Mrs. Vanbert just, above the prejudices of a mother? Ashby did not question, and replied;

"Miss Thelton, madam, is a superior woman."

"We all know that," said Mrs. Vanbert, and looked across the room to Emily, and tapped her forefinger with her fan. Charles also looked at Emily. Under one of the chandeliers in the further room stood the major conversing with a county judge and the Rev. Mr. Hoffelfinger. And Emily, then just recovered, listened to a youth very oddly made up, with shoulders thrown up to his neck, knees curv-

ing inward, enormous feet and hands, white hair, red and pimpled face, and gold spectacles.

"Emily," said Mrs. Vanbert, "is the copy of her noble father. Look at her, Mr. Ashby, and tell me if she does not resemble our esteemed host."

"I think she does," said Ashby, vacantly.

"What a charming girl your sister is!" said Mrs. Vanbert.

"I am glad you think so."

"A dear, delightful, fresh little girl. I say to my girls, 'why can't you be as happy and *as naïve* as Fanny?' But they can't. They are women before their time, Mr. Ashby."

Ashby bowed.

"I like to see little girls keep little girls. One would think me the mother of women, instead of girls not—not—not near old enough to be considered marriageable, Mr. Ashby."

If Ashby was obtuse before, he now began to see. Mrs. Vanbert was no managing woman—for her daughters. Her policy was not the common dowager policy. There was no scheming for establishments, or husbands, or handsome settlements. Was Her Grace so considerate and tender of the dear girls? Did she think night and day of their happiness, as she confidentially, and with a sigh, was wont to say to her nearest friends? We will not think ill of Her Grace, and so shut our ears to the malice which whispers that Mrs. Vanbert's real solicitude is about her own appearance of age. Has Her Grace, then, an ambition unfulfilled? Did Christopher Vanbert die too late after all? Alas! for that bitter in the cup, which time day by day must intensify! Every grey hair becomes a dagger that



stabs at her peace. Every new wrinkle a Gorgon's head that turns her to stone with horror. There are desperate remedies for desperate griefs. How Mrs. Vanbert blooms! The blossoms have come back; spring once more sits upon her cheek; raven in her locks! Mrs. Vanbert has discovered the secret of perpetual youth.—But her girls must be kept girls. No tell-tales there!

Long before Ashby's thoughts got as far as this, he has discovered a chance for a word with Emily, and is by her side.

"Mrs. Vanbert delights in praising you, Miss Thelton."

"Yes, sir; I believe the lady is fond of protégées."

"But the pleasure it affords me to listen."

"Yet, it is no compliment."

"Why?"

"Mrs. Vanbert only commends those whom she considers a safe distance beneath her. It is her peculiarity—and I have seen it in other great people—to recognize only inferiority. She can be merciless, sir, when she fears rivalry."

"Is there not a little spite in that remark?"

"Do you think I have any cause to fear her rivalry?"

"No, no, no!" whispered Ashby with emphasis. "Ah, Miss Thelton, if I could speak—tell"—

"The Rev. Mr. Hoffelfinger, Mr. Ashby."

The two gentlemen bowed. The reverend suggested a clerical grenadier. He was very tall and straight; his hair was parted on each side and brushed upward in a high crest or comb along the centre of the head. The side locks were brushed straight forward and cut off in a square line directly at the point of the eyes. He wore side whiskers which were also brushed forward and projected beyond the

cheek bone. A small patch of forehead, a large nose, were nearly all of his face visible.

"Fine weather for the crops," said the Reverend.

"The early autumn tints are indeed beautiful," said the artist.

"A plentiful harvest, Mr. Ashby, for which we ought to be thankful."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Ashby politely.

"The most beautiful agricultural region in America," reiterated the clergyman, who, singularly enough, by profession was divine, by looks warlike, by tastes Arcadian.

"Where is Fanny, Ashby?" says the voice of the major. Charles looked hastily around in surprise. Fanny is not to be seen. The major draws the artist aside, and whispers a few earnest words. Ashby starts, flushes, and looks both angry and surprised. The major smiles and is polite and cool, but the remarks which he continues add new excitement to Ashby's manner. Emily observes this; so does the watchful Vanbert. Presently the artist, in extraordinary impetuosity, starts from the room, and the major serenely follows.

## CHAPTER XXI.

A LONG a gravel walk at the remotest boundary of the garden, Warren walked and watched for Fanny. The delay was brief. She soon came tripping down the moon-lighted path, with her lover's message in her bosom.

"Now why, Warren, at such a time?" said Fanny, as Warren ran up and caught her hands.

"There is a moon; this is the lovers' hour," said Warren; but his sentiment was brisk and gay.

"And such a place!" said Fanny. "For me I do not like the moon. It is too melancholy."

"But, Fanny, I cannot see you at Thelton's; and to-morrow I run back to town."

"Back?"

"Have we not kissed and made up? Ah, Fanny, I could not lose you; the thought, the fear made me mad; so I flew to you eager to make amends. And now my lost treasure is found, let me say farewell, and then back to town again, gay and happy."

"Why so soon?"

"You are at the house of an enemy; I cannot meet you; and as I broke away from pressing duties in the city, give me new assurances that I am forgiven, and let us postpone our happy meetings until we are back to the attic parlor."

"Why is Major Thelton your enemy, Warren? Who is he? Why do you quarrel?"

"So much is he my enemy that I almost tremble to find

him your friend. My father suffered at his hands a great commercial injury; he was robbed not only of his fortune but his honorable name."

"There is so much mystery!" said Fanny.

"I really cannot see it. Only the mystery of love. I am not thinking of hatreds now. I forget Thelton and all the world; there is too much rapture and delight in my heart to care for anything but the happiness of the moment."

Fanny leaned against a tree and beat her foot upon the ground.

"Warren," said she with an earnestness prompted by a feeling of unrest and apprehension, "Warren, there is too much mystery, far too much. It fills me with dread which I cannot shake off. Do you not appear under an assumed name?"

"Yes. That is because my father's name was dishonored. It will be made white some day—the guilty exposed, the innocent acquitted. Then I will appear what I am."

"But your real name is so dreadfully interwoven in our history!"

"Our history? What do you mean, Fanny?"

"Alas! how can I tell you! You must have seen my agitation when you revealed your name."

"I did."

"And when next we met we"—

"That is to say I, Warren, got absurdly jealous."

"And ever since I have carried an unhappy secret," said Fanny, "and now how can I tell you?"

"This is odd. Go on, Fanny. But let me hope that your secret is no bar to our affection."

"If my brother—there! there!" she cried, with extreme agitation, "Charles comes! he knows all. The major has

revealed. Warren, Warren, go! escape! Do not meet my brother! Never see me again! He will never forgive."

"Never forgive? What? And why should I escape?"

"Escape!" exclaimed Charles Ashby, stalking rapidly along the gravel walk up to the lovers, very white and angry. "Escape! I am glad I am three seconds too soon."

"Charley!"

"Fanny," said Charles, "I have made a discovery. You know what it is."

"Yes, Charles; but I did not dare tell you."

"You were right. I do not forgive or forget. I would not take by the hand a son of Roderick Hoffman."

"Charles, as you were my friend, will you explain this?"

"Sir, I called you my friend because I did not know you. You came to me under a false name, aware that I would have permitted no Hoffman, son or father, to cross my threshold. You deceived me, for what purpose I cannot think, and we came near being your victims a second time."

"A second time? These suspicions—these accusing words! I am patient under them because I believe they cover things which can be explained."

"Patience is the virtue of a schemer," said Charles, with an angry stamp of the heel.

"Will *you* explain?" said Warren, turning to Fanny, who had clasped her brother's hand.

"I will try, Warren. Shall I speak, Charles?"

"Yes. Then the gentleman cannot complain of harsh words."

"Your father, Warren," said Fanny, speaking tenderly and low, "was our guardian."

"My father!" Warren listened intensely.

"Charles thinks that he did a great wrong to us—to my mother and her children. He thinks so, Warren—but oh, I hope not! I pray not!"

Warren for a moment did not speak. A flood of doubt, surprise, fear, apprehensions, deprived him of words.

"I am bewildered at this," said he at last. "I never knew he stood in such relationship to any one, but that perhaps is not singular, as I lived apart from him so much."

"It's incredible!" exclaimed Ashby, who on this matter was always excitable. Good tempered and slow to anger usually, any reference to this subject was sure to exasperate him. The theme stung him, put him beside himself; it blinded his justice, destroyed his self-control, rendered him harsh and bitter. "It is incredible," said he, "that you can be ignorant. It was too important; it involved considerations too large—in short, the game your father played was too brilliant for his own son to be unacquainted with the stakes."

Warren's cheek grew hot; he caught his breath and desperately restrained his rising passion. His blood was honest, and ill calculated to keep cool under imputations like these. His father's memory was sweetly cherished; the sufferings he had experienced excited chivalrous sentiments; he loved, honored, and was fiercely ready to defend his name.

"Oh, why, Charles," said Fanny, "do you not let me speak? You are angry—you say such offensive things!"

"You accuse my father of treachery and me of falsehood," said Warren slowly, and with a slight swinging

motion to his body, as if this action served to check a certain hot gathering in his breast. "Let me ask you why I have not been entertained before with these accusations and suspicions?"

"We did not know you," said Charles; "in our ignorance we made you our friend. That friendship I puff into the air; I discard it; I cast it from me forever. And as for Fanny, if she unhappily has felt"—

"Brother! Charles!" cried Fanny, and Ashby paused.

"I am still bewildered," said Warren. "This unaccountable and sudden hatred of me"—

"Neither unaccountable nor sudden. Your name has been the most hateful to me of any on earth."

Charles paced the walk, his brow black, eye and cheek on fire.

"I am cool, Mr. Ashby," said Warren; "I hope you will observe it. It is a good deal that I am called upon to bear. For Fanny's sake I do bear it. And yet, if without epithets you would possess me of the particulars of this story I should thank you—and perhaps be enabled to render explanations that will clear my father's name."

"The facts cannot be smoothed away."

"What were they?" said Warren, clenching his hands hard with his effort at restraint.

"Your father was our guardian, the executor of my father's will, my mother's adviser and banker; and, by Heaven! he thrust our money into his own pockets, and us into the streets—into beggary—into want—into suffering, ignominy, disgrace! I curse him—now and always!"

"There is some terrible mistake," said Warren, with sudden paleness.

"No mistake! It is too true."

"I say a mistake," replied the youth, defiantly, and with suppressed rage. "There are a hundred ways how. Or if true, it was some misfortune, and no crime. My father died abroad in poverty—is not that evidence of innocence?"

"A tale easily invented to conceal his duplicity. He fled with money, there can be no doubt. All rumors to the contrary I reject as improbable."

"By Heaven! you defame his character! He failed; his losses were overwhelming; he was the victim of a villain. He may have been unwise, and through some imprudence sacrificed your interests. More than this I do not believe, and no man knows better than your friend, Major Thelton, that he was innocent."

"Pshaw! Major Thelton, his creditor, confirms his treachery. Unless you make your opinions facts, I shall not change my views." Charles spoke doggedly, and Fanny caught his arm.

"Oh, Charles! you loved Warren once. Do not wound him so!"

"I tell you," said Charles, "that I will not trust a son of Roderick Hoffman."

"Let me say," replied Warren, fast losing all restraint, "that I know my father's heart. He could have intended no man wrong. He is a scoundrel that says so."

Ashby, who had been pacing the ground with rapid, passionate steps, wheeled and ran up close to the face of Warren, and hotly thundered in his ear—

"Your father was a villain!"

The barrier broke; the impetuous passions leaped like a flood. There was a ringing in his ear, a hot mist before his eyes, and then, in one vehement outburst, too violent for words, he struck—suddenly, fiercely. The blow was

powerful. Ashby sprang upward, and fell like a stone, without motion or breath. Fanny shrieked, and flung herself upon her brother.

"He is murdered!" she cried, and broke into convulsions of grief and terror. Warren's rage was spent with the blow. He sprang forward to assist the fallen man, brow, cheek and ears tingling with remorse and shame.

"Go! go!" exclaimed Fanny, vehemently. "You have struck him—now go!"

"Fanny," said Warren, "hear me!"

"Do not speak to me—never again!—never! You have killed him! Do not come near me. I cast you off!" and wringing her hands, she flung her head upon her brother's breast.

"Fanny," cried Warren, wildly, "in the name of mercy hear me!"

"Go! go!" she replied. Then Warren, in a whirl of passion, sprang by the prostrate body, and rushed blindly from the scene. And Fanny, in sullen apathy, lifted Charles's head from the ground, just as sense began to return.

But Fanny's shriek reached the drawing-room. Out upon the piazza the major, the Vanbert, Emily, the Rev. Hoffelfinger, the county judge, all ran precipitately, each eager with questions and surmises.

"Where is Ashby?" whispered Mrs. Vanbert to Emily, and wound an arm affectionately around her waist. Emily gave a slight start, and looked quickly into the rooms.

"Hush, my dear," said the considerate and watchful Vanbert, "let no one suspect anything."

"My dear," laughed Emily, looking coolly into the eyes of the lady, "What do you mean?"

"Don't expose yourself by any agitation, dear—that's all," said Mrs. Vanbert, who, though at first shaken by Emily's coolness, was too good a strategist to be thrown off the scent so readily.

"Papa," said Emily, lightly, "something, I fear, has happened to the artist. Hadn't you better see? Ladies, we may as well return, and leave the matter to the gentlemen."

And Emily so carelessly, lightly, led the way back to the drawing-rooms, that Mrs. Vanbert was indeed deceived.

"Then she doesn't think of him," she muttered, and the thoughtful woman, whose daily life was to spin out destinies for other people, was irritated and perplexed.

Major Thelton, followed by several of his guests, hastened through the garden, guided by the direction whence the shriek had come, and reached Fanny and her brother just as Charles had recovered his feet.

"An attack!" exclaimed the Reverend; "bless me! are there robbers?"

"Gentlemen," said Ashby, faintly, "I regret this disturbance. My sister had a fright. Will you pardon her nervousness?"

"It demands our commiseration, not our pardon," said the major, and he bent tenderly over her. The tenderness irradiated into a smile, and with a manner the most princely, he exclaimed, "I beg Miss Ashby to allow my arm to guide her to the house. It is a host's privilege to console her alarm, which I cannot yield."

Fanny mechanically took the proffered arm, and the major quickly led her in advance of the party. Oppressed by the numerous comments and surmises, she was grateful for

this ; and the instant they placed foot upon the piazza, she withdrew her arm, and incoherently wording an apology, glided rapidly into the house, and up to her chamber, unseen by any one.

"I was right," said the major to Ashby, apart, as he plied his nose with his Maccaboy.

"Yes," said Charles ; "but my regret is that my knowledge came so late."

"He is a vagabond," said the major, with rapidly successive supplies of snuff.

"I do not understand you."

"My dear Charles, he is without family, friends, almost without a profession. Men like him sink so rapidly!"

"Well?"

"If degraded in Fanny's eyes, your problem would be solved."

"That is true."

"Then, my dear sir, we must manage it."

"Fanny will always respect him, I fear," said Charles, musingly, and ignorant of Thelton's real purpose, so vaguely indicated ; "yet the circumstances of to-night she cannot easily forget."

Thelton looked at the artist curiously, but Charles was silent, and offered no further explanation ; and the major tapped his box, and repeated to himself—

"We must manage it."

## CHAPTER XXII.

WARREN fled through the garden walks and into the public road, with Fanny's sentence of banishment ringing after him, as if the air had caught up her words. All the passions clamored, beat, raved ; drove their hot spurs into his brain ; battled with tumultuous fury in his heart. He rushed along the highway frantic and heedless, wild with terror at the consequence of his insane violence, and frenzied with dismay at his loss. A rioting mad desire seized him to escape—what, it was not clear, but distance appeared to offer the only relief to his mind, shattered with its sudden grief.

He broke from the road and rushed up the hill-sides, reckless of his way, leaping up the precipitous and rocky steeps, and wandering along the broken, irregular heights, amid their growth of stunted cedars. Here, tramping to and fro, up and down, in shadow and moonlight, his passions sometimes broke into words, sometimes burst into extravagance of physical action.

He would pause abruptly, occasionally, and leaning against a rock or tree, shake with violent grief, pulling his hat over his brow to cover up the tears, and pressing his hands upon his ears as if to shut out sounds that pursued him. But upon these intervals of grief would come hot blasts of rage and despair, which vehemence of movement alone could relieve.

The swift change of an hour seemed to the youth an in-

credible and extravagant dream. The air, the hills, all objects were in no wise changed; the stars shone, the moon glistened coldly and serenely as before—he could not believe that life, hope and peace could be torn up and scattered forever, and the ruin find no reflection, no echo in nature.

The intensity of his suffering can only be appreciated when all his early, unhappy story is recollected, now so strangely interwoven in the pattern of the present. Suspicion had driven his father abroad; accusation had slain him. Warren, conscious of this, was loyal to the memory of his father, and trusted in his secret assurances of innocence. A new name, a new career, new surroundings had served to sever his history from the stained and stigmatized past. Yet his first step led him upon that past; revived it in a shape to destroy him; evoked it in a form deadly to his peace and hopes. His father's reputation was lost in an inextricable web of suspicion, unfavorable circumstances, and misfortunes that looked like crimes. Explanation was beyond possibility; there was little hope that the mystery of those misfortunes could be cleared. He must suffer like his father, a victim to chance, misfortune, and the schemes of a villain. What could he do? Now not only was there the barrier of his father's supposed crime, but a greater barrier thrown up by his own hand—that terrible, cruel, furious blow. Patience and time might otherwise have wrought conciliations; it was now too late; he had struck down hope when he struck down Charles. His blood had leaped hot and furious to hear his father traduced. Every word was a stab. That father had suffered so much from unjust contumely, it made him mad to listen; he felt that he must have struck had a hundred loves been the sacrifice.

"But it is all sport," he exclaimed, a "mockery—a lie—a cheat, an invention to drive me mad. Charles was my friend. Fanny I loved so well—her face was always over my shoulder. To lose both—lose all—lose Fanny!"

Passion begets passion; grief feeds on grief; rage is its own stimulant. In the heat and frenzy of Warren's emotions he saw all things magnified. Fanny was lost! This fact appeared great as creation, absorbing now and hereafter! The world seemed to sink beneath it, and all things become no less a chaos than the passions and griefs in his own heart. He was hurled from the clouds, and impelled upon a sharp, granite, piercing, deadly fact. Love to youth is the world. To lose that is to lose all. Nothing remained to Warren beyond Fanny; ambition had no smile; life no charm; the illusions, the delights, the beauties, the peace, the gaily tinted future, vanished into mist and a dead waste.

The tumult within him urged action, forced nerve, brain and blood. Sometimes he tore amid the rocks and through the scant trees like a sprite; now and then his madly strung feelings would abandon themselves to shrill and startling laughter. So he roamed in the uncertain light and with irregular step, hither and thither, with imprecations on his lips, with vehement outbursts of love and remorse; and so shifting, uncollected, mad, he at last sank down upon a rock, and in a dull torpor, rested his head upon a stone, and apathetically lay crushed and dumb. The moon travelled over him, the stars watched, the tree-tops waved, the hill-sides rested in their intense and deathly shadows, and midnight settled over all, hushed, calm, through whose silence only waters plashed, and restless forest boughs breathed low and sadly.

Then Warren rose stiffly, stunned and dull with fires burnt out, and shiveringly gathering his coat close around his chest, started in a vacant, staggering way to walk. He tottered on a few steps, his feet slipped, he slid unresistingly over a smooth rock, and down a height of a dozen feet. He fell heavily upon a sharp, flinty substance at the bottom; there was an instant of intense pain, and then silence.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

MAJOR THELTON, Emily, and the Vanbert, sat in the cool breakfast parlor, with bread and coffee before them. The rest of the guests had not appeared.

The major is cool placid, and agreeable. He moistens his bread with coffee, and talks æsthetically of art. It is not a common theme with the stock-scheming major.—When I think of this gentleman's skill and ability in all things, I am dissatisfied with that title of major. Nothing less than General fairly indicates the real rank his admirable parts entitle him to assume. It is not easy to think of him as subordinate to anything—not even his conscience.

The major talks about art, and glides to Ashby so smoothly that no one less acute than my reader could suspect this subject to have been the end proposed at the beginning.

"Has Ashby genius?" he inquires.

"Transcendent," cries Mrs. Vanbert, who was in a fever to exhibit her sensibilities upon all occasions.

"His pictures prove it, I think," said Emily, who was adroit enough to know that an indifferent interest was the most subtle guard she could assume. The major, bent to discover more, thrust again.

"Is he a rising man? Do they acknowledge him in town?"

"Why, my dear major," exclaimed Mrs. Vanbert, "you met him at my reception, I believe?" and the relict



of Christopher Vanbert looked startled and almost offended.

"I have not forgotten it," said the major, and bowed to the lady.

"And you know, papa, that Mrs. Vanbert gets only distinguished people," said Emily.

"Rather say, my dear, that Mrs. Vanbert's parlor is the Parthenon. Whoever gains admission becomes immortalized."

"Major!" cried the lady, and smiled with conciliation and pardon.

"There are some circumstances about his early life which are peculiar, I believe," resumed the gentleman.

"Some romance," said Mrs. Vanbert.

"He and his sister are alone," said Emily, whose coolness under the searching glances of the major and his coadjutor was sustained with difficulty. She fortified it with many little arts, and kept her eyes on a line of vision that prevented either from looking into them.

"A little romance, Emily, only renders him the more interesting," said the major. "A handsome genius"——

"With a mystery," interrupted Mrs. Vanbeck.

"—— Is rare enough to prove agreeable to" ——

"A fastidious Thelton," again interrupted the widow, who warmed into headstrong zeal as the game approached cover. But Emily was as calm and profound as before. She tapped her spoon upon her cup, gathered all her thoughts closely about her, and smilingly awaited the advance.

"But artists are such shiftless fellows!" said Mrs. Vanbert, and sighed.

"To mercantile men absorbed in the bustle, the struggles,

the victories of trade," said the major, quickly following the amiable widow's new lead, "they appear painted chips upon the sea. Pretty but useless."

"That is," said Emily with a cool smile, "buying and selling is the proper vocation."

"She defends him," muttered Mrs. Vanbert, with repressed delight; "we shall penetrate her secret yet."

"The industrial vocations," replied the major philosophically, "which develop resources, administer to needs, increase the wealth of the people, are the true and honorable avenues."

"I understand you, sir," said Emily. "The utilitarian is the only legitimate thing. How we all respect our friend Mr. Earle, the little cobbler!"

Emily's sharp little answer went home. The major felt the prick, and resumed the attack a little more hurried and decided than before.

"Men who live upon their wit are proverbially vagabonds, my dear. They are fascinating companions sometimes—that must be admitted, Mrs. Vanbert—but they are usually so reckless, wandering, unprincipled, loose in morals, that we may allow them to entertain us, and at the same time be cautious of anything more."

"Anything more!" laughed Emily; "do you expect they will eat us? or are they pirates to run away with us?"

"Pirates! my dear!" said Mrs. Vanbert solemnly, "That is the word. They are delightful creatures at receptions; they make your evenings so distinguished; they are lions, my dear, that everybody runs to see and will talk about. But, Emily, let me ask you seriously—had Christopher been a man of genius, would he have performed his duty to his family so nobly?"

"No madam," replied Emily, "he might be alive this moment."

"We admit," said the widow, unconscious of Emily's sarcasm, "that Mr. Ashby is a most agreeable and accomplished man of the world."

"My dear," said Emily, "there is nothing to admit or deny in reference to Mr. Ashby. That gentleman is my father's guest. It is not he that we have been discussing, but the town wits."

"No one admires Mr. Ashby more than myself," said the major; "but his profession is precarious; his associates idlers, free-thinkers, vagabonds, literary incendiaries"—

"Are not we Mr. Ashby's companions?" said Emily, and rising, walked to the window.

"There is no doubt of it," whispered the Vanbert to the major. "She thinks of him favorably."

"Your penetration, Mrs. Vanbert, is remarkable," said the inscrutable major, and hunted for his snuff-box.

There were heard steps without, and a servant ushering in little white-faced Mary Hall.

"Why, Mary, my dear," said Emily, "you look alarmed."

"Oh, Miss Thelton! a young gentleman has been found in the woods very much hurt."

This was a surprise against which Emily was not fortified. Ignorant of Warren and the scene of last night, her thoughts flew to Ashby, and her whole frame quivered with sudden alarm. Both of the Inquisitors saw it. The major smiled; the Vanbert ran forward with a concern that was as near genuine as the lady could render it.

"Who is it?" said Emily. "Is it Mr. Ashby?"

"Oh, no," said Mary quickly, "but Mr. James, who came last night to see Mr. Ashby and his sister."

Emily glanced at the Vanbert; the Vanbert, in surprise, looked earnestly at Emily. Neither knew of Mr. James, or of any visitor to the artist or Fanny. The major, suddenly interested, stepped near the girl, and had rapid recourse to the snuff-box.

"Do you know this Mr. James?" said he.

"No, sir. He came yesterday, and asked to lodge with us."

"And came here last night to see Fanny Ashby?"

"And her brother," said the girl, lightly. "He told me he was their friend."

"Is he much injured?"

"I am afraid he is. He can scarcely stand. Uncle Robert ran for the doctor at once, and I came here to inform his friends."

Unknown to either of the speakers, a figure had glided into the room, and stood listening.

"When was he found?" inquired Thelton.

"This morning. He must have lain on the rocks all night. He did not come home, and as soon as daylight uncle went in search of him."

"Does your uncle suppose it to have been an accident or intentional?"

"Oh, an accident, of course, sir. Nobody would have injured him; and uncle says that suicide is ridiculous. He would have jumped off a higher rock. Besides, Mr. James"—

A cry, and Fanny came staggering, white and terrified, into their midst.

"Oh, what is it?" she exclaimed. "Is he hurt? Is he killed? What is it?"

Mary's delicate cheek grew a shade whiter, and her eyes

widened with an expression of peculiar interest. For an instant she did not speak, and the impatient Fanny burst into louder exclamations. Emily hastily caught her by the hand, and whispered, almost sharply, a word of womanly restraint.

"Be calm. There is nothing serious."

But Fanny, at the best no heroine, was wrought up by a night of suffering. A frank, hearty, whole-souled, impulsive creature, she knew little of those restraints which society imposes, and this intelligence, following an event which had haunted her fancy all the weary hours since, in her weakness, love and distraction she became heedless of everything but Mary's alarming news, and sank down in a chair weeping. Mary assured her that Mr. James was not dangerously injured, and Emily strove to arouse her pride and that womanly heroism which will bear in matters of love hot coals upon its head rather than flinch or confess. The Vanbert stepped up to the ear of the Thelton, and uttered a single word which caused the major's shoulders slightly to shrug. Poor Fanny, indeed, was in a sad plight. Her grief was telling too much, not only her love, but the broken lute, and little conceiving that her secret was dropping into the eager clutch of those who would use it without mercy, tenderness, or pity.

Emily signalled to Mary to say nothing more, and presently winding her arm around Fanny's waist, led her unresistingly from the room. Mary followed.

"Never mind, Mary," said Emily, "about the rest. Let us know, if you please, as soon as you can, how much Mr. James is injured."

"Yes," said Mary, and walked pensively away.

Emily led Fanny into an unoccupied room.

"I don't want to know, Fanny, who Mr. James is, or why your grief is so violent; but let me urge you to be calm. There is no cause for alarm."

"However little he may be injured," said Fanny, "it almost breaks my heart. You don't know all. I scarcely know it myself. But last night he and Charles quarrelled, there was a blow, and I—I—Warren must have been driven nearly mad by all that was said and done."

"Well," said Emily cheerfully, "you and I must manage to make Mr. James and your brother friends again."

Mary, meanwhile, with her light foot sped rapidly along the road back to the cottage. In the slight confusion in her thoughts, the pensive nature of a fixed smile that rested upon her lips, the occasionally heavy sigh that gently heaved her bosom, the restless, abstracted way she fingered her bonnet strings, there was more than we who watch her in our invisible caps, can understand. More, I think, than she can understand herself. There is disturbance in her thoughts, and she sighs, and sighs because she sighs, and wonders why she must press her hand against her bosom as if it were a little heavy. I am told that there are things in the nature of the simplest peasant-girl which the wisest man cannot understand. This saying restrains me; for if true, how can my clumsy scalpel dissect those delicate, evanescent, misty shadows of thought that now flit through Mary's mind? The most delicate ethereal film, just casting a shadow so transparent my blunt sense scarcely detects it! Yet the heart feels the change from the bright, ripe sunshine, and slightly shivers. And Mary wonders why, and so may we. And Mary trips along and breaks into song, but the song has no lightness or mirth, and quickly dies away; Mary wonders why—so may we. She thinks of

the little scene in the breakfast parlor, and of Fanny, and sighs. She wonders at the sigh, and the strange little weight that rests upon her bosom; and so may we.

How briskly she ran when she came near the cottage. For there was the doctor and Uncle Robert, and her heart beat quickly for the news.

"All right, Mary," shouted the hearty Uncle Robert; "not a bone broken—only bruised. He will be well in a jiffy."

And Mary, with a gay laugh of pleased response, ran into the house.

"Mr. James," exclaimed she, "I am so glad. You are not badly hurt; you know what the doctor says?"

"Yes," said Warren, faintly.

"And I," said Mary, "was so frightened when I saw you bruised and senseless, I ran up to the Theltons' to let your friends"—

"What?" shouted Warren, with an angry flush. Mary looked at him in sudden fear and silence.

"You have been to the Ashbys'? I would rather" exclaimed he fiercely, "have lost half my limbs than have them know a word of this."

Mary was so startled at this unlooked for anger, that her eyes filled with tears.

"I did not dream of offending you, Mr. James. You appeared so badly injured, what could I do but tell your friends?"

"Never mind," said Warren, more gently, but still moodily. "You meant it for the best, I suppose. But I regret it; the only thing for me to do is to get away as soon as possible."

Mary was still hurt, and slipped away. The pain of his words lingered strangely; she could not shake it off; she crept into a corner and sat musing, with her brow upon her hands. The weight upon her heart grew heavier and sadder—and she wondered why.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

IT was the evening of a September day. The air was cool, and a small pile of wood blazed on Uncle Robert's hearth. Warren was there, and the two philosophers, he of the Liver and he of the Heart; and a little way apart sat Mary, her stitching in her lap, and her eyes cheerfully watching the sparkle upon the hearth.

The two philosophers puffed into the air their meditative smoke, and murmurs of talk ran slowly around the group.

"I'm thinking," said he of the heart, very slowly and in a profound and ruminating way, that makes Mary shake her curls with a half merry, half pensive shake, and look lightly, watchfully into his face. "I'm thinking," said he, and still the thought hung undelivered.

"What are you thinking, uncle?" said Mary, and with the question her eyes sought out the sparkle again, and her thoughts wandered off through such a sudden, wide sweep of things that she sighed—and smiled, and wondered why.

"I'm thinking," resumed Heart, ejecting an enormous volume of smoke, as if the fearful, slow, giant thought that labored around the foundation of his brain for utterance, was really volcanic, and came with fire to destroy. "I'm thinking," and the thought followed the belching smoke, "that we here are just as happy and contented as if we were Grand Moguls! Eh?"

The sentiment came in so slow, deliberate, and fortified a manner, that at first nobody had the hardihood to dispute

it. Mary laughed a low, flashing laugh, and Warren smiled. But Varley, he of the antagonistic pipe, whose philosophic smoke mingled in the atmosphere, spoke and repelled the sentiment.

"Hum!" said Varley, "what have we but—pipes?"

"Pipes," cried Uncle Robert, and he surveyed the burned and stained clay tenderly. "Pipes! Let mine be buried with me."

"Yes," said he of the Liver, "that's all life affords. Grand hopes—and smoke."

"My boy," said Heart, "pipes are solace. They make me think softly and gently. And what would you be, without tobacco? A scorpion, stinging yourself to death with the venom in your own tail."

And Uncle Robert laughed so heartily that Varley lifted up his head and growled—as a dog sleeping on the rug will sometimes do, when dreams or sudden noises disturb him.

"My pipe, and Mary," said Uncle Robert, shaking his head with a smile and a glitter in his eyes; "my little one who is brighter than the sun, and sweeter than tobacco." Mary laughed gaily, and bent her head forward to look into her uncle's face. "Yes," said he, staring at the blaze, "it's Mary and the pipe that make me happy."

"You have no right," snarled Varley.

"Now hear him," said Heart. "Why?"

"Think of the old trouble. Happy, and that to recollect?"

"Yes," said Heart, with a defiant cheerfulness, "I do, Varley. And I ask Mary if it makes me uncomfortable?"

"No," said Mary, so softly that the sound scarcely reached Warren's ears.

"It must," said Varley, resolute in the belief that his friend must be miserable.

"You have lived with us ten years, Varley," replied Uncle Robert. "Now, you know that I say, 'let bygones be bygones.' Since we struck the partnership to work the farm together, you hain't heard me complain. Have you?"

"You ought," said Varley, whose eyes did not wander from the bowl of his pipe. "It was infernal. I complain for you, and for the girl."

"Not for me I hope, Mr. Varley," said Mary in the same low tone.

"It's about Mary we are talking," said Uncle Robert, turning to Warren.

"It is not strange that you are proud of her," replied Warren, who, while perceiving there was some antecedent wrong or suffering in Mary's history, still chose to attribute their language to another cause.

"We are proud of her," said Heart, who, in spite of an antagonistic and fortified cheerfulness, slipped occasionally into a little sadness as he stared at the fire; just as readers sometimes fall suddenly away from their author into slumber—but start, and shake, and come quickly back to their text again.

"It isn't it," said Liver, snappishly.

"She's an orphan," said Heart, plunging into a sigh and hastily floundering out again.

"That's it," exclaimed Liver, who appeared to relish the gloom which this fact mysteriously evolved.

"It was unfortunate," said Uncle Robert, and drew nearer the side of Mary.

"Uncle," whispered the girl, "Mr. James cannot care to

hear the story. Why revive it? We have forgotten it for ten years."

"I haven't forgot it," said the uncle, "but I don't often let it make me sad. What's the use? And did I want to bring you up in sunshine or under a cloud? I said sunshine, and tried to make you merry and happy in my own way."

"You have," said Mary.

"Wasn't it best?"

"But you couldn't help it, uncle. Your heart is so cheerful no cloud could keep it in shadow."

Uncle Robert took her little white hand, and laying it on his knee, patted it with his broad, seamed, sun-burnt hand. And Varley, puffing vehemently, glanced out of his cloud of smoke, and shot glances of contempt at the weakness which would refrain from shaking up old griefs, and fattening its humors upon dead, lifeless vapors.

The two smokers puffed for a long while in silence until their pipes were out; then each rose to retire. They were of simple habits, whose days began with the dawn, and ended in a pipe after nightfall. Varley shook himself, and crept out of the room silent and heedless. Heart kissed the white cheek of his niece, said a merry good night to Warren, and with a last jest at the doorway, went rolling ponderously through the rooms.

Warren drew his chair upon the hearth, and fell brooding over the coals. His bruised limbs and a sprained ankle detained him at the cottage an unwilling captive. Idleness and its consequent introspection were the things his temper and condition could least patiently bear. Believing that all was lost, he panted for the excitements of the city, in the power and fascination of which he hoped

to expel and forget those sorrows that now plucked at his heart. He tried to shut out Fanny and his lost love, to forget old hopes, to laugh at old dreams, to make merry even with the lover's fantasies and foolish fondness. It was usually mad mirth. Mary would start and pause when he laughed, with her head poised, and upon her features an expression of pain and wonder. There was so little employment about the cottage he was continually driven in upon himself. There were few books. The two philosophers amused him at first, but at last into the midst of their halting sentences his griefs would suddenly flash, and their talk would sound like waves upon a far-off beach. There appeared but one escape—to talk himself. In Mary he found a quick and pleasant listener. When the mood was on, he would talk, with great freedom and range of theme, by the hour, and Mary would sit with her head half averted, silently absorbing every accent, sometimes wonder in her eyes, sometimes smiles upon her lips.

Sitting brooding over the coals, after the smokers had left, he heard Mary in the room, and called her to come near. She drew a low seat to the corner of the hearth, and seated herself, with her hand leaning against the chimney-jamb.

"Is your history a mystery, Mary?" said Warren.

"No, sir."

"No? It would seem so from the allusions to-night."

"It is a sad story, but not much mystery. Yet I do not know all, I was so young. My mother came with me to Uncle Robert when I was about six years of age. She fled from her husband, who, they tell me, was a tyrant. He oppressed her, hated her—so I am told, Mr. James.

My poor mother took it to heart, and died of grief; and Uncle Robert, who was her brother"—

"Then your name is not Hall?"

"No, sir. I take Uncle Robert's name because he is the same as a father. My real name is Beach."

"You recollect your mother?"

"Oh yes."

"And your father is dead?"

"Yes."

"But a happy orphanage, Mary."

"I am grateful," said the girl.

"Contented, peaceful and merry; never looking higher than the eaves of the cottage; never with a wish that Uncle Robert's purse cannot supply; no sorrows in your compact, sound little heart—why, Mary, I think you are the very symbol of peace."

"A little girl's thoughts sometimes fly higher than cottage-eaves," said she. "I am contented—or was."

"Was?"

Mary jumped lightly to her feet, laughed her low, sparkling laugh, and said:

"Never mind what I say, Mr. James. You know I look happy; and Uncle Robert is enough to make any heart glad; and I'm young, and—good night, Mr. James!"

And she ran from the room; but not ten steps from the door she paused, and wondered at the strange, pale melancholy that came down upon her heart.

When Warren talked to his gentle, white-faced auditor, there was a heart and an imagination that listened as well as ears. Mary's life had been shut out from the world; she was as ignorant of its wealth, its meaning, its colors, its splendors, as the lily she resembled. With the excep-



tion of Emily Thelton, the people she had met had all been commonplace. She had never known what fancy and delicate culture was; she had met neither wit, imagination, humor, learning, until Warren James came under the low roof. His manners, his gay, refined vivacity, his fancy, his genius, "smelt holiday." He was a revelation to her simple, innocent heart. His words, his thoughts, fell upon her fresh imagination in golden showers; they colored it, filled it, touched it with life—awakened it to splendors it had not conceived before.

There is quick magnetism of love in these gentle, delicate beings. They are Psyches. Perhaps they do not experience the vehement passions that leap in the hot bosoms of their darker, fiercer sisters, but their nature is an essence of tenderness and love; it is an upward-looking, a going out of self to others, a desire to cling and depend, a plastic tendril temper that seeks to fasten upon and knit itself into the heart of the thing it loves; and these qualities being the physiological opposites of masculine force, they leap to its magnetism swiftly.

And so Mary Hall looked up at Warren and wondered; looked up and admired; looked up like white pebbles on the shore to the moon, and was glad of the rays and warmed in the light.

Emily was fond of Mary, and took long walks with her in the woods. Mary's girlish grace and simple ignorance charmed the polished lady. Her sweetness of temper, through which flashed a light silvery sparkle; her docility, tenderness, and purity, so utterly free from tinct or shadow you could only think of snow in the morning new fallen; these rendered her admired and loved by a woman of the world, who dazzled under chandeliers, but never left her heart

there. Emily, perhaps, with a very little art, was pleased to heighten her own brilliant tints by this pale contrast; magnolias and white lily of the valley as a foil. If Emily thought of this at all it was an instinctive art, which we ought not severely judge. For instinct in a woman is a religion; it will come out earnestly and be christened a virtue. You cannot undeceive them, so spare rhetoric.

Emily saw little of Mary when town guests were numerous. It was in those long intervals between season in town and the summer vacations that they met most frequently. Mary was above her station, both in intelligence and manner, but her simplicity and ignorance never misled her. She was pleased with Emily's attention; she had her instincts too, and understood them; and when the gay tides of society set in upon Wood Hill, she slipped calmly, contentedly back into the unknown cottage girl. Emily did not neglect her entirely, though guests pressed sorely; and sometimes she stole an hour with her. While Warren fretted in the low-beamed parlor, and Charles stalked among the hills, they rambled one bright morning down a favorite shaded path to where a flat stone hung above the river, and lay cool under a willow. Here they peered into the shaded ripples and mused. Mary drawing a little nearer Emily, spoke:

"You see so much, know so much, Miss Thelton, the world must be bright to you."

"Why do you say this, Mary?"

"Only because I was thinking it."

"But it is not a common thought. What prompted it?"

"I have not known until now how brilliant the world is beyond this valley," said Mary, "I thought it all as simple



and plain as my home and life. But Mr. James frightens me."

"Mr. James, Mary?"

"Yes," said Mary, heedless of Emily's surprised accents, "all things now appear so large, so grand, so full of mystery! There is so much wit, talent, beauty, gentleness, happiness in the world!"

"Silly girl!"

"Is it not so? I do not complain, Emily. I am happy here as ever. But I never thought of it before as being something so splendid."

"You are dazzled and deceived, Mary. To most people it is a noisy, struggling, dusty, frantic, selfish world—be glad that you live in this quiet, pleasant corner."

"But you," said Mary, "can live always, day by day, year after year, with such brilliant, witty men as Mr. James; with books, pictures, music, and delightful people. Your life must be like a dream—so entrancing."

"Is your little head turned?"

"I don't sigh, Emily; I don't regret; I try to be contented here; but I am wondering what life would be if I could slip away and be always with—with"—

"Well?"

"I mean, I wonder how life must be to two who love each other, and are as noble and great as Mr. James."

"Since I saw you Mary, strange things are in you brain. What does it mean?"

Mary did not answer, only dropped her head slowly forward, and placing her cheek upon her friend's shoulder, lay rapt in a kind of ecstasy—her eyes looking out through a mist of tears upon the landscape; her cheeks tingling with

new sensations, part of shame and part of delight, and her heart beating quickly yet sweetly

There was a long silence. Emily began to see and to fear; she wound her arms around the girl with solicitude and tenderness.

"Do you know Fanny Ashby?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Do you think her pretty?"

"I am sure she's pretty."

"And good?"

"Yes."

"And worthy to be loved?"

Mary looked up.

"Of course,"

"Well, Mary, do you not recollect the incident, when you brought us intelligence of the accident to Mr. James?"

"Yes," said Mary faintly.

"I think she has a lover, my dear."

Mary turned two large, eager, expanding eyes upon the speaker. Her cheeks were pale, but her lips bore their common tender, bright smile.

"Mr. James is Fanny's lover, Mary. I am sure of it."

For ten minutes not another word. Mary kept her face shaded by her bonnet; her hands lay still in her lap; her breathing was very soft and low; her whole body was still and calm as if cut in stone.

"Shall we return?" at last said Emily.

Mary assented by rising, but did not speak. They walked along up the path slowly, and Emily began to talk—of humble, earnest, pleasant things. Sometimes Mary replied by a single word, but she made no attempt to converse or divert the deep settling current of thought. Her eyes were

veiled, and she walked by the side of her friend in a hushed and stilled way. At the door-yard gate Emily left her, and walked home alone.

Her thoughts were not pleasing. They were disturbed and almost embittered. For if Mary Hall's white spirit had been singed—if that sweetest and gentlest of all natures had, like an ambitious and dizzy moth, flown into the candle and burnt its happy wings—seared its heart with unhealing wounds—then things were out of joint indeed!

It was not a fortunate moment for Ashby to meet her, but he came running down the hill-side, and out upon the road. She was ready to be angry with his entire sex, and returned his salutation politely, of course, but with that distance and hauteur which is so formidable with the coy angels to ordinary men. Ashby was in unusual good spirits, and held his fingers between the leaves of his folio, ready to exhibit some recent sketches. She did not ask to see them, and the artist piqued at the inattention, roughly thrust the folio under his arm. For forty paces they walked in dead silence.

"The weather is fine," at last said the gentleman, desperately.

"Yes," replied the lady.

"But the wind has changed," exclaimed the artist abruptly.

"Fickleness is its privilege, I believe," said the lady.

"Yet there should be cause. What have I done since breakfast? Two hours ago I fancied I was honored; the world was a bland summer day; I aspired and was happy; now there is a wind out of a cloud."

"Have you been sketching, Mr. Ashby, or studying

poetry? There is so much pretty confusion in what you say, I fancy it must be the last."

"Confusion, Miss Thelton?"

"You mingle things oddly, and glide so swiftly from the weather and the wind to Mr. Charles Ashby, that I am perplexed."

"I spoke weather, but thought woman. Is it a vice of mine that I confound temperament and temperature? Their phenomena are not essentially different. I am frozen with the wind that blows from the Arctic; I am chilled with the breath that comes from an icy heart."

"Which is so fine I cannot understand it; but that, I suppose, is of no importance. Poets require to be appreciated, but do not care to be understood."

"Sometimes," said Ashby, "they fall in love with their song, and forget the inspiration of the theme."

"You mean their passion is for the rhyme, and nothing more?"

"Yes."

"Then they must be vapors, phantasies, gilded sunbeams, hollow sprites, but not flesh and blood. They are delusions. Let them be admired, but not followed, like Will-o'-the-Wisps."

"Your epithets are inapplicable. The mischief is, the poets have hearts too big for their breasts, and wear them upon their sleeves. They are not Will-o'-the-Wisps, but the hunters that rush madly after the snares, tempted to destruction by the gay, dancing lights that hover over the bog and beckon them on."

"Mr. Ashby, I should really appreciate a little plain prose."

"And I, Miss Thelton, am thirsting to speak plain prose."

There is a subject on the surface of my heart which is uppermost in every thought, yet little things continually slip before it into words. It almost shaped itself into utterance when we met ten minutes ago, but an unaccountable change in your manner frightened it back into silence."

Ashby could get no further. The hauteur and reserve came back again; her form, face, eyes, settled into a look of coolness and distance which the artist could not encounter.

"Mr. Ashby," said she presently, "who is Mr. Warren James?"

"A man I wish I had never known; the son of an enemy, who comes now to complete the injuries began by his father."

"There is passion in your judgment, I fear."

"You would applaud my feelings, if you knew all."

"Is he an honest man?" inquired the lady.

"I must confess that I cannot accuse him of any positive crime. I doubt him because he is of the same blood as one who had neither pity nor honesty."

"But he was your friend. There must have been a sudden discovery. You drove him away, and Fanny is almost heart-broken."

"He came to me under an assumed name. He is not James but Hoffman. Fanny is a bright, fresh, merry little girl that will be as happy in a month as ever. She knows the crime of the father, and in a little while will sanction my conduct. Besides, he has brought it mainly upon himself; a blow has sealed our compact of enmity. The bond cannot be cancelled."

"The name of Hoffman is familiar," said Emily. "It was the name of your guardian, I've heard my father say."

"This man is the son of that Hoffman."

"Roderick Hoffman?"

"Yes."

"But Roderick Hoffman was once the partner of my father."

"This is new to me. Roderick Hoffman squandered our fortune, and failed."

Emily Thelton kept her eyes averted, as she asked in a low tone:

"And this wrong you attach to the son?"

"To the Hoffmans, young and old. At this moment I feel the extent of the injury more intensely than at any previous period of my life. And I perceive how the consequences of that injury are to multiply, and accumulate misfortunes and sorrows upon me. I am poor, low, and condemned by the limits of a narrow vocation, to continue so to the end. I must pour my heart and life into my canvases, for they can have no fruition, fullness, happiness of their own. I was and am ambitious; I feel a capacity capable of some broad, grand growth; I pant for the big prizes; my profession appears loathsome as I dream of possibilities that once were mine, lost to me through him."

"This is sorrowful, Mr. Ashby."

"It is not the only thing," continued the artist, whose words came with an impassioned swell, "which the faithlessness of that man is depriving me of. There is a more powerful passion than ambition; there is a desire greater than the thirst for fame. I would lay down both of these to win the other. Miss Thelton, a poor artist has some right to hope; his nature is not overlaid with his pigments; his passions do not succumb to his poverty; in the very midst of his despair, in the full consciousness of his low station, he sometimes has the madness to think of love."

"That is a just and honorable hope," said Emily in a suppressed voice.

"How shall I read those words?" cried Ashby, seizing her hand. "Miss Thelton, if you think art has any dignity—if a life such as mine must be, can present a single charm—if indeed, as you assure me, it is just and honorable to hope—then I lay my hopes, my life, my heart at your feet. If it is presumption, I must accuse you of being the teacher."

Emily made no reply. She only looked calmly at far-off objects, but left her hand in that of the artist.

"Emily?" said he at last, and he drew nearer.

"Mr. Ashby," said she in quiet but slightly broken tones, "I ask permission to return once more to your sister. Am I wrong in supposing that young Hoffman is her lover?"

"No, Emily."

"And they are separated because you will not forgive? because the elder Hoffman deprived you of fortune?"

"I cannot forget; I cannot trust. If the father was a villain, may not the son be one too? But how can this affect our happiness?"

"If there is any barrier between us, Charles, you have erected it. If there is any reason why your hopes cannot be fulfilled, you alone are that reason."

"This is a riddle."

"No. Yet I cannot explain. Charles, my heart is willingly yours. But I repeat, there is a wall between us, and built by you."

"You chill me with these singular words."

"It is my duty to utter them, and some day, when I have the courage, to make them clear. But you hold my hand—you, who have forbidden the bans."

## CHAPTER XXV.

WARREN had not left for town. The sprains and the bruises were nearly well, but it was easier to talk of departure than deliberately to accomplish it. To go was to cut the thread and cast himself loose from Fanny, perhaps forever. The first impulses of flight were over, and he lingered. To-day he promised to depart to-morrow. On the morrow it was not difficult to invent a reason for further postponement. At the bottom of his heart was a wish that his tongue continually denied to himself. I will never see her again, he loudly declared; but he secretly knew that the oath was a sham, and the perjury was committed almost as soon as the words were uttered. But Jove laughs at lovers' oaths, and so do novelists.

He walked much, and rambled up and down the river-bank, and into the woods that at places bordered the shore. Fanny walked too, and hung for many idle hours in favorite nooks, and wondered, there is no doubt, if the little cottage which she sometimes saw from afar off, still locked within its walls the lost lover. But at last they met. It was sure to be, and both, perhaps, had some such hope or expectation. Fanny was under a tree on the bank, plucking leaves and flowers, and flinging them into the stream.

Warren stopped suddenly as he came upon her, and Fanny jumped up with an instinct of flight. But she

paused, and rested her hand upon the tree, looking down at the river that rippled in a pool at her feet.

"Fanny," said he, "I am glad that we have met."

"We should not have met."

"Why?"

"You have sunk a gulf between us. It is now all ended. So farewell."

"You must not go," said Warren, intercepting a movement to escape. "I must be heard. Your first words are unjust words, and I have a right to answer them. Is it just, Fanny, to say that I have sunk a gulf between us? Am I the cause? Did I scheme it—devise it? Would I not this moment leap the space if you bid me? I offered you my love—was yours. I am exactly what I was when we loved and were happy; and you are the same. Nothing is changed—neither my love nor yours—although a cloud has settled down between us. It is a cloud only; we may cross it, defy it, disperse it!"

"Alas! it is more than a cloud! Would we had never met! Why did we? I do not call that stain upon your father"——

"Fanny, there is no stain."

"That suspicion, then. I construe for him all things favorably, and believe that time would have adjusted it all. But you were hot, impatient—you had no courage."

"Courage!" cried the youth, the color rushing to his cheeks.

"Is not patience courage? The spirit to bear and forbear. Not even for me, Warren, whom you professed to love—not even for me, who had been frank, and confessed so much—not for our loves and all it promised could you submit to one poor, paltry insult."

"I redressed my father's injured honor," said Warren, gloomily.

"But did you vindicate it?" said Fanny, lifting her eyes for the first time, and fixing them on Warren earnestly. "Did you prove anything? Did you gain anything but bitterness and hatred? Ah, Warren! you knew that I was by, yet not one thought for me. You were more the gladiator than the lover. Your selfish passions were everything, and so you struck Charles, who is so dear to me—who is all to me—struck him cruelly, fiercely, as a madman strikes. That blow fell upon me, too, Warren."

"You speak of the blow, but not of the provocation."

"It was enough, perhaps, to make you angry; not enough to make you a fiend. I have not forgiven it, Warren. In one sad moment I thought he was killed. It was too terrible to forget lightly."

"Fanny, you madden me!" exclaimed Warren, wildly impelled to an effort to snatch back his hopes. His love was on fire, and dared to do. "I love you," he cried, "with intense devotion! Believe me, I implore you—if you can believe at all. I am humiliated at your feet; I will perform any penance; do any act to prove my contrition."

"Oh, this is passion and impulse. It is not reason nor judgment. You will become cold again."

"You mistake my nature," said Warren, with vehemence, tramping up and down the path, bareheaded, his hat flung upon the grass; "I am not the slave to my passions you think me. In common matters, I am called self-possessed, and ruled by will; but with you and my love—with things that move me deeply, as this does, I am vehement, not because I am weak, but because I am strong. Fanny"—he paused abruptly at her side, and seized her

hand—"I've clambered up to your heart, and won it, as I believe. I have my hold upon it."

"Once; not now."

"Now," said he, and his face grew white with intensity; "marriage and happiness may bless that hold—but there is no blowing cold, no relenting, no withdrawing. You are woven in the web of all my future, and I as surely woven in the web of yours."

His hand had clasped her waist; he drew her to his side. There was a fierce and dogged purpose in his eye. Fanny struggled with him.

"Warren, take your hand away. Release me."

"I hold your waist, your hand," said Warren; "you cannot thus idly recall what you deliberately promised. If you break from me, Fanny, you are perjured and dishonored."

She stood still, and spoke with deliberation.

"Warren, I confess that my feelings toward you are not changed. But my duty to my brother has from childhood been my first claim. Unhappily enough, you have forced me where, to accept your affection, I must give up his. This I will not do. If there is estrangement, I am not the cause. I am innocent, and may suffer, but will not repine. Until you and Charles are friends you must not see me again."

"But the enmity was not my seeking. I loved your brother. He quarrelled with me, not I with him."

"Yet you struck him! Warren, Warren, that scene makes my heart sick!" She dropped upon the ground, at the foot of the tree, and buried her face in her hands.

"What am I to do?" said Warren, still vehement, and resuming his impetuous tramp up and down the path: "I love you too deeply to think of losing you. But your

brother heaps contumely upon my father—casts me from him because of a fancied wrong committed, I know not how—cannot believe was committed all; and for this violent wrong done to my father, I am to expiate by a still more violent wrong done to me. That blow was given in a moment of ungovernable rage. My indignation was too hot to realize anything—it was a moment's insanity. I offer him redress, apologies the most earnest; if these will not suffice, what more can I do? Does it not all lie with you and him? Heavens! Fanny, you and your brother mock and humiliate me too much. I am your lover—at your feet. I shut my eyes to all forms, all courtesies, all etiquette—I ask only that my honest love for you shall meet with frank return. Let our differences be bridged. I propose peace. I cannot consent to let my happiness escape me if a word will restore it; I cannot leave any honorable thing undone to bring back the old time. Tell me what to do. Is there nothing in the earnestness of my passion to convince you? Must I plead like this to your heart and hear no answer? Is the regret, the pain, the anguish, on my side only? Am I to be driven out into the world mad because of a caprice, a tradition, a matter of which I am as innocent as you? I'll accept no choice, between you and the world. If you banish me, now; if you refuse all hope, then I shall be willing to let life and love die together."

"If my brother could hear this," said Fanny, "this day might see us happy again."

"I put my future in your hands, not in your brother's," replied Warren. "I ask it of you, not of him. Will you destroy me to please another? What right is better than mine—better than love? That love asserts itself. You are mine; my heart feels it; your heart feels it!"

*They* shall be rulers. I defy other authority. By Heaven, I am mad enough to make you mine this hour! There are reverends here, and marriage is a brief story."

He seized Fanny by the waist and looked down white and fiercely into her eyes.

"Will you force me," cried Fanny, "to send you from me? Will you make me believe that you are like your father?"

"I *am* like him. If I am not, then despise me; for there must be some fatal weakness in my blood. I cannot be honorable, just, true, tender, manly, and be unlike him. You plead for your brother, defend him, link yourself to his fate; so do I to my father. It is not only me that you must love, but his memory."

"His memory!" exclaimed Fanny, with sudden vehemence. "That word reminds me that you *are* like him, and have deceived me. How I tried to believe it was not so—did believe it. Warren, when love was fresh on your lips, you falsely told me that your father was dead."

"Falsely told you?"

"Yet he lives."

"Fanny! I do not heed your accusation of falsehood—I only heed your startling words."

"My brother says," said Fanny, astonished at Warren's flushed, eager face, "that Roderick Hoffman is living."

"A mistake," said he, drawing a long breath.

"But Major Thelton says so too."

"My God! what does this mean?" said Warren, and big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow.

"Is it not true?"

"True!" cried Warren with feverish excitement, "the first breath was to laugh the story into derision, but sud-

denly, with *your* words, the possibility breaks upon me, unsuspected before."

"This is strange."

"It is. Wildly so. My father died in a southern city. I had not seen him for years before. A letter came to my uncle from one who was at his side, and watching him die. Another letter was for me, written a few days before, while upon his sick-bed. Both were addressed to my uncle, and three months elapsed before they were seen by me. But I now recollect that nothing further ever reached us, confirming his death."

"Had he lived he would have written to you," said Fanny.

"That is not certain. He was so oppressed by remorse and grief—so I gathered from the tone of his letter to me—that he may have desired the oblivion which an assumed death and a concealed life would afford. This is speculation; but the assertion of Major Thelton that he lives, renders it possible. That man is not often guilty of the weakness of a mistake."

"And if he lives, Warren?"

"If! Is it not clear? Doubts, suspicions, vanish. I conquer you and your brother. You, Fanny Ashby, are mine. Yet how madly improbable is the story! Still I will know what truth there is in it; I'll hunt, search, explore, and if the truth is anywhere, dig it out."

"And to vindicate your father's name will be reward enough," said Fanny, with an arch smile. Her heart ran swiftly to its own gay tone, the moment the clouds parted and the sun peeped.

"What more?" cried Warren; "Fanny Ashby can then take her cheeks, her beauty, elsewhere. Fanny!"



"Well."

He held her close and brushed back the locks that fell over her cheeks—tenderly, yet with trembling fingers.

"Fanny, I could act the fool now. I look into the years and see all things promising. I am wild with a new joy; there is wine in my veins; I could do a thousand foolish things. But now we part. I am full of my new purpose. To-morrow I shall be in town, and at work. I'll clear it all up somehow. If my father lives, or if not, there is somewhere a history of this strange affair. I'll find it, for I go to my labor and know that your heart follows me."

"It does," whispered Fanny.

"And then to link you to my life—to say, henceforth, this is mine, and I am this. Then no slips between the cup and the lip; no capricious changes in Fanny's heart; no fear of rivals."

"Yes, one," and again the gay flash in Fanny's eye.

"Whom?"

"Indifference. He comes swiftly after the wedding ring, sometimes."

"There's an easy way to shut the door upon him."

"Explain."

"An occasional quarrel."

"Pleasant alternative! But you and I, Warren, have seen enough of quarrels."

"Yes; and so we'll smoke calumets forever."

"Forever," said Fanny, solemnly.

"This is a compact," said Warren, "under this blue sky, in this fair day. Nature is our witness."

"Of what!" said Fanny.

"That you are lost and won," said Warren.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

MY readers have found out long ago that this is a story of commonplaces. In these trite times, a novelist must weave his tale out of slight filaments. What can he do with frock-coats that will satisfy a love for the picturesque? And if he gets his love-lorn maid in distress, matters are so practical and off-hand, and modern ladies so sensible, she quietly walks out again. There are now no dungeons, it must be regretted, where love and beauty can be immured, and strong doses of mystery and horror concocted. Adventurers by flood and field are out of tune with the character of the time. There are no gallant rescues by sword and prowess. There is no cutting of throats, and the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. There are few objects of interest except those that get in the police court. Crime is vulgar, and dazzles nobody. Gallant highwaymen have succumbed to the constables; gay knaves, with suspicious associates, are at first sight set down among the swell mob. Virtuous damsels are not carried off to mysterious caves; raven locks, and pale cheeks, and melancholy eyes are worn-out properties, thrust into dust-holes; and forlorn maids in white muslin are dolls of a bygone make. People now-a-days, for the most part, marry whom they like, and nobody cares. Courtship experiences no severer hardship than a few old jokes, and lovers falsify the old adage about true love, etc., every day. Matters, indeed, are so staid and proper that love-making



is done in the parlor, while mamma nods over Morris & Willis.

Without these fine ingredients, how can the novelist mix his gruel thick and slab? If he succeed in inventing anything new, it is tolerably certain to be improbable; and if he holds fast to the probable, he is equally sure of serving up old dishes. He can get no color in his pages, in this black-and-white epoch. He cannot flaunt feathers in his readers' eyes; no plumes can wave and dance through his scenes. His entanglements are transparent, for readers, by long practice, are experts, and unravel an ingeniously woven perplexity with a dexterity that defies his ingenuity. In fact, he is driven to a corner, and desperately wonders what he shall do.

I am tempted to paraphrase Othello's touching lament. Farewell love's big perplexity, and swearing papas; farewell royal damsels in distress and the mysterious horsemen; farewell velvet and laces; farewell those heart-thrilling escapes, the bloody deeds, the neighing steeds, the plumed troops, the stirring adventures, the picturesque coloring, the scope of imagination! Farewell romance, and the day of broken hearts. Our occupation is gone!

Delineate nature, I hear somebody say. My dear sir, you have been studying Emerson. Nature is the newest fashion, and, Heaven save the mark! the sentimentalists have got hold of her. The dear old damsel is their latest love. They kiss her yellow cheeks, hang upon her venerable form, and dote upon her ancient bloom. She is trotted out in Lyceums; she is harnessed in rhyme; she is pulled to shreds by the young critics; she runs wild through the pages of Ruskin, and has gone mad under the fingers of the pre-Raphaelites; she is the jargon of all the arts; philoso-

phers, poets, rationalists, and the blue-stockings, have taken her in charge—and of course nothing must do but the novelist must follow suit.

But this is a special plea, you say. I am trying to justify my weakness, you think, when for nearly thirty chapters I've given you nothing but little nuts to crack. My dear youth, this history is woven out of the tissues of which men spin their daily lives, and are made and unmade hourly before us. There is not a princess in all my budget which I can offer you. There is not a murder flinging its awful shadow down the path of the story. There is nothing to come fiercer or stranger than what has gone before. It is only a few bits of colored glass which I shake before you, gathered on the stale highways of modern life. They do not dazzle, amuse, interest you! The combinations are old, the colors are faded, the picture is wearisome! Then toss the book in the fire, and banish from your memory Fanny and the rest. For the unfortunate necessity is that I must write up to the truth, and not to your imagination. I cannot bring a pageant into a parlor; and my story was told before I begun. History must not be falsified even to tickle the dear public.

You are covertly intimating that this is not history. There you are wrong. It is honest chronicle—every word of it. You may prove that Macaulay turns history to romance, if you like the task, but I defy you to demonstrate, by any logic, that a word I have uttered is less than the truth.

What wholesale murder you scheme! You think of exterminating my brood at one fell swoop. Your guillotine is doubt; you whip off the heads of the whole company, and relish the labor. Beware, sir; they may yet

outlast yours—let me be moderate, and say a thousand years or so.

But my story, out of the necessity of truth, and by the veracity of the conscientious historian, is only a slight fabric; transparent, flimsy and means nothing! I am sorry that every word of this is fact. Yet what can I do but faithfully go on and relate the rest? I am compelled to admit a secret fondness for some of the personæ, and if it wasn't too late, and Warren's chance at the worst rather favorable, I believe I should find out Fanny, and spoil the story by falling in love with her myself.

As for Warren, if you have not liked him before, look at him him now and you will. He is running along the path and into the wood fresh from that warm, impassioned interview with Fanny. What splendid color in his cheeks—what brilliancy in his eyes! He walks the air. His head is thrown back; his gaze is fixed on a love perspective. He moves like a monarch; his big heart is swelling with pride, bliss, hope; his imagination is aglow. So looked Perseus when the sea-monster was slain, and the white arms of Andromeda fell upon his breast.

It is these same old stories of Perseus and Andromeda, Hero and Leander, after all, that we must tell over and over again. There are those who laugh at love-stories. Love is the silver thread, let me say, that you can trace back to the hour when Adam awoke, beheld, and became a lover. It is never stale or old. The songs, traditions, and tales that come floating out of the past are woven of its texture. It is the link that makes sympathy identical six thousand years apart. Wherever it turns up along the ages, the heart beats, responds, grapples it. We cannot deny it our tears, our tenderness, our hearts, come in what

form it may. It has repeated itself in every clime, age, language; through all poetry, literature and song; in every history; in grove, villa, camp, youth and age; in all legends. Yet it is always new; and with every people its story thrills hearts around the fireside; fires youth; sends tears to the eyes of the aged, and is handed down by old generations to new generations. Every poet becomes its priest. Every new age lays its offering upon its shrine. Every new heart aspires to decipher and portray its meaning. And while we have ears and eyes turned backward to the doings of mortals who were tenants of the world before us, eager to learn, see, comprehend how they lived, felt, and occupied the earth where now we stand, the story of their affections will link back a succession of chains from now to the beginning, and which we shall hand forward.

And so my story is a love story. You may tell me that Warren and Fanny are only old ideas in new forms; and I tell you that life is only an old idea in new forms. You may tell me that the past tells, a thousand different times, all that you are now telling. And I reply that every golden hour freshly rounded, floats into history with its own unmated tint. Every new-born day brings its new sensation. And I and many after me will renew the ancient tale, subduing hearts now as at the beginning.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

AS Warren sped swiftly along, he suddenly felt a shadow upon his path, and dropping to earth and mundane things, he looked and saw——

Richard Hawley, the Titan.

In an instant there rushed upon the memory of Warren the last scene in Philip's attic. But he laughed. A rival in the very moment of his success added pleasure to his victory—and a rival in whose pretensions he could see only ridiculous presumption, afforded his safe hopes and harbored venture, only sensations of mirth.

"Why Hawley," cried he, with an air of good-natured patronage. "This is a strange place to find you. Are you studying rustic manners? Are you contemplating a philippic at rural society?"

The inevitable glove whisked rapidly between his fingers, as a look of surprise gave way to one of vexation.

"Don't fear me, Warren," said he, "I shan't steal your small game. My themes you know are larger—I leave this chit-chat, tea-table literature to you fellows."

"We are honored, Mr. Hawley, and thank you for not leaping into the arena with us."

"You prize safe bones, eh?"

"We like fair fights," returned Warren; "victories won by things done, not by deeds bragged of. We are vain enough I confess, but most of us have an attainable modesty

—a blushing-point, if you will permit me to use the phrase."

"How fortunate, when the necessity is so apparent," said Hawley with a malicious laugh.

"We blush at praise. For depreciation there is the lash."

"My dear Warren, it is the novelty of praise that makes you blush, and experience in retort makes you caustic."

"My dear Hawley, we are not literary highwaymen, rushing out upon every straggler, demanding his admiration or his life."

"Sir," said the Titan, "it is the prerogative of genius to command recognition. As Shakspeare and Milton knew their powers, so do I mine. Modesty is only conscious inferiority. Have you read the last Caustic?"

"For a week I have escaped the Caustic, and all its fraternity."

"It contains a comprehensive paper that ought to be read from Maine to Texas. I shall receive the thanks of the government—the approval of the Senate—the sanction of the Judiciary—the applause of the people. It will arouse the whole country. It is only three days fresh from the press, and already I receive communications, letters of congratulation. Its style is so superior to the abrupt colloquisms of Macaulay, and the weak, tame sentences of the rest of them. Its logic, fire, learning"——

"I'm impatient," interrupted Warren, "to know the subject. Please do not withhold it."

"An Inquiry into the Sciences Possessed by the Esquimaux."

"A far-off theme, but distance lends it grandeur. But how unexpected this meeting here! Have you come to join Charley Ashby?"

"The Ashbys! Are they here?"

"They have not brought you then," said Warren, eyeing sharply the Titan, who, shifting his eyes, answered with a vague equivocation.

"Well, I'm glad of that," said Warren. "You'll not be disappointed if you do not meet them."

"Have they left?" The question was eager, and unmistakably indicated the object of his presence.

"No, but I doubt if they will see you."

"Pshaw!" said Hawley, with his old lascivious smile, "Fanny is a pet of mine, you know."

"It is strange," replied Warren, getting a little angry, "that you can get away from the Esquimaux long enough to pet anything."

"Bless me! I can entertain grand projects—yet I have an eye for a pretty cheek."

"Not for Fanny's, if you please. You will recollect the warning given you in Philip's room."

"Why, gad, she likes me! and a woman is recreation for a man of intellect."

"Confound it, Mr. Hawley, you have an exasperating way of alluding to women."

"It's a way we get on the Continent. Don't be squeamish! Fanny is a nice girl, good color, warm blood, pleasant voice, fine ankle"——

"Let me ask you, if this is the sort of praise you bestow on Fanny to her face?" Warren's anger began to show in a red spot on his cheek.

"Gad! no," replied the Titan, with a complacent whisk of the glove; "I brush up a sentiment. It tickles, and she is caught. We men of the world have skill in this kind of angling."

"Are you angling after Fanny Ashby?"

"Fanny's a merry girl. We have our sports. We laugh, and kissing goes by favor," said the Titan, and drawing a note from his pocket, turned down the sheet so that the signature was visible—Fanny's signature, as Warren could plainly see—and kissed it with a fantastic, conceited air. Warren ground his teeth together in a fury, and restrained, though not without difficulty, an impulse to punish the fellow on the spot. He was unwilling to betray his real relation to Fanny.

"Mr. Hawley," said he, "do you always exhibit in public the names of your correspondents? Do you boast of every lady who honors you with her name?"

"Ah," said he with a sneer. "I know how to be close, believe me. Fanny favors me"——

"With what?"

"Letters. You may congratulate me"——

"Hawley, you lie!"

"Ha!" The Titan fairly bounded, and his glove whisked with accelerated speed.

"I know your tricks," said Warren, "and so don't complain if you compel me to speak plainly. That letter is either a commonplace note of courtesy, or it was obtained by you unfairly. Fanny does not correspond with you. The next time I meet her I shall have the pleasure of repeating this conversation. Perhaps Ashby will be asked into our confidence. If so, upon my honor, I think there will be some danger of his wringing your neck. I shall certainly advise him to do so. Good day."

And Warren walked past the now infuriated Titan, who scowled, and stamped his feet, but for some reason

held his tongue. Warren in words threatened nothing—perhaps his eye did.

The literary Giovanni, looking after him, muttered, "I'll extinguish him in the Caustic. I'll put him in a pillory that will madden him. I'll write him to death."

And resuming his way, meditated upon his revenge.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IT was just night-fall, and one small candle was feebly attempting to illumine the attic of the ancient Todd. The antiquated articles of dress and furniture, which filled, with ingenious economy every angle of space, dark and solemn with the gravity of half a century on their heads, absorbed the mild rays of the candle, and frowned down its radical attempt to impart cheerfulness to the scene, and break down the legitimate and conservative gloom. But what the candle failed to do was accomplished by the light humors of the occupants. Here was the dame, almost entirely restored to her early faculty of mirth; and Susan, whose countenance was steady, but whose eyes shot out gaiety and happiness; and Philip, whose tongue uncoiled his pleasantries in odd phrases.

The ancient Lady close by the candle made essays at sewing, and fortunately the material did not suffer under coarse and rather rambling workmanship. Philip held a book between his fingers, and taught the listening Susan, who, half merry and half perplexed, made eager efforts to comprehend the subtle lesson.

The page was Shakspeare. When Philip had conquered the girl's aversion to his protectorship, the next step to consider was her education. Fortunately she was a reader, having in earlier days been benefited by attendance at a ragged school. The actor, therefore, began to ponder, and, as we might expect, indulged in no little rare logic, and at

last arrived at his own unique conclusions. He absolutely turned this green, rude, wild nature into Shakspeare. He read her plays, taught her their meaning, and industriously strove to create a power of appreciation.

"In Shakspeare," said he, ponderingly, "she'll find the circle of knowledge. Of all desirable knowledge, of course. These bald facts that run about the world, and heads are continually cracked against, may not be there, but I think that a favorable circumstance. She must have meat, not stones. In the great teacher she'll find—let me see—philosophy? Yes! History? Both ancient and modern! Human Nature? Its complete exposition! Poetry, wit, passion, humor? The very essence! Shakspeare is the book," he cried, "her brain and heart shall be made of it?"

Imagine the beginning of this novel course. At first he would have been as comprehensible if he had read Hebrew to her. Nor up to this period had there been awakened any real knowledge of his meaning. With all Philip's familiar illustrations, and sometimes forcible delineations, she had obtained very little grasp of the poet's themes. Occasionally there were humorous passages which were partially appreciated, and pathetic ones that she could understand, although it is probable that the pathos in the reader's tones was the full extent of her sympathy. In one direction, however, her imagination had really begun to grow. The pomp and pageantry, the throng of kings and lords, the big wars, the flourish, glitter, and gay splendor of the scenes, so well interpreted by Philip, caught her fancy, filled her imagination, excited her wonder. As ignorant of the existence of these things as if she had been born on the Ganges, and not without a native sensi-

bility, they dawned upon the darkness of her mind strangely, in wild confusion of dazzling colors, in masses of chaotic splendor, magnified undoubtedly by an utter inability to adjust them to real life, or measure their exact extent. And the interest thus excited, Philip hailed as evidence of the wisdom of his scheme.

"She'll take up Shakspeare" said he, "like a sponge. And what then? These commonplaces of education are picked up and stick like burs. One needn't step on either side to find them. And Shakspeare in the brain is like keeping your powder dry. It is always ready to explode; touch it and there is fire; light it and there is illumination. Every faculty in fact gets on tip-toe. The entire sensorium bustles, sparkles, lives, and is ready crammed for anything. I think," said he with a roar of laughter, "that I will add a new profession to those I already starve by. Educational Artist! The Shakspearian mode! I am convinced the invention is a brilliant one, and needs only to be known, etc., as those funny fellows the advertisers say."

Philip was reading, with a running amusing commentary, a humorous scene in which the knight Falstaff and the Prince Harry, were deep in their potations, when Warren, dusty from the train, stood suddenly in the narrow space of the partially opened door. The ancient Lady gave a well-bred start, and dropped her needle.

"It is Warren the prodigal!" exclaimed Philip.

"It is Mr. James," said the dame, and rose to do her courtly honors. The sweep of her courtesy was grand, and Warren, who had entered, acknowledged it like a gallant.

"You bring the brown tints from the country," said Philip. "How the sun loves the cheek of a housed citizen!"

For me, I've nearly bleached my blood white with these twenty years of life among the shop-windows."

"Never go to the country, Mr. Giles?" said Susan.

"I see it sometimes scuttling by out of a car window. I swoop upon it occasionally in a swift, wild way, and carry off a paltry sketch or two. But absolute idling is the charm; burying your head in the grass; toasting yourself to a slow brown while you wink at the sky; stretching your limbs on a bank and nothing to think of but whistling! This is living in the country—these are luxuries that are delicious."

"These unfortunately have not been my pleasures," said Warren.

"Better!" exclaimed Philip; "love-making under the trees, eh! Ah, it is all the old story. How pleasantly you all do it?"

"Your banter does not apply," said Warren, "for I have got a budget of troubles."

"How is that?"

"And as my only friend, I've posted to town for your advice and aid."

"That's well said, Warren, and warms me."

"You know," said Warren, how much alone I am in the world. Who else could I come to but you?"

"None, no doubt. Will you talk here before the ladies, or must you have my private ear?"

Why it is a long story," said Warren smiling, "and I should fatigue the company."

"Well, then," said Philip jumping up, "I am your majesty's obedient servant."

"Not for the world!" exclaimed Warren; "Madam Todd and Susan would never forgive me if I deprived them of

their companion. It is not so urgent, Philip. Indeed I desire, before getting at business, a pleasant chat with my old friend, Lady Todd."

"Ah!" said the ancient dame, and a smile struggled up on her wrinkled lips. "I am a poor old dame, but when dear Richard was alive, I was good company for young folks. My poor husband was always praising me for being so lively and free. Ah, sir, he's dead, but I can remember, I can remember the merry times we had."

"I really think," said Warren, "that you are younger than when I saw you last."

"It's young company, sir. Susan here is cheering to the lonesome hours."

"Now," cried Philip, "as business is postponed, let us welcome the wanderer's return. Susan, my dear, is there any sugar?"

"Oh, yes," replied the girl gaily.

"And water in the kettle?"

"To be sure."

"And tea?"

"No," said the Todd dolefully.

"No," echoed Susan despondingly.

"My dear Todd," said Philip, "please run over your stores."

"There's a lemon," said the ancient Lady musingly.

"Two," cried Susan.

"And no whisky?" inquired Philip.

"No!"

"No?"

"But there's Jamaica."

"Ah! And what else?"

"A plate of biscuit."



"Well?"

"Nothing else, I do believe," said Susan.

"Nothing from nothing comes. Madam, make the Jamaica hot. Serve it in two vessels for Warren and me. Prepare that acidulated concoction, which you affect, known as lemonade. Bring forth the biscuit. We'll have a feast in honor of our guest."

"I will do it," said Susan eagerly, and flew to the task.

"Ah," said the Todd, shaking her head in a ruminant way, "that was the way of dear Richard. He always would have something hot for a friend, and sometimes he would say, the noble fellow, Alice dear, let us suppose we've got company to-night. I knew what he meant, and mixed it with my own hand."

"Those were cheerful times," said Warren.

"Yes," said the lady, and put her finger in her eye searching for a tear.

A table was found in a corner under a pile of old boxes, and pushed into the centre of the room. The ancient Lady drew from a secret corner of a little cupboard another candle, and lighted it, which additional illumination brightened up the scene magically. A hand furnace was brought out, filled with chips, and in a few moments the kettle was singing blithely over the blaze.

"I did not expect an ovation," said Warren.

"You return from conquests, and deserve it," said Philip, with a laugh.

"No! I return for aid to plan the campaign. Strange things have happened, Philip."

"Strange things happen every hour."

"I find," said Warren, "that my early life so interweaves with the present, that I cannot ignore it as I once resolved

to do. I must travel back to it. Before you can intelligently advise me, Philip, I must tell you my history."

"Which for three months past I have been almost ready to give an ear to know."

"Why?"

"Because I like you, simpleton."

"It's ready," said Susan. "Now Mr. Giles please prepare the glasses and I'll pour in the water."

"Draw up," said Philip, "this is high art. A concoction of the kind can only be made by a quick eye, a cool head, and a balanced judgment. If I do not succeed, I am fit for keeping sheep."

In our Invisible caps we may hop on the window-sill, and peep through the panes at this pleasant little scene. There sits the ancient Lady in a chair that might have come over in the Mayflower, for it is difficult to conceive how anything so stiff, so angular, so straight, could have been invented at a later period. The back is a foot higher than the topmost fold of the ancient turban, and the little arm-rests are many inches shorter than what is comfortably required for the elbows. For fifty years has the ancient Lady occupied it, however, and a sentimental story could easily be written, tracing the old dame's life in the history of the familiar, steadfast companion. The little mahogany table, dark with half a century's toning, waxed, seamed, stained, yet glistening with the remains of its ancient burnishing, is close before her. At her side, on a wooden bench, sits Susan, her dark, sunken eyes brightening and flashing over the scene, her lips half parted in a smile. Susan's features are of a smooth, fine cast; her complexion high-toned. She looks well in her trim calico gown, and the abrupt manners of her rude life have begun to yield a little to the in-



fluence of better surroundings. Philip, with his big, hearty manner, one hand laid broadly upon the table, his quick and shifting eye, with its earnest, humorous twinkle, and Warren, who drops away occasionally in little fits of abstraction, are both sitting opposite the ladies, as Philip calls them. The punch smokes in the glasses before them, and they sip, eat, chat and laugh in a fashion that guests at stately banquets might look down upon and envy.

Gaiety is an honest democrat. Fortune cannot corrupt her. She will turn a cold shoulder upon palatial splendor, and tripping to cellar or attic, in by-ways and corners, fling up her cap of bells, and clash her merry cymbals to those who wear hearts under rags, and dance without the jingle of silver in their pockets. We can see that she has touched the hearts of our little group, who are as brisk and jocund as if their mirth was in a parlor, and not eight pairs up, crowded in a patched, faded, stale, antiquated old woman's narrow attic. Here is a bed, with a quilt memorializing every dress of the ancient Todd since her bridal day, its patches breaking out into rents, and its colors sinking under an oppression of old age. Here are bits and remnants of old housekeeping times; crockery cracked beyond the possibility of usefulness, but retained historically; gowns upon the pegs too old for any recollection but the dame's, and startlingly absurd in shape and color; chairs, baskets, benches, old prints, a carpet walked into shreds, and darned until nothing is left but the darning; an open cupboard, crammed with vials and clipped willow-pattern dishes; a cracked and yellow ceiling: in summary, an appearance of decay, dust, fading-out, incongruity that renders cheer and mirth odd and fantastic by mere contrast.

Yet the cheer is genuine. Philip is vivacious, and Susan

and the Todd delight in his peculiar witticisms. Warren listens quietly, and sometimes laughs. There are toasts proposed, and healths drank, and good wishes so numerous that the vocabulary is taxed for phrases. Merriment explodes at slight provocation; banter is free; light hearts make light words.

"Now," cried Philip, "we ought to have an address of welcome from President Todd."

"Oh," said the ancient Lady, "what can I say? Ladies didn't make speeches in my time."

"I tell you what to do," said Susan; "order *him* to do it."

"I think I will," replied the President, in her piping voice.

"Then," and Philip, finishing his glass with a single quaff, "this is my speech"——

"Oh, no, sir, please to stand up," interrupted Susan.

"Yes, yes," decides the chair.

"That's the rule," continued Susan.

"Well," said Philip, bowing to Warren, and thrusting his right hand into the air as if it were a pump-handle, "this ancient fraternity welcomes you."

"I'm not ancient," retorts Susan.

"No," replies Philip, "but the Todd has age enough for us all. It is she who speaks. The attic has missed you, young sir. The ancient President has searched your fate daily in the tea-leaves. The street-lights have burned dim without you, and my customary walks have been foregone."

"These sentiments are gratifying," replies Warren.

"My dear boy," exclaims Philip, slipping out of his speech suddenly, "we are glad to see you; and that's the whole of it. And—what's that?"

"The nine-o'clock bell."

"And I forgot!" cries Philip, with sudden consternation.

"What?"

"I'm cast in the after-piece!" and seizing his hat, bolts headlong from the room.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

EARLY the next morning Warren entered Philip's room, and found the actor just rising. He sat on the bedside, his trowsers half-drawn, contemplating a small sketch on his easel.

"I think," said he, addressing Warren, but without turning his eyes from the picture, "I think there is some truth in that sketch. Something genuine. How it got there puzzles me. It never happened before."

"It's a very pretty scene," said Warren.

"I am troubled," replied Philip. "I've recently and most unexpectedly evinced a capacity for acting. And now I break out suddenly on canvas. For a man who has known failure so long that he rather likes it, a suspicion of anything different alarms him. And how to account for it?"

"An object, perhaps," suggested Warren.

"Susan?" inquired Philip.

"Yes."

"A stimulant, eh? Responsibility, a sort of necessity that pricks and spurs?"

"That is what I mean."

"Pshaw! Nothing less than the keen edge of hunger has ever so far succeeded in forcing me on the boards or up to the canvas. And as for success, my elements are the same, and the identical atoms that have always rendered failures inevitable, clog my brain and skill now as before."

"Then how do *you* account for this change?"

"I think you have hit the cause, but have failed to indicate the operation. A man's heart passes into his labor, and renders the product of his brain warm or cold, rich or poor, in purple or in rags, according to its texture and nature."

"I assent to the proposition," said Warren.

"Well, with me the brain was alive, but the heart was dormant. Something has slipped in and humanized it. Fresh sensations flutter about the ribs, and tingle in the thorax. Sympathies troop up and make me wink. Brain and fingers have caught new colors, impulses, feeling, radiance, shooting upward from the little left-hand corner, which a little ragged outcast has taken by storm."

"It's plain enough," said Warren, "and we shall live to see you warm into something like greatness yet."

"Which sentiment is meant to be kind, and so I thank you. But a good deal too much of this. You have got a story to tell me, Warren."

"Yes," said Warren, "for that very purpose I am here."

"Has anything happened between you and Fanny?"

"My story will lead to that."

"Then begin," said Philip, bolstering himself into a position of ease upon his cot, his head pillowed against the wall, and his limbs stretched among the tumbled coverings of the bed. Warren seated himself on a chest near the bed, and with some hesitation spoke.

"It will be a very simple story, Philip, confined to a few facts which are better briefly told. You know very well that my desire has been to lock up my unhappy past. As I could bring nothing out of it that would not stain, darken, or impede my future, it was my fortified resolution to cut myself away from it as if from a sinking wreck."

"To wash the slate," broke in Philip, "and begin the sum over again."

"But I did not have my future in my own hands. I have found that I cannot escape from my past. It has come up at my very feet, and compels me both by the evil it threatens and the hope it unexpectedly excites, to go back, and take up the old theme."

"Which is enough for a preamble," said Philip.

"Well, sir, I begin. A succession of great misfortunes befell my father in my boyhood. He was a merchant, and in consequence of bad speculations and the villainies of an associate, he became a bankrupt. This bankruptcy was attended by loss of character, as well as loss of property. I do not know all the circumstances, and scarcely can explain why a stigma attached to my father's name. He was the victim, I have his own word for it, of a man who led him into extensive financial operations, which he adroitly turned to his own benefit. My father's property and means fell into this man's hands, and under circumstances that compromised his honor. The operations were large, the capital important, the ruin and the disgrace overwhelming. In the very midst of these disasters my mother died. My father was sensitive; his mercantile misfortunes had nearly maddened him, and this domestic blow, reaching him at such a time, struck him down broken-hearted. He placed me in a rural school, and travelled. For many years I did not see him. At last he returned a wan, faded, decrepit, melancholy old man. His sorrows preyed upon his mind; my mother's death was still an unhealed wound; and his mercantile disgrace seemed as terrible and severe as ever. I saw him for a few weeks only. He was restless, ill at ease, and brooded upon his sorrows. So we parted, and

again he became a wanderer. I never saw him afterward. His means were small, and I was provided for under private tutorship in the family of a village pastor. My father hoped to secure for me a full educational course, and his few letters always alluded to this hope. But it was never accomplished, his resources no doubt proving insufficient.

"I had very few relatives. I spent an occasional vacation at the house of an uncle, my mother's brother. My poor father, like myself, was an only child, and I never knew any of his family. My isolated school life and the circumstances of his career easily accounted for this. My uncle's name was Lawrence Cone. My mother, it seems, had carried to her husband a handsome fortune. This money, invested with all his capital in his speculations, was lost with the rest. Mr. Lawrence Cone never forgave my father for this—indeed, never spoke of his bankruptcy without the most excessive exasperation. Mr. Lawrence Cone is a man enormously supplied with animosities and hatreds—enough for a good portion of mankind. He hated my father. He hated me. He was a bachelor, surrounded only by servants, and even the presence of one of his own kin, instead of a solace, was a bitterness and fury. It is difficult to conceive of a man so made up of harsh angles. If there were any good temper in his composition, it got snarled at the bottom somewhere, and never came up to the surface. When at his house, he came to me one day, and told me my father was dead. I was at first too shocked to ask for particulars, but was surprised presently to learn that the news was two or three months old. He had received a letter from one attending my father, describing him in a dying state, and had waited for more evidence; none came, and the conclusion was too evident that he was

dead. His illness was the fatal fever of the southern States. There was another letter, written by my father a few days before, addressed to me—the saddest and most pitiful letter, Philip, in the world.

"‘If my misfortunes,’ he wrote, ‘could only end with me, I would be contented; but I see too well, Warren, how my deeds are to cast a shadow forward upon your path. I gave you birth, but I cannot give you an honest name. My sharpest anguish is that you must take up my burden and carry it. For the world, no less than Heaven, visits the sins of the father upon the children.

"‘Yet, Warren, receive this solemn assurance, that however harshly the world accuses, I have committed no willful wrong upon any man. My crimes have been imprudence and too much confidence. I was unwise enough to invest the means of others where I invested my own, and trustful enough to place myself at the mercy of a man who had no mercy.’

"He reveals, Philip, in that letter, the name of the man who ruined him—a man who often came to his house, and whom I recollect well. He does not explain the manner, nor does he detail the nature of his speculations, but he speaks as if the particulars had been related to me before; and he tells a pitiful story of his almost fierce efforts to regain his fortune, and so restore the misused wealth of his creditors. He did not succeed, and the very intensity of his desires, no doubt, hastened the approach of disease.

"I had very little time to speculate upon the character of this letter. The irascible, sullen temper of my uncle could not dwell upon me in any other light than an enemy. He had revealed the fact of my father's death only as a prelude to something nearly concerning my own fate. In a

fierce, repelling manner, he asked me what I intended to do. The question was so abrupt and so untimely that for an instant I did not understand him.

"'You are alone,' said he, 'without money or friends. You must begin a career. You must earn your own livelihood.'

"I told him that I saw the necessity of what he spoke. I explained that I was not without ambition, had already given the subject attention, and asked for a week's delay.

"'It won't do,' said he; 'you must decide at once, or I must decide for you.'

"'Is a decision so urgent?' I inquired.

"'You've been idle long enough,' he said; 'it's time to work.'

"'Well, sir, then I'll begin,' was my reply. 'I have long desired a literary career. I'll seek employment of that kind.'

"'You're a fool!' he shouted. I felt my cheek grow hot, but I asked him calmly why.

"'Literature is the trade of idlers and swindlers,' he retorted, roughly. 'I have selected a business for you.'

"'I'll hear your proposal,' I quietly said, 'although I tell you beforehand that I shall not embark in commerce.'

"'Commerce!' he exclaimed, with a furious sneer. 'Are you rich? Where is your capital? your qualifications? commerce! You must take a trade—the only fit thing for a poor man.'

"'Mr. Cone, I am a gentleman.' I said this, Philip, looking firmly in his eyes. I hoped that he would understand my feelings, and forego his purpose.

"'Who the devil would have thought it!' he exclaimed,

brutally. 'Hang it, you are poor! Are you going to live on me? Not another day.'

"'My father, then, has left nothing.'

"'Not a dollar. And now hear me: you can have your choice—take a trade, or get out of my house—I don't care which. As for your pen-and-ink follies, I'll not encourage them with a word. Take to them, and starve.'

"'I do, Mr. Cone.'

"'Do what?' said he.

"'Take to them, and starve if I must,' I replied. 'And I relieve myself of your presence. I am poor, but have some courage, and will brave the worst. I'll go to town to-day.'

"'You have no money.'

"'I'll learn to do without it. I have neither money nor, as it appears, friends. My father's death, indeed, does leave me alone. But I hope I am a man, and can bear up under difficulties and misfortunes.'

"'Then,' roared he, purple with rage, 'you will be as disgraced as your father!'

"'If as innocently, Mr. Lawrence Cone, I shall have cause to thank my fortitude and courage.'

"And fairly running from his presence I rushed to my room, crammed a little apparel in a bag, and in twenty minutes' time, with a high head, a hot heart"—

"Stop!" shouted Philip, bounding with a single spring into the middle of the floor, and seizing both of Warren's hands. "Stop! First let me shake hands with you. Why, Warren, you are made of the right stuff. You make me wish that somebody would try a little oppression on me, that I might let off some of the indignation your story excites."

"Well, Philip, it was that day that I first saw you."

"To be sure. Can I forget your intention of passing the night in the street?"

"And I thought then never to recall my past history. I changed my name."

"The devil! Then you are not Warren James."

"Warren Hoffman."

"And you deceived even me," said Philip dolefully. "Jove, I'm tempted to turn you into the street—to cut you off—to say finis to friendship from this hour."

"I do not fear you," laughed Warren. "But to proceed. I've made, since I saw you, a startling discovery."

"Humph! This promises to be a pretty history."

"It is singular indeed. And now my future as well as my past is concerned. You know"—he paused, and hesitated.

"Well! Go on!" said Philip. "I listen."

It was not so easy to go on; but Warren plucked up courage and told the rest—his love for Fanny, and the bar that now stood between them.

"It seems," said he, "that the Ashbys were my father's wards; that by some means their property, intrusted to his care, became swallowed up in the general wreck. Charles is vindictive, and unless I can clear my father's character, I must lose Fanny. Not that I doubt it. The thing is simply, how to begin. To complicate matters, this Major Thelton, with whom they are guests, is the man my father points out as the cause of all his misfortunes?"

"And you did not know of this guardianship."

"I knew very little of my father's affairs. We were separated almost entirely after the bankruptcy, and previously I was too young to be made a confidant. But now

it appears probable that these very circumstances were part of his bitter recollections. And there is still one point behind."

"More mystery?"

"I have told you how the news of my father's death was received. As you recall it, do you not perceive that the fact was not established—the evidence not complete?"

"Ha!"

"I have been told, Philip,—and the information came by indirect means from this same Thelton—that my father is living."

"Impossible!" cried Philip, who, in the intensity of his interest in the story, was pacing the floor, if chafing around the very small space of the room left unoccupied, can be so called.

"That is the first impression," said Warren; "but there are circumstances which render it not impossible. I do not permit myself, Philip, to think of it, except as a curious contingency. For if living, he conceals the fact, and what sorrow, remorse, suffering is at once implied! I dare not think of it, for if I do my very heart burns."

"What do you propose to do?" said Philip.

"To discover the absolute truth as to his death, and then to clear up his fame, if possible. To probe, search, and ferret. To unearth all that is hidden. If there is guilt anywhere, to find it out. To let the guilty and the innocent both be known as they are."

"How will you begin?"

"I have said my father's letter to me appears to hint at some communication sent, or written for me, at an earlier day. My father's papers are all in the hands of Lawrence Cone,—and since I received the letter, inaccessible to me. But now



with these new facts in my possession, I must somehow obtain the paper to which he alludes."

"I see," interrupted Philip; "but how?"

"I will demand his papers of my uncle. If such communication or letter is among them it will tell the story. If not, to search and see what light other documents will throw upon his affairs."

"And then, as to the matter of his death"——

"Why, Philip, after his papers are examined the next step will be more clear. It will probably be necessary to go at once to the city where he was last reported living."

"And you have told me this story not merely for my advice, but my aid?" said Philip.

"I have."

"And it is your design to brave this formidable uncle of yours in his den?"

"Yes."

"And I am to go with you?"

"Why, Philip, you are my only friend. I want all the coolness, skill and judgment that a man like you affords."

"Bravo! I accept the compliment with alacrity, for who knows better than I that it is deserved?"

"Then this is a treaty of alliance?"

"I rush into the compact, my boy, with all my heart. I have found my vocation at last. Here's a chance for intrigue, cunning—here's occupation for certain wit and subtlety long in rust and disuse. I was born to play at carte and tierce. All your straight roads I am lost in—give me a crooked, mazy, snarled path to travel, and I can walk it blindfold."

"The question now is, Philip, how to proceed. My

uncle will probably refuse the papers. He could be compelled by some process."

"Hang the law!" broke out Philip, flinging himself again on the cot, and staring with a desperate fixedness at the ceiling.

"What do you suggest?" asked Warren.

"I can lay no scheme until I get before the enemy. I'll run down to this fine uncle of yours and tack on. Once get the clue to his character I'll know what to do. Trust me, but in twenty-four hours I'll have him under thumb and finger. I'll find out his tender side and warm him—I'll creep in a corner of his heart in spite of himself. I'll tickle him as he never was tickled before; he shall laugh and roar until he exclaims with delight as Jacques did, 'A fool! give me motley!' Warren, there is nothing human which will not thaw—the problem is the weak side. Gain this, and you can slip into his good will, with colors flying."

"You do not know Lawrence Cone."

"I know human nature."

"But when nature made my uncle she was suddenly called off, and forgot to put in a soul."

"Then, my boy, there is another policy."

"What is that?"

"Poison against poison. I will meet him on his own ground, with his own weapons, for like cures like."

## CHAPTER XXX.

**M**R. LAWRENCE CONE lived in one of the Hudson counties north of the range of hills known as the Highlands. It was a long, low house of the last century, standing coldly and alone on an open sward which ran down to the river shore. The habitually closed blinds, the grass on the paths, the ragged untrimmed shrubbery, the chimney that so rarely vomited forth the smoky incense of the hearth beneath, the weather-stained gables—all indicated lethargic life and torpid affections. The windows neither looked out upon the world nor let sunshine in. The sward and walks unpressed by household groups, told of the hushed rooms and the empty life. Watching the house curiously you would see that in one corner two servants burrowed; and at the other end of the building a partially turned blind evinced the dull, colorless existence of a solitary occupant.

"This is capital discipline for the vapors," said Philip, as he and Warren stood on the lawn, studying the aspect of the building. "A man here would naturally grow as sour as a forgotten cask of cider. I see that we must prepare for nettles. For my part I am thinking of all the exasperating things possible, and twisting my mind into as waspish a state as I can."

"Pray why?"

"Because the lesser must yield to the greater. If it come

to a contest of temper, I mean to get the best of him, and for this reason have put myself in training."

"I am afraid that his skill and long practice will prove too much for you," said Warren, with a laugh which was a trifle melancholy.

"*Will* has something to do with it," said Philip. "I shall fling myself into my purpose with a vehemence that will astonish, silence, subdue him. See if I do not."

"Well," said Warren, "shall we knock? We might loiter here an hour unnoticed."

"It certainly looks so."

"I cannot explain, Philip," said Warren, pausing upon the door-step, "how much agitation I feel. I am not at ease, and I have lost my courage. My heart is unaccountably apprehensive."

"Pshaw!" said Philip. "It is indigestion. That dinner was enough for the blues. These stale, soiled, fly-plagued country taverns need missionaries."

"There," said Warren, with a sigh, lifting the hammer to the knocker, and letting it fall upon the iron plate. "That is the first blow. Where will it end?"

"At the altar of course. You look as if that blow of the knocker was a knell—why not consider it the first note of the marriage chime? Think of Fanny, Romeo, and take heart."

"I do," said Warren; "and think of my father too!"

A shuffling step in the passage, bolts draw back, the door opens a little way, and a head is thrust out. An Irish head, crowned with a mop of frizzled red hair.

"What is it ye want?" was the query.

"Is it a woman or a man?" exclaimed Philip to Warren.



"What?" said the head.

"Are doors in this part as small as your hearts?" said Philip. "Have their hinges no hospitable creak? Is their welcome only an inch wide?"

"What do you mean?" said the head, the face suddenly deepening into as fiery a hue as the hair.

"We don't ask questions through a crevice," replied Philip, assuming a fierceness and harshness of manner that caused the head to start back a little, and the door to open several inches wider. "Let us know whether we address a man or a woman. Open the door, I say. Let me see how big your body is—you have shown how little your soul can be."

"Not until I know your names," said the head.

"Bridget," said Warren, "you know me."

"And it's forbidden the house you are, Mr. Warren," said the head, which for the first time had observed Philip's companion.

"But open the door," roared Philip, "and take my message. Are you a donkey? Where's your master? Tell him gentlemen are here to see him." And Philip with his hold upon the door pressed forward with so much resolution, that Bridget insensibly fell backward far enough to admit him. Bridget, however, whose whole appearance was so ragged, that from her frizzled hair to the fringe of rags that encumbered her feet, she looked like a long used mop, still held, with her red hand, to the knob, and kept her broad ragged person before the intruder.

"Tell Mr. Lawrence Cone we are here," said Philip, with an air of oppressive importance, and stamping upon the floor with assumed anger and authority.

"And who are you?" said a voice on the stairs. "Do

you batter my house down? Confound it, is this an inn? What do you want, I say?"

A small man in bed-gown and slippered feet came along the passage. His form was bent, his face prematurely wrinkled; his eyes were exceedingly small, and glittered like two little beads under his deep, heavy, eyebrows. His face was sallow and flabbid, his chest hollow, a habitual expression of bitterness rested upon his lips, and his whole appearance indicated the victim of dyspepsia.

"Who are you?" he repeated, and then saw Warren. His face grew slightly tinged, and in his black eyes colors played like those that glitter in an enraged snake's.

"You here! Why? I say, why?"

"At first," muttered Philip, "let me try smoothness."

"Mr. Cone," said he aloud, "Mr. Hoffman and I are here with an object in which we hope to receive your co-operation."

"Begging?" sneered the affectionate uncle.

"No," replied Philip, sternly, "our business is legitimate. We shall thank you for a gentlemanly concession to our proposal, but if you refuse us"—

"What?"

"Why, it will make no difference in the end, as we do not mean to yield the point."

"That is, fair words at first, then blows."

"Will you hear what we have to say," said Warren.

"No," shrieked Cone, stamping his slippered foot upon the floor, "no! I cast you off once. Why do you come back to pester me? I thought you had starved to death long ago. Why didn't you?"

"I believe," said Warren, "that I was not born to accommodate you in that particular. Perhaps I did not

starve because I was reserved for some part in your future destiny."

"Bah! You've always got nice sentences. I hate them. Why did you come, I say? Now, why don't you go?"

"Are we to hold this conference on your door-sill?" said Philip.

"No; not even here. If you have anything to say, go outside and say it, and be brief."

"The law," said Philip, coolly, "is long-winded. It takes its time."

"Law!" roared the little fellow, "you are a"——

"Stop where you are," thundered Philip. "No epithets! no passion on me! Keep your temper behind your teeth."

"Who are you?" said Cone, astonished at Philip's vehement emphasis.

"Mr. Warren Hoffman's friend. And our business, if you will not permit us to confer with you privately, must be spoken here."

"I suppose it's private."

"It concerns you to make it private."

"And if I do not?"

"For our part *we* do not shrink publicity. We offer you the choice of privacy. Hear what we have to say, and make it as public as you please after that."

"Here is the parlor," said Mr. Cone, and led them through the door which opened not four feet from where they stood, into a square, cold, half-furnished room, the air of which struck chill and damp from its long ignorance of sunshine and human life. Mr. Cone shut the door and stood near it. He offered no chairs, and waited for further communication.

"You have in your possession," said Philip, with a legal

pomposity which was very telling, "the private papers of my client's deceased father, Mr. Roderick Hoffman."

"A lawyer?" said Mr. Cone, interrogatively.

"Mr. Hoffman's attorney," said Philip, coolly. "I act by his authority, and speak as his legal representative."

"But no lawyer?" said sharp Mr. Cone, who saw through Philip's ambiguous language.

"I must decline answering any questions which do not concern the business in hand," replied Philip, with a tone so similar to that prevalent at the bar, that it ought to have gone as far as any diploma to assert his claim to professional fellowship.

"I positively shall not deliver those papers upon any formless demand, to a person I do not know," said Cone, decisively.

"You know *me*, Mr. Cone," interrupted Warren quickly.

"Too well!" snarled the uncle. "Too well! And deny your right to the papers. Are you your father's executor?"

"Who is?" asked Philip.

"He made no will," said Warren.

"That you are acquainted with," replied Cone.

"There may be one among those papers," said Warren incautiously.

"Oh, ho!" cried Mr. Lawrence Cone, "you are a couple of desperate fortune-hunters. But Roderick Hoffman left no property. So what do you want?"

"Not property, Mr. Cone," said Warren with a very red cheek. "Those papers belonged to my father, and now are clearly mine. There can be no reason why you should refuse them."

"But I do," exclaimed the irritated dyspeptic. "Value or no value, your father's legal executor alone can have

them; so please withdraw. Don't importune me any longer. I hate it."

"We cannot be answered so easily," said Philip.

"Cannot! But you shall. I tell you, you cannot have the papers."

"Let us see them. We have an especial object," said Warren.

"No doubt! But I say no! I repeat no! And now, will you go?"

"No," said Philip. "I insist upon my friend's right in this matter."

"You! Insist! I'll send for the servants to turn you out."

"You are a gentleman, and will do no such thing."

"I am not a gentleman. As for you, Warren, I sent you away once. I discarded you. How dare you come back?"

"That's not true," said Warren, "I left you voluntarily."

"Do you impeach my word?"

"I repeat the facts."

"You and your fellow go. I repeat my commands. Leave this house."

"Not yet," said Philip, helping himself to a chair. "We have our just business, and do not mean to be cheated nor tricked. Nor will we patiently listen to violence, epithets, or insults."

"What? I say what?"

"It is very plain that you say it."

"You are vagabonds!" exclaimed Cone, trembling with powerless fury. "You force yourself into my house."

"We are on legal business," interrupted Philip.

"You are cheats," hissed Mr. Cone, furiously.

"There's the cheat!" shouted Philip, with vehemence, springing upon the floor, running forward, and thrusting his finger into the face of Cone. The man started, and the flush of anger paled into sudden fear. He shook, and for an instant was voiceless.

"There's the cheat," said Philip, following up his advantage. "You turn Warren from your house naked; you deprive him of his rights; you reject his manifestly just demands; you hate him and trample upon him, mainly, I do believe, because honesty is your natural enemy."

"Will you leave my house?" exclaimed Cone, but his manner was somewhat repressed and bewildered. The paltry opposition he was accustomed to encounter was so easily overcome, that this man, whose temper rose with his, whose tongue was as keen, who, behind all his vehemence, kept a cool eye and clear head, was so new he was staggered—for an instant beaten down with his own weapons. Like most intensely ill-natured men, he was a coward. He possessed no force of character or will. He was snarlish, bitter, quick to attack, and fierce upon those who yielded, but he cowered, shrunk, faltered, the instant he encountered resistance and a bold front. He had the hasty impatience and quick irritability of little dogs, but lacked nearly altogether the steadfast courage of the nobler breeds. Stunned by Philip's manner, his ill-temper sank into sullenness. He showed his teeth, but his bark glided into a growl.

"We do not purpose to leave your house," said Philip, in reply to his command, "until we are turned out, or are permitted to examine Mr. Hoffman's papers."

"For what purpose?" said Cone, with a snap.

"To trace the affairs of his wards, the Ashbys."

"You'll find nothing there."

"Let us look," said Warren, "or, what is better, restore to me my father's papers, without compelling me to resort to legal measures."

"Confound you!" said he, "if I refuse, I suppose you'll come backed by these legal devils. Well, sir, I do refuse, and I wish you good day."

"Refuse?" cried Warren.

"Yes," said Cone, his ill-nature rising again, "and I'll give you ten seconds to relieve me of your pleasant society."

With these words he threw the door open, and half ran blindly along the hall, tugging with his fingers at his wristbands, and his entire features black with his stirred and excited passions.

"There," said Warren, when he had gone, "we have failed."

Philip stared at the floor, and rubbed his forehead.

"I don't understand it," said he.

"Of course," replied Warren, with some irritation, "if we batter a man's door down, and attack him in such headlong fashion, what else have we a right to expect?"

"The theory is right," said Philip, still staring at the floor.

"Pshaw!" said Warren, who had the worldly way of sneering at a scheme after it has proved a failure.

"I still hold to the theory," persisted Philip; "it is philosophically complete, and ought to work. There has been some fatal flaw in the management. And didn't you see him shrink, his eye wavering, his accursed temper yielding? Jupiter! I thought I had him, and the next instant he had escaped me. The plan was clearly right."

"Upon my word, I cannot see it," said Warren, gloomily.

"My dear boy, in nine cases out of ten, your ill-tempered fellow has no heart at bottom. Small oppositions pinch, excite, irritate him; but a big, bouncing passion snuffs him out—he is stunned, and turns up as docile as you please. Hang it! I don't believe that we have failed. I'll follow him, and try my skill again."

"What do you mean?"

"You remain here. I'll track Bruin to his den."

And Philip, tramping through the passage, boldly ascended the stairs in search of the master of the house. Warren, whose petulance at Philip's failure had not entirely disappeared, laughed recklessly and flung himself into a chair.

The scene was familiar, and looked like home to Warren, in spite of all the gloomy associations which it revived. He thought of his father; of his long, dull, colorless youth; of the repressed, dead, estranged life he had led under this very roof; and fell by easy declensions into a retrospective melancholy. The old loneliness crept into his heart. He recalled the hour he had left that roof, apparently the most isolated, abandoned, cut-off being in the universe; without friends, money, or even pleasant memories; a life that seemed to spring up suddenly there, with a blank behind and an unknown before. The possible failure of his present design added to his melancholy. Fanny again appeared escaping from him. He felt like a man, by a strange freak of fate, doomed to be thrust apart from his kind. "For where is the link?" he exclaimed, and realized there was none. This gloomy shadow upon his heart was only temporary. He sighed, got up and walked, looked from the window vacantly, and presently hearing a step in the hall, turned with the expectation of seeing Philip. It was William, or Billy, the one male servant.

"I am ordered by Mr. Cone," he began, but looking up saw that he addressed Warren. The sentence stopped short and an exclamation of surprise sprang to his lips.

"Mr. Warren?"

"Yes, Billy."

"And I am ordered by Mr. Cone to require you to leave."

"That is not so strange, is it Billy?"

"No, sir, I am sorry to say."

Billy was a man of almost fifty years, sensible, quiet, well spoken, who for twenty years had performed the varied duties of gardener, ostler, butler, and general household superintendent. Mr. Cone, locked up in his book-room, gave little heed to the details of his establishment, content to absorb a feverish pleasure from the lives and thoughts of others, exchanging for this doubtful good health and vigor.

"I suppose I must obey," said Warren.

"Don't ask me to say it, Mr. Warren," said Billy tenderly.

"Billy," said Warren, "you recollect my father?"

"Oh, very well."

"His life was a sad one."

"Very unfortunate, Mr. Warren."

"I am here, Billy, upon an affair concerning my father—his reputation and fair fame. Mr. Cone is as hard to me to-day as he was the day I left him. I have asked for the possession of my father's papers, which are mine, or for permission to examine them. He has refused me, Billy, and sent you to exclude me from the house. This is harsh."

"Very true, sir."

"You know the room my father occupied when here? Is it in the same condition now as when I was here?"

"Just the same, sir. We don't often alter things here."

"My father's papers are in that room," said Warren, moving close to the side of Billy, and placing one hand upon his shoulder.

"Well," said Billy, his eye wandering up and down, to and fro over the carpet.

"If I could get an hour in that room, Billy, it would be the most precious hour of my life."

"Mr. Cone has refused you," said the man, in a low tone.

"He has no moral or legal right to do so, Billy. I could compel him to deliver up those papers. But I am too impatient and too poor for the law."

"Are they important?" said Billy, his eye abandoning the floor, and looking in a straight line out of the window.

"Most important to my peace, I do believe."

"And if I should let you in," whispered Billy, drawing very near and speaking in a whisper.

"Which you would do for the sake of my father's memory, for the sake of an affection which you sometimes felt for me, and because you see how strangely unjust is my uncle's refusal. Which you would do, because I pledge you my word that I mean no injury to Mr. Cone whatever, that I come only after that which is mine."

"But I should still be unfaithful to my master."

"I cannot urge you then," said Warren, and turned away.

Philip's step was heard on the stairs. He came treading the boards with a ponderous anger, ejecting epithets of all varieties of emphasis.

"I must go," said Warren.

"To-night!" said Billy hastily.

"Eh? Where?"

"To-night, at the door," he whispered, "I'll watch for you."

"Come," roared Philip as he joined them, "let us get out in the air. I suffocate here with strangled imprecations."

"Be cautious, sir," whispered Billy, and conducted them hastily to the door.

"Now," said Philip, as they stepped upon the lawn, "now I know my theory was right."

"What new proof have you?"

"I tracked your sweet-livered uncle until I found his quarters. Then if you had seen me! I was as sweet as summer, as mild as mead. But he grew hotter as I grew smoother; I was polite, I ducked, I took off my hat, I got off a compliment or two. No use. Had you been there you would have seen my theory triumphantly proved. It was clear enough that nothing but a sharp temper could bring him to his senses."

"Which you didn't apply?"

"I must first find out the fatal weakness which rendered the plan a failure. But I am convinced that the theory is right."

"Well," said Warren quietly, "I believe that I have succeeded without the theory."

"How?"

And Warren related the conversation with Billy.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

IT was some hours after night-fall when three figures stepped silently into a large chamber on the upper floor of Mr. Cone's residence. Through two broad, uncurtained windows the moon poured her light, and rendered every object visible. The room had once been used as a sleeping-chamber, for a large bedstead stood in one corner, but unsupplied at that time with furnishings of any kind. There was a carpet that partially covered the floor, and a few distant, isolated articles of furniture. A secretary stood in one corner, and a trunk beside it.

"This is the room," whispered Warren; "it was my father's. His papers and letters are here, untouched, I hope."

"We must have a light," replied Philip. "Billy, are you provided?"

"Yes," said Billy, and drew a candle from the breast of his coat. He was also provided with matches, and in a few seconds placed the lighted candle on the secretary.

"'Pon my soul," said Warren, "I feel halfway a burglar."

"I am out of my line, I confess," replied Philip, "but I think we may applaud ourselves as good examples."

"Explain."

"If all robbers took care to steal nothing but their own, we might shut our prisons."

"But we are in another's house, secretly"—



"My dear boy," interrupted Philip, "shall we go back?"

"By no means."

"Then pray don't draw upon your nice morality, or we shall soon get too honest for our purpose. Now I admit that we are doing a very unhandsome thing—that we have no business here—that some narrow-minded judges would look upon the matter awkwardly; but the end, we have duly decided, justifies the means. I'm sure that I don't know whether it does or not. After we get away, we might submit it to a parson, and get his opinion. Meanwhile, hadn't we better complete the roguery, when it has begun so handsomely?"

"I came after my own," said Warren, and walked firmly up to the secretary. It was not locked, and as he threw the doors open, it appeared crammed with folded documents.

"This trunk," said Warren, "is full also. I have looked at them many times, but with little curiosity. There was no special reason to stimulate a desire to know their contents, and they always appeared dull, formidable, and for the most part unintelligible. Perhaps we shall find them so now."

"Your father had the trick of order," said Philip, pulling a dozen packages from the recesses, all of which were carefully banded and indorsed. "One would suppose that we could make it a short business."

"I hope so, gentlemen," said Billy, who was standing by the door, nervous and excited with apprehension.

"We shall not find those in the trunk so well arranged," said Warren.

Both began eagerly their work of examination. Warren

was too agitated to proceed with both ease and celerity, and sometimes his trembling fingers almost failed their task. His situation was peculiar; his father's fame, his own happiness, perhaps the peace of his father's old age, if the rumor which had reached him should prove true, appeared to be at stake. And the exulting hope that somewhere amid those mysterious pages lay hidden such precious words as would disperse the clouds that overshadowed his love-hopes, thrilled him with impatient fire.

As for Philip, he talked. That was a necessity of the honest, hearty fellow; but he labored with zeal, and while his humors kept their incessant ebb and flow, his quick eye and quick fingers ran rapidly through page after page of the documents.

"I am perplexed," said he, "about your affable uncle, Warren. I get no clue to his character, his motives, his life."

"If I had your skill of analysis," said Warren, "I might entertain you with a curious psychological study. Perhaps if I lay before you a few of his salient characteristics, you can adjust them satisfactorily."

"I like anatomy of that sort," replied Philip. "What do we find here? An elderly gentleman locked in the corner of an old, gloomy, decayed, neglected structure, given very much to dyspepsia, bad temper and dull study, turning out of his house and out of his affections the one person who might have rendered his life something else than comfortless and motiveless. Hang it, Warren! how has all this come about?"

"I see that you know already pretty much all that I can tell you," said Warren. "I can only add to these peculiarities that Mr. Cone is singularly indifferent to so-

ciety or companionship, is somewhat miserly, is a vigorous and comprehensive hater, and lives sullenly either among his books or in scientific explorations among the rocks."

"Scientific? This is odder still."

"Why, no. A temper naturally petulant is apt to get sourer in isolation and abstract studies. My uncle, probably, can like a few people. He hates me because I am the son of Roderick Hoffman, and he hates Roderick Hoffman because he married his sister, and diverted a portion of the property out of the family."

"There's nothing here," said Philip, as the last package was drawn from the secretary.

"Nothing?" said Warren despondently. "We must try the trunk. I cannot forego the hope of finding something."

"Then at it my boy. Time is precious."

Both on their knees plunging their hands down into the mass of papers, which had been tossed into the receptacle in great confusion! Philip dragged out an armful, and ran over them with skillful speed. Warren now more calm and collected, labored with equal vigor, and far more intensity of interest.

"So your uncle," said Philip, "keeps his blood hot by cool science. Or perhaps he breaks rocks as an escape-valve for the natural heat in his temper."

"There is a morbid bitterness about him which his science does not cure, does not meliorate, I'm sure. Harsh angles like his can only be rubbed smooth by contact with the world."

"True," said Philip.

"Why men should absolutely delight in the darker passions I do not pretend to explain; but that they often do, is everybody's experience, and as for my uncle"—

"There!" cried Philip, and snatched at a sealed and tape-bound paper, almost under the very fingers of Warren, who at the same instant saw the superscription.

"It is addressed to me," he cried in an earnest whisper, and seized the document.

"To you, and dated five years back," said Philip. "This is important."

Warren tore the wax and tape from the paper with feverish vehemence. "It is the very thing desired!" he exclaimed with exultation, as he scanned the pages, "a history of my father's affairs. Philip, we are successful."

The light was suddenly extinguished, and Billy, with a motion for silence, stood close by them. Each voice was silenced, and all looked toward the door. A step was heard in the passage—it approached, paused, passed on, and died away in the distance.

"Please go now," earnestly whispered Billy; "I shall be discovered and ruined."

"This is enough," said Warren, thrusting the paper into his pocket.

Philip tossed the documents back into the trunk, and into the secretary, and with light but active steps, the adventurers followed Billy cautiously down the stairs.

"You've been my friend," said Warren to Billy, as they stood upon the door-step, "so recollect I am always yours, if you have need of me."

"I shan't forget; and thank you," replied Billy, in a low, hasty tone, at the same time motioning for them to depart. His timid eagerness was outdone by Warren's impatience, who fairly dragged Philip away from the house.



"I am on fire to get at the contents of this paper," said he, striding along with the utmost speed, and baring his perspiring brow to the night breeze.

"How came it there?" said Philip. "And why didn't you know of it before?"

"Oh," replied Warren with impatience, "what difference can it make how it got there? For my part I think only of the contents. There are a hundred ways how. My father probably wrote it before he went South, intending that it should reach me only in case of his death."

"And Mr. Lawrence Cone concealed it?"

"I don't know that. It is likely my precious uncle was ignorant of its existence, or at least gave it so little heed that he forgot it. It is pretty certain that he never tumbled over my father's papers, his sole desire being to extinguish the memory of the Senior and get rid of the person of the Junior. I have no love for my uncle, but I acquit him of any intention of wronging me."

"Then why the deuce should he refuse you access to the papers?"

"Because he bristles with antagonism; and because my friend, Philip Giles, was mounted on a theory and riding it to the devil."

"Would he have yielded to your persuasions?"

"I cannot tell. But with this experience I shall never again invite a man to a friendly concession by knocking him down at the start."

"My dear boy, a failure or two should never take the wind out of a theory. The difficulty was, we gave up too soon. In a second or third trial I should have thrown him, and pinned his ill-temper under my thumb."

"You have got the true philosopher's composition,

Philip; you would stick to your theory, no doubt, if facts had knocked every pin from under it."

"It's a poor theory," said Philip, "that cannot stand a little battling from what you call facts."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

**I**N a little room, near the top of the village inn, Warren opened out the pages and began to read. At first his sight was blinded by tears, and the words disappeared in a mist; then his heart was in such commotion that he could not grasp the meaning of the sentences. It was a strange situation, and wrought up every feeling and sensibility. Here was one speaking that had long been dumb; here was admission into the secret history and sufferings of a father always so tenderly loved; here was hope that that father's fame and honor should again shine brightly; here was promise of rewarded love! His emotions, however, soon yielded to his passionate desire to possess the secrets of the pages; he fairly devoured the contents; his eyes, heart, brain, took them up. He read with speed, vehemence, sometimes with passion. Dismay, sorrow, exultation, ran through his blood, swift or slow, with the nature of the theme.

Philip thrummed upon the table, stared out of the windows at the stars and at the dead black earth and shrubbery; paced the floor with such rapid steps that he endangered his head in the short limits and his absent thoughts; and when he had repeated this round a dozen times, flung himself in a chair before Warren. "What do you find? What is it?" he exclaimed, unable to restrain the impatient queries longer. Warren laid down the pages. They were

completed. A great flush was upon his cheek, and his eyes burned with the fire of profound sensation.

"Philip," he cried, "my father was an honest man."

"I reasoned backward from the son to the father, and was convinced of that truth long ago," said Philip. "Is that all we turned burglars for?"

"No," said Warren, "this paper is proof to me of all I desire to know, and I do believe it will convince others. It is a clear statement of my father's misfortunes, by what unhappy circumstances his reputation became involved in the loss of his property; it is a confession, too, and an accusation. I knew enough before to know who was the really guilty man in my father's adversities. This document proves it."

"Major Thelton?"

"Yes. But I mean to read it to you. I want your advice now as much as ever."

"It is yours, my boy, without a fee."

"And with no crotchets or theories, let me stipulate," said Warren.

"Let me hear, and talk of conditions afterward."

Warren began, with a tremulous passion and grief in his tones.

"I write this history for you, my son," were the opening words, "because I desire to justify myself in your sight, if I cannot in that of others, and with the hope that if I cannot live long enough to make a restitution to those I have wronged, you, if ever worldly successful, may do something toward rescuing my name from infamy. It is certain that you will encounter taunts and criminations from those who have suffered by me, and for your sake it is necessary that you should know the extent of my guilt, and

the innocence of my motives. This paper is to be read only after my death. If God is merciful, I may be enabled to wipe out the disgraces it records, before I am called to an account before Heaven."

We will not follow Warren at length through the long and elaborate paper, but catching at the facts so far as they are necessary to the elucidation of our narrative, state them briefly.

Mr. Roderick Hoffman was a prosperous merchant. He became intimately associated with Robert Thelton, and the two adventured together in various speculations. Their enterprises became extensive and promised fairly, but they drew heavily upon the capital of each. Hoffman was infatuated, deluded by the sophistry of Thelton, and impelled by the desire of accumulation which seizes with the force of a master passion those concerned in financial or mercantile operations. He invested everything—his money, credit, paper, in the glittering and delusive schemes. The principal of these was one of Thelton's own concoction. The major secretly held a vast number of shares in a southern joint stock company, organized with the combined purpose of Banking, Trade and Transportation. Its prospectus was brilliant, whose promises appeared, even to a cautious judgment, remarkably flattering. It aimed to develop the resources of a fruitful region, multiplying its products, supplying a market, and creating the capital or rather credit for its commerce and its industrial pursuits. It proposed to make loans to planters secured upon their staples, to establish lines of Transportation, and to control by its vast capital the market values of products. It was supposed that by means of its extensive loans it could secure the purchase of cotton under circumstances peculiarly favora-

ble, and in quantities so large as to influence and even dictate the market price. It was simply by its loans to force products into its own channels, and by its enormous capital to be enabled to hold the staples until markets were favorable. These schemes were set forth glowingly, and captivated the imaginations of several northern speculators, and a little band of capitalists was organized for the purpose of investing in this company and advancing the value of its stock. Thelton was the prime mover, and became the southern agent. Then commenced the drama of deceit, intrigue, invention, and false play. An extensive purchase of shares was made at low figures, and then as if goaded by a spur, the stock sprang upward. Thelton wrote flatteringly and exultingly from the South:

"Do not hesitate, but purchase freely," were his words; "the shares will advance at least fifty per cent. above their present value. You will trust to the judgment of an old financier, when he tells you that the prospects of the company are most brilliant. The objects proposed are perfectly feasible. The State will be revolutionized; its labor, products, commerce, credit, will advance beyond all precedent. Money already begins to centre here. Our banking operations multiply daily; we are enabled to negotiate with great readiness, and people already clamor for our advantageous loans." Letters of this character poured in upon the capitalists. The stock advanced swiftly, and their gains already appeared enormous. But Thelton wrote, urging further investments. "The shares," said he, "are nowhere near their culmination. It has been mainly the successful banking operations alone which have advanced their value so greatly. In a few months the commercial projects will begin to operate. The lines of communication are open,

and the transportation receipts are swelling rapidly. Trade of all kinds centres into the hands of the company; they will buy under peculiar advantages, transport to their own profit, and sell at times and under circumstances to insure large returns. We shall almost command the prices of southern staples. You may depend upon advances in the shares as certain as you depend on to-morrow." The little band of capitalists were exultant. They could not be deceived. Thelton sent them the most convincing statistics and tabular proofs. Figures do not lie, it is said, but the major knew that they could deceive more successfully than the most plausible and glittering rhetoric. So he plied the capitalists with them, and these little, cunning, unmistakable facts, which every man could study, cast up, and resolve into apparently impregnable conclusions, as easily led our wily capitalists as if they had been mere phantasies of the imagination. There is nothing an ingenious man cannot make out of figures. And until their tricks are understood, their sophistries exposed, they will always render mercantile speculation a trap for the unwary—and even sometimes for the wary. So tables of products, of freightage, of resources, of wealth, undermined the judgment of Mr. Hoffman, and by their splendid aggregates seemed to justify Major Thelton's dazzling prophecies. At last a letter came from Thelton, urging a large and simultaneous purchase of all the shares in the market attainable. "They are now," he wrote, "as high as a hundred and fifty, and will be in three months' time up to one hundred and eighty or two hundred. But so rapidly do they rise, that we must strike at once, and with concert. Send agents to the neighboring cities, and secure at once on a fixed day, all that can be purchased at less than a hundred and fifty. We

shall then control the company, can advance the shares by a few bouncing dividends, and sell easily, or hold, as we may determine. But for my part, I believe the company will pay a fine percentage for fifty years to come on shares double the par value."

Major Thelton's plan was successfully accomplished. A simultaneous purchase of all attainable stock was made, which proved much larger than was supposed, exceeding vastly the estimates of the capitalists. The drafts from their agents to meet these purchases were so unexpectedly large that Mr. Hoffman was compelled, in the sudden emergency, to make use of every available dollar. The transactions had already been so large, that he was involved to the full extent of his wealth, and in the contingency of this last demand he borrowed extensively, pledging his honor and the property he held in trust, and succeeded in meeting the bills only with extreme difficulty. Mr. Hoffman was too shrewd a man not to be alarmed at this unlooked-for excess of shares in the market. He began now coolly to examine the statements of Thelton, and surprised at the long silence which ensued the large purchase, fears and apprehensions of all kinds grew upon him. He resolved to sell, but before he could put his shares in the market, was startled to find that they were rapidly depreciating. Rumors were current impeaching the solvency of the company. Alarmed, and unwilling to submit to the losses which a sale at that juncture would require, he wrote urgently to Thelton for particulars. The only answer was the smooth, polished, imperturbable major himself. He brought bad news, and told it with the urbanity and grace of a gentleman. He admitted that the last purchase was a mistake, and complained that public confidence had sud-

denly and unaccountably been withdrawn from the company. This had caused a temporary depreciation in the shares, but the company was founded on principles so sound, and with objects so feasible, that no one need to be permanently alarmed. And Major Thelton, with this explanation, withdrew to his country villa, and bore the misfortunes of the company with the coolness of a philosopher. It was not until long after that it became known that the sudden excess of shares in the market was caused by Major Thelton's prudent disposal of his own stock. All the large number of shares, originally purchased at a paltry figure in a fictitious name, and held without the knowledge of his co-workers, and all the stock subsequently purchased in his own name, were, on the very day of the purchase, offered by the major's secret agents in the various stock-markets. The result is briefly summed. The major returned from his brilliant financial campaign a victor, bearing with him splendid trophies, and Mr. Hoffman and the capitalists were ruined men. The stock never recovered, but sunk to a mere nominal and paltry value. The company was proven to be a bubble, a concerted swindle, adroitly entrenched behind the bulwarks of the law. Mr. Hoffman was a ruined man every way—his property, his credit, all. Money borrowed upon his honor, property in trust, his reputation and honor pledged upon the means borrowed to meet the unlooked-for drafts—a bankrupt in name and everything. His innocence could not appear, or men would not adjudge him so. Failure in finance and trade is always a crime, and a failure like this met with neither justice nor mercy. He fled, with the desperate hope of recovering fortune and restoring his wounded name.

That portion of the narrative which referred to his

guardianship of the children of his old friend, William Ashby, was the most affecting. The property thus intrusted to his care had gone with the rest. "I do not extenuate this breach of trust," he said. "It was unpardonable. But when I confessed the truth to the mother of the children, I asked to have my motives and intentions exonerated. But she was unforgiving and suspicious in temper, unable to comprehend the nature of financial transactions, petulant, perhaps from a wasting sickness that was carrying her rapidly to the grave, and she upbraided me with harshness, accusation and condemnation. I escaped from her presence with her reproaches ringing in my ears, and almost maddening me. For a moment I contemplated suicide, but with better thoughts resolved to live, with the one object of restoring to those orphans the wealth of which they had been so cruelly deprived. They probably were taught to hate, condemn, and always to associate my name with their misfortune. It was probably right, and I desire not to complain. But I charge you, Warren, to seek them out, tell my story, and solemnly to adopt my debt to them as your own. I do not bequeath this as a weight to encumber your exertions and repress your ambition, but, believing that you love me, the performance of a task like this will prove, I am sure, an animating pleasure and a sacred, therefore, a cheerful duty."

When this pitiful history was told, Philip stretched his ten fingers in the air.

"What a pity," said he, "there is such a thing as civilization. If the savage times, when every man was his own judge and executioner, were back again, I should be happy the day I could get my fingers around that Thelton's wind-pipe."

"And I have met him."

"Did you stab him with your indignation? Did he know you?"

"I did not fail to speak plainly. He knew me, for during his early connections with my father he was frequently a visitor at the house."

"Well," said Philip, "what is your next card?"

"What I desire above all things, is to ascertain if there is any truth in the rumor that my father still lives."

"Of course."

"It is not improbable," resumed Warren. "Up to the time of his illness, he had failed to accomplish anything toward the restitution he had so much at heart. If he recovered from the illness, is it not consistent with all the facts that he should attempt, in concealment and secrecy, to work out his ends?"

"I think so," replied Philip, with a hearty blow of his hand upon his knee, as if he had obtained some sudden insight into the subject.

"Then what do you advise me to do?" asked Warren.

"Go South," said Philip, but he spoke abruptly.

"These weeks of idleness have exhausted my money again. I am as poor as ever, and a prolonged journey to me is a great difficulty. Yet I must undertake it in some way or by some means."

"And leave Fanny?"

"I should desire first to see Fanny and her brother, and read to them this tender story of my father."

"Will you take my advice?" asked Philip.

"If I like it."

"You have no money; nor I. But my profession goes with me; I am gypsy by habit and trade, and wherever I stop

can pitch my tent. There is scarcely one of those southern cities in which I have not outraged Shakspeare. Your trade is at home; it is not vagabond, and does not travel. Besides, you have your love affairs to look after. Let me go South. I can live by the way; I'm good at a hunt; and it may be better in many ways that I should attempt the search than you."

"Philip, this is a noble offer. Yet how can I permit it? I am impatient to ascertain the facts, and the duty clearly falls upon me. Besides, you have a family now."

"I should trust to you to look in upon Madam Todd and little Susan occasionally; and as for money, I can make as much abroad as at home. Warren, my lad, we must talk about this."

"We can talk about it, I suppose, but I must not yield."

"There are reasons why you must."

"What are they?"

"I cannot tell them. But make up your mind to let me go instead of you. I will give you my reasons in my first letter from the South."

"That will not do."

"You will think better of it by to-morrow. It is past midnight, so let's to bed."

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

FANNY now wandering about blithely and gay, and Mary, stealing away from the cottage for a half pensive revery, under the trees, met and knew each other. Each had looked in to the other's eyes before, but now under these new circumstances, as they came face to face their hearts stopped, poised, fluttered, then flew plump together. It cannot be called a sudden friendship, for each heart carried those antecedent sympathies that rendered the other its fellow. To Fanny, Mary was the tender girl who had watched Warren in his illness, whose very fingers had banded his wounds. To Mary, Fanny was the mysterious and blessed being whom the splendid youth had stooped to love. Friendship is not always in the citadel, subdued only by the slow siege, approached by parallels, through outworks and frowning walls, and won at last by the sheer force of service done. Sometimes it is more generous; two meet and put their thoughts into some silver speech—their eyes glance fire to fire—and then arm-locked they walk off through the years together. It was in this pleasant way that Fanny and Mary met, liked, and thinking tender things of each other, were friends.

It is so fine a picture that we think of it with the eyes wandering musingly through the window, and the fancy busy at the canvas. Look down through the long green vistas, and see them walk waist encircled, with light feet that toss the long grasses in their path; see them sculptured

against old trees, white upon the brown, knotty, burly, trunks; see them bending over the swift blue tide, with light laughter, and low mirth; see them looking upward at the moon, sentiment bubbling to their lips at the bidding of the pale vestal. Fanny is as gay as the time when she was not a lover. There is such sweet warmth and hope around her heart that all her glad humors dance and prank, and in the heart of the wood sometimes run into little riots of mirth. And Mary watches Fanny and is gay in the mere reflection of her happiness. She looks up to Fanny as one who loves, and is privileged to love; she puts her cheek upon her breast, and courts the low, fascinating, irresistible theme. And when Fanny, with her fingers clasping Mary's white brow, whispers the rich secret in her ear, there is rose in the cheek of Fanny, and pale flushings in Mary's.

Fanny was charmed with Uncle Robert, and he, inspired by his delight with her, gave his generous philosophy a wider sail. "Look here now," said he to Varley, "see them girls! What? Ha! Tell me human nature ain't beautiful after them!"

"They're pretty," said Varley grumly, and looked for his pipe.

"Now, that's unhandsome," said Uncle Robert.

"You say so," retorted Varley.

"You don't give up, Nat, when you're beaten. Now I hold that them two girls just knocks your philosophy out and out."

"I haven't just begun to live," growled Varley; "I've seen nice girls before. But I can't help it."

"No!" said Heart, behind his hand to Fanny, "he can't help it. It's his liver. He really can't help it."



"Pshaw!" said Varley, "I'm sixty-two, and knew a good girl once—well! No matter."

"What was it, Nat?" said Uncle Hall tenderly and with surprise.

"A bad business."

"You've had your wrong?"

Varley nodded his head, and smoked with unusual rapidity.

"So have I," replied Heart; "and so has Mary, here. Well, we forgive them. That's what I believe it's Christian to do."

"You are not poor," said Liver, puffing himself into a screen of smoke out of which he talked. "Haven't been robbed of your money, and all?"

"By whom, Nat?"

"One of your good friends. Your noble fellows. Never mind."

"But it is mind, Varley."

"Ask rich Major Thelton. That's all."

"And that pretty girl? I've heard about your property before. That was unfortunate, no doubt. But of course the old major thought he was right—perhaps he was. The matter was too knotty for me. But that girl, Nat?"

"It was forty years ago. I didn't mean to speak of it. Well, my sister, a pretty girl as either of them, was cheated by a handsome fellow—her heart was broken. That's all." And he fell to smoking sturdily without another word. Uncle Robert, with a hand spread upon each knee, watched the cynic for some seconds in silence. Then he turned to Mary, with a solemn idea gathering in his brains that he ought to moralize a little on the sad story indicated in Varley's words.

"Think of that, Mary," said he, shaking his head and looking after Varley, who had walked out into the porch.

"Yes, uncle."

"What happens innocently?"

"Well, uncle."

"And don't you, Mary, make me as"—

Mary's white hand closed upon his lips.

"Now uncle," said she, "how could you hint such a thing? That was unkind."

"Was it?" said Heart, his eye winking. "Do you think so, Miss Fanny?"

"Yes, Mr. Hall. To think of little Mary in such a way makes one laugh."

"Well, I *don't* think of her in such a way. You see I'm not good at a sermon. I don't know how to begin, nor when, but as I'm told that young folks must have good advice sometimes, I thought"—

"My dear Mr. Hall," said Fanny, "Mary is a white snow-flake. She can teach us all how to be good."

"Oh, Fanny!" said Mary, and thinking of a little secret passion which she daily rebuked and vainly strove to thrust from her heart, blushed a deep, conscious red.

"So she can!" roared Uncle Hall, "and I'm an ass, that's clear. Mary, my dear, I ask your pardon."

Fanny wanted to bring Charles to the cottage, and had promised her friends that he would be sure to come. She was certain that he would be pleased with the quaint, noble-hearted Uncle, and the charming simple Mary. "I'm sure," she muttered, "that this once would have pleased him better than the major's cold parlors. I am so tired of them. Once when I was tired of a thing, that was enough. But now—there's Miss Thelton, I suppose." But instead of



thinking of Miss Thelton she thought of Warren, and pardoned Charles, no doubt, for she smiled and blushed. But one evening he consented, and Fanny led him proudly into the low-beamed parlor. Charles had appreciation for character. In those earlier days when he and Fanny in their summer jaunts took up humble lodgings with simple village people, he liked the quaint old country gossips, and chatted with them on their lowly themes. And with Uncle Robert he slipped into good fellowship almost immediately. Even Varley watched him over his pipe with interest. Of course Charles was a smoker, and loved a pipe, else he had been no true artist. These studios nurse free manners and hearty tastes. Charles, although less jovial than his fellows, had known roaring times, and smoked and drank and danced with that gusto and splendid abandon that never get down from attics into respectable first-floors. He took a pipe from Uncle Robert and smoked with such grace and appreciation that the warm-hearted host could have hugged him. And this was the reason, no doubt, that Varley was mollified, and looked upon him kindly. And as the three smoked, there were Fanny and Mary together on the hearth, seated low, Fanny's head against the chimney-jamb, and her fingers in Mary's hand. The brisk, but light blaze on the old squat fire-dogs, flung its red tint richly into the faces of the damsels, and shone through the smoke from the pipes, tinting it ruddily, and glistening on the brows of the smokers.

I cannot repeat all the pleasant things that were said that night. Uncle Warren was twice himself. I may go further and say three times himself. Never did he look so genially, and enjoy so heartily. Occasionally in the very excess of good feeling he made a dart at Varley, swooping

at the cynic's philosophy, with a broad, devastating way that seemed to leave scarcely a rag for him to stand by. And Varley warmed into a mild sense of enjoyment, and even laughed at some of Ashby's good natured hits at the world. For Charles talked finely and with great play of humor and fancy. He liked this listening with the heart in the ears. Mary, to whom within a few weeks life had appeared in a new form and in fresh colors, turned her ear to him but kept her eye on the floor. She thought of Warren—and these were sensations that grew stronger every day—and wondered why there mingled in her keen delight that undertone of sadness, that half-uttered sigh that followed in the steps of every laugh. These were only the little beginnings of a coming aching sense—the seed just swelling that was to expand into a big desire to grasp life, to bring it down to the needs of her heart, to seize and live through it in some form or manner. And if love should never disperse the troubled dreams, quench the strange thirst, supply life and being for all wants, and fill up the measure of her content, then—who shall tell the story of a heart against which no other heart builds itself? No fate like this for Mary, let us hope; for love goes out and brings back love to itself! It is a bee that hives. It is the south wind stealing and giving odors.

As Charles walked home that night by the side of Fanny, he left three friends who looked after him wistfully.

"Now, what do you say?" said Heart, and he clapped his hand upon the shoulder of Varley.

"I like a man who can smoke a pipe," said Varley.

"A wonder," roared Heart; "here's a change—Nat Varley has his likings as well as his dislikings."

Varley's acid aspect, however, had not changed. He

looked as surly and cynical as ever. But Uncle Robert believed, and so did Mary, that there was a secret, covert kindness in the man's nature, and that his sharp tongue and bitter looks denied, yet only hid the better impulses within. "Don't fear," Uncle Robert has said to Mary, "if I should die, there's Nat Varley, he'll be a friend to you until you get a sweetheart." And Mary was as sure of this as her uncle.

"I want you to tell me, darling, what's the matter," said the uncle a little later that very night, when Varley had tramped off to bed. He drew a chair up before the hearth and seated Mary on his knee.

"Now tell me," said he, "you're pale, and not so happy as you used to be. Mary, there's one side of my heart that's never got old, and can understand young people's feelings. So Mary, don't hold back, but say the word."

Mary started, and would have escaped from the knee, but her uncle held her firmly. So she turned tremblingly, and looked down into the ashes.

"Now, Mary," said Uncle Robert, coaxingly.

"It's nothing," whispered Mary.

"Nothing? That's a convenient word. It used to be nothing, dear. Now it ain't. Because who ever before saw Mary fall a-thinking with her needle in her hand, forgetting about the stitches? Who ever saw Mary stop short in a song, and sigh, instead of singing? who ever saw Mary with her face against the window, and little tears in her eyes?"

Mary did not answer, but kept her eyes upon the hearth.

"I'm not so old, Mary, to be blind; nor so old to be deaf; nor so dull not to know something of a young girl's

heart. I've guessed some queer puzzles, Mary darling, and perhaps now I can guess this."

"No, no," whispered Mary, with a suffocating accent.

"Why? Now, Mary, why?"

"Because—oh, uncle, there's nothing to guess—nothing that must ever be thought of. I never mean to sigh any more, uncle, or be absent, or think sad things sitting by the window."

And Mary playfully patted his broad, red cheeks with her white hands, and looked beseechingly into his eyes. But the uncle took the white hands in his, and spoke again.

"These city gentlemen, dear, are fine birds. If they should dazzle my Mary"—

"Now, uncle," cried Mary, "this from you, who are so generous! Please don't. I'm not so very foolish as you think I am. Of course, I know they are far above us; and I'm glad of it, because I like nobody so well as you and Mr. Varley, cross as he is. Please never say anything about Mr. James again."

"But I didn't say anything about Mr. James."

"There now," exclaimed Mary, "how quick you catch me up! Of course I meant to say, or Mr. Ashby either."

"But you said Mr. James first," replied the uncle, and shook his head.

"Uncle," said Mary, winding her arms about his neck, "I'm a good girl, ain't I?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, trust me, dear—that's all. We all liked Mr. James; we couldn't help it. And if ever"—she put her now burning cheeks close to his, and her hands trembled on his shoulder, "if ever—I say this, uncle, to be frank and

honest with you—if ever I was in the least bit foolish in the world, I know better now, and it's all over, and by and by—perhaps to-morrow—I shall be as gay as in the gayest time. That's all, uncle; and please never say a word about it again."

And, with a hasty kiss upon his cheek, she sprang from his knee and ran out of the room, leaving Uncle Robert staring at the smoking embers on the hearth. A half hour passed in profound silence; then cautiously, as if his steps would awaken something of the past, he arose, and was stealing from the room, when his steps were suddenly checked by a cry of anguish from without.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHARLES and Fanny, walking home from the cottage, saw a figure gliding along in the shadows of the trees by the roadside. They both stood still, when it disappeared.

"That was Hawley, I'm sure," said Charles. "What can he want? and how came he to follow us here? Have you met him, Fanny?"

"Yes."

"It's a little mysterious, his turning up in this place, of all others."

"I think it intentional," said Fanny.

"What was the motive?"

"He's a plague," replied Fanny, quickly.

"He's a fool, I know; and folly, I suppose, is apt to break out in defiance of all rule or method. But when I met him two days ago, he leered, and smirked, and danced in a way to render me decidedly uncomfortable. I don't know what the fellow means."

"I'm really half tempted, Charley, to tell you the grand motive that brought him here."

"If you know it, I command you."

"I might as well, for the fellow has transferred his allegiance. It would be a pity if all lovers were so changeable."

"A lover? Not Hawley? Why, Fanny, have you been coquetting with our great Historian?"

"My dear sir," said Fanny, pertly, "the coquetry was on his side. The impudent fellow dared to get down on his knees to me. At first I laughed, then I got angry, he was so much in earnest."

"The villain!" exclaimed the artist, with emphasis.

"But it's all over with now. Down he came here to attempt a siege, I suppose; but scarcely did he appear before the citadel than his fancy was caught by Mary. The desertion was sudden. He tripped over without a 'by your leave,' whisking his glove, and now persecutes her ruthlessly. He turns up in all our walks, breaks into our talks, and annoys poor Mary—or at least annoys me beyond endurance."

"The fellow is a bigger fool than I thought. What does Mary say?"

"Mary, Charles, is as white, and simple, and tender as a dove. She wouldn't pain him for the world, and doesn't quite understand him. She opens her eyes—that's all."

"She's too pure for him to think of mischief, eh?"

"Why, Charley, as to what a queer-headed fellow like Mr. Hawley may think, I don't know; but if he should whisper a wrong word to Mary, I'll"—

"What, Fanny?"

"Find somebody to punish him!" exclaimed Fanny, striking her two little hands together with feminine fierceness. "If he dare"—

"Why, Fanny, you make me think of Beatrice," interrupted Charles, gaily. "It was with some such look as that of yours that she bade Benedict kill Claudio for poor Hero's sake."

"I like my friends," said Fanny. "Hawley is mad as well as foolish. I tremble, for I am sure he cannot be trusted."

"Madness and folly," retorted Charles, "are the natural conditions of lovers."

"Except with that splendid fellow, Charles Ashby."

"Is he a lover?" said Charles, with a laugh, but turning away his head.

"Yes," said Fanny, shortly, and with good emphasis.

"There was once," said Charles, still with averted face, "when I could have relied upon his better sense."

"And I."

"What does that mean?"

"Exactly what *you* mean, Charley. I could have relied upon a sense too well balanced to fall in love with the daughter of an enemy."

"Are *you* mad?"

"Charles, you hate Warren, because he is the son of our guardian. But Major Thelton was the man that ruined Mr. Hoffman, and so"—

"This is incredible. Major Thelton knew Hoffman—had business with him. That was all."

"Warren will prove some day a different story."

"My dear, that fellow got up that story to exonerate himself. I am in the major's confidence, and know the facts. You have been cheated, Fanny."

"Oh, Charles, I wish you had my head."

"Do you think it so much better than mine?"

"Not nearly so great as yours, but so much more sensible. Just think of that remark. The major in your confidence, revealing all his wicked acts!"

"He is your host, Fanny."

"I wish he wasn't. I wish we were back to our little parlor. I wish my brother was as kind, just, generous and

happy as once. Then he might love whom he pleased, and I would be the gladdest sister in the world."

"And I have lost all those qualities which you enumerate?" said Charles coldly.

Fanny caught his hand, wound her arm around his waist. "Charles, forgive Warren."

He loosened her hold from his waist, but held her hands.

"Fanny, you have seen Warren." He said this with a lowering brow.

The poor girl trembled, and her flushed cheeks hung upon her breast.

"You have met the man who struck me, who would have killed me—and you dare to plead for him."

"Charles! Charles!"

She sobbed and tried to wind her arms about him. He prevented it.

"I could not have believed this, Fanny. We, who have loved each other so well, and have been so happy alone in the world. To forsake me for my enemy—for one who is the son of a villain—for one who inflicted that bitter shame."

"Hear me, Charles."

"Have you seen him since that night? I will hear an answer to that question—nothing else."

"Charles, you must hear more."

"Then I see that Fanny has forgotten her brother—has lost sight of his feelings, his outraged person, his insulted honor—has foregone her old affections, trust, love, duty—has gone from one who has protected and reared her, to a nameless adventurer. Fanny, I cannot forgive this. I am wounded as I did not think it was in the power of any one to wound me."

"What should I have done?" muttered Fanny, the hot tears upon her cheek.

"Spurned him!" exclaimed Charles.

"He was my lover," said Fanny, forced to this confession and this defence. "He means some day, Charles, to deserve and obtain your pardon."

"I ask your choice," said the brother, without regarding her words, and lashing himself into a fury; "will you forsake him or me?"

"Oh, Charles!"

"You must answer me, Fanny. You are privileged to choose, but by Heaven, if you cling to him, you cannot be my sister. I repeat my question."

"Have patience, Charles! Be generous! Do not force this terrible alternative upon me. All will be well yet."

"I have your reply," said Charles, and walked deliberately away from her side. Fanny gasped, almost shrieked, then stood watching him like one stunned. She remained still and fairly breathless, until his figure disappeared in the shadows of the road. Then a pain, a blade, cut down into the very core of her heart; she staggered, almost fell, passionately extended her hands after Charles and called to him, and then with a sudden impulse, wild with terror, grief, dismay, turned and fled down the road toward Mary's cottage. She burst through the gate, staggered upon the porch, and nearly fell against the door, as she beat upon the panels and passionately called upon the inmates. Mary had only recently escaped from her uncle's knee, and was sitting pensively by the window in her little chamber, when she heard the cry and the strange summons. She ran down to the door and caught Fanny in her arms as she threw it open.

"I'm lost ! lost !" cried Fanny with convulsive passion,  
 "Oh, Mary ! Mary !"

"What is it, dear ?" said Mary, and tried to soothe her.

"Mary !" cried the bewildered, maddened Fanny. "I'm lost ! abandoned ! Oh, take me in ! save me !"

And she staggered into the parlor, and fell upon the floor, clasping Mary's knees.

"What can it mean ?" said Uncle Robert, standing awe-struck, and speaking in a whisper.

"The bad world," said Varley, who had hastened from his room at the clamor.

"It's God's world," said Heart, whom nothing could shake from his sublime philosophy. And stooping down he lifted up this waif in God's world, and bore it like one of His, tenderly, and laid it upon the sofa.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

IT was all impulse with Charles when he strode away from the side of Fanny. He was hurt and angry, but quite unconscious of all that his words implied. It was only when he turned to look back, and saw Fanny flying along the road, that he began to comprehend what he had done. Then, with an imprecation upon his own cruelty, he ran rapidly after her. He called, but Fanny's grief made her deaf. His hand was on the gate at the moment the door was opened, and he saw his sister fall into the arms of Mary. As the door swung to and left him alone in the garden path, the separation appeared completed, and he stood still, astounded at the grief so suddenly precipitated by his harshness and injustice. During long years of struggle and deprivation, he had never quarrelled with Fanny. The irritations that come with poverty never had the power to provoke even a momentary antagonism. Their affections had flowed smoothly, their sympathies, tastes, feelings, pleasures, and pursuits, had been identical, their lives an interwoven web. The discords that glide under so many roofs had flown above their attic parlor. This rendered the sudden estrangement so startling to each ; but Charles was both generous and vindictive. He upbraided his hasty words, but the wound in his self-love still pricked him. Had Fanny been before him, there would have been instant reconciliation, no doubt, and the brother would have expiated for his harshness by carrying his own wounded feel-

ings secretly. But as she was safe among friends, and the hour was late, he determined not to see her until morning. His secret resentments had something to do with this resolution. "If Fanny loves my enemies," he reflected, "she cannot expect our old feelings to remain. It was the most unsisterly thing in the world to meet Warren Hoffman even while the mark of his hand was still upon my brow. It is she," he argued as he sullenly walked homeward, "who has caused the estrangement. She cannot have both lover and brother. It is indifference to me, our mother, and our common cause, to look kindly on the son of the man who ruined us. Had she loved me as she once did, would she have tolerated for a moment the presence of a man who committed that accursed indignity? It is her duty to hate him as I do. She is no longer near to me. I offered her a choice, and she deliberately forsook me for the vagabond. Hang him! It would be a pleasure to meet him at this moment."

And the artist in his heat and temper struck at the air. But as for his sophistry, he labored hard to justify himself, and didn't succeed. He mused upon the matter up and down, sometimes with upbraidings both upon himself and Fanny, sometimes with hot epithets upon Warren as the real cause, sometimes with generous contrition. He presented himself to Emily only to explain Fanny's absence, and then withdrew. He slept little that night, for Fanny's cry haunted him, and when he fell into a slumber the incident repeated itself in dreams, distorted and exaggerated. At an early hour he left the house to find his sister, with a calm purpose of restoring amity and peace. "But," said he absurdly enough, "Fanny really must give up young Hoffman. There is no other way. It will be painful of course, but there is no choice."

And with these wise words he walked with his olive branch to the cottage.

As we in our invisible caps hover before and around him, and look down into his heart, where at bottom there is so much goodness and tenderness, how we desire to warn him—how, if our thoughts could run into words, we could plead to him in our best eloquence and most persuasive tones—and adjure him by all that dear past with his sister, to carry with him a peace-offering and no condition! By that sister's tender, living affection to look kindly upon her maiden choice! by her purity and goodness to believe that the man she could love must be worthy her trust and affection! for her sake and happiness to thrust away and forget old memories and old hatreds! for the sake of generous truth to forgive the supposed crimes of the father in the innocent son! and in the name of honesty and justice to frankly confess that that unhappy blow followed taunts and provocation that manhood could not have failed to resent! Think tenderly of Fanny, we would say, and repeat the phrase in varied forms a hundred times. Think justly of Warren, the lover, we would whisper; and blow it in his ear upon every wind. Are you not a lover, we would half-humorously, half-tenderly mutter, and can a lover forget what love is, and young hearts are? Think of Emily, O Judge! then be honest in your judgments if you can. Recollect that you liked Warren when you knew him only by his own virtues and not through the offences of his father—then step back to the old time, and be magnanimous. Beware, you who can dispense either happiness or sorrow, how you use a power which is an attribute of Heaven, and shows likest Heaven's when mercy seasons justice!



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

“MR. ASHBY is not at breakfast,” said the polite Major Thelton.

“No, sir,” replied Emily, coolly. The father and daughter were alone, for the Vanberts had hurried back to the city with the earliest townward set of the fashionable tides.

“Am I right, my dear,” said the major after a brief pause, “if I accept Mrs. Vanbert’s hints as probable?”

“Mrs. Vanbert,” said Emily, “is very observing, but I do not quite understand your allusions.”

“You will pardon me then if I speak very plainly. Is Mr. Ashby the favorite with you which she suspects?”

“He is a gentleman,” replied Emily, evasively.

“He is an artist—a successful one, I believe; but artists are a class we naturally fear, it is so rarely that they make steadfast members of society.”

“You invited him here, I believe, sir.”

“Yes. It is pleasant to recognize and encourage genius.”

“Only socially?” inquired Emily.

“It is necessary for young ladies to consider expediency, however unromantic that may sound. A lady, Emily, with your fine tastes and talent for society, would be only happy as the mistress of an establishment.”

“I’m not so foolish, sir,” said Emily, smiling, “as to

believe in the charm of poverty. I am fond of society, life, and the world. Yet, there is one thing I like better.”

“What is that?”

“Will you pardon me if I do not name it? Romance in a woman of the world sounds so absurd! Yet, permit me to ask you if I have evinced hitherto that eagerness to put myself at the head of an establishment usually attributed to women like me?”

“No, indeed. Quite the contrary, and inexplicably so. You have refused, I must admit, very advantageous offers.”

“As I have done, sir, I shall continue to do. Please do not name advantageous offers to me any more. Nor encourage those who present themselves in that mercantile way. I am serious when I say that I shall only marry the man I love.”

“I will not quarrel with your intentions,” replied the major, with the most unruffled politeness.

“Your promise is made hastily. I am afraid that my intentions will not please you.”

“Then you do sanction Mr. Ashby’s addresses?”

“You like him, sir?”

“Yes, tolerably. But it is not pleasant to think of him in that aspect. I asked him here because I had reasons for making him my friend.”

“And I know those reasons, sir!”

The major almost dropped the cup which he held in his hand, and even turned slightly pale. But his composure was regained almost as swiftly as it was lost. He pushed back from the table, armed himself with his snuff-box, and looked smiling and prepared. The major’s snuff was an indispensable aid in those numerous delicate occasions



which a man of his habits and antecedents is so sure to encounter. Once prepared, his fingers in the pungent powder, and he will turn successfully many a dangerous corner, and while he applies the odorous compound to his nose, adroitly throws dust in the eyes of his adversary.

"I do not quite understand you, Emily," said he.

Emily was nerved up to a task, and with her fingers closely interlocked in her lap she continued,—

"I happen to be aware, sir, that Charles and his sister were the wards of Mr. Roderick Hoffman."

"My dear," said the major, "you utter that commonplace fact as if it were a mystery."

"And that Mr. Hoffman," said Emily, intent only upon her subject and careless of her father's interruption, "was the partner or associate of my father in a large and important financial transaction."

The major with some haste applied the snuff; then as he delicately flung into the air the remainder in his fingers, he gaily remarked,—

"My dear, finance is an odd subject for a lady, and one not easily learned in drawing-rooms."

"These facts which I wish to mention, dear sir, are so intimately connected with your past history and perhaps my future, that you will forgive, I'm sure, a little unfeminine knowledge."

"Please go on," said the major somewhat hardly.

"This speculation of yours and Mr. Hoffman's, resulted, I believe, very favorably to you and very unfavorably to him."

"I interrupt you," said the major, "to inquire the source of your information."

"I have been out in the world so much," said Emily,

"that I heard the rumors current in society, and of those concerning you or me have been curious enough to inquire into."

"Would it not have been well," said the major with benignant serenity, "if you had applied to me and not to others for the facts? Misrepresentation is a common evil of society, you know."

"Why sir, that is exactly what I am doing."

The major smiled with satisfaction, and bowed. For our gentleman was never so scrupulously polite, as when he was in danger of being confronted by some awkward accusation, and the habits of a lifetime were retained even in the interview with his daughter. Had Emily been the formidable Mrs. Vanbert herself, he could not have been more formal, studied, and smooth.

"But you will permit me," resumed Emily, who pursued the subject with great pain and hesitation, but which she concealed behind formal sentences and a cold manner, "you will permit me, sir, first to repeat the story as I have heard it. Mr. Hoffman, I have been told, was ruined, and even dishonored. He failed to meet even his debts of honor, and the property of his wards, unwisely invested with the rest, was swept away in the general loss."

"I do not recollect," said the major, "of anything I am to correct in this statement."

"Then let me ask you, sir, if the fact that an enterprise or speculation from which you derived profits so large, and he experienced a loss so overwhelming, has not naturally excited considerable surprise—need I say suspicion?"

"I rarely interest myself in the surprises, suspicions, or the gossip of the world. What may have been thought I did not heed—perhaps," and he smiled, "I do not care."

"Unfortunately," replied Emily, "the singular circumstances excite my surprise. I cannot understand how the identical speculation could result so differently to different men."

"My dear, I told you at the beginning that finance is a knotty subject."

"But honesty is not a knotty subject," said Emily, with spirit. Even the major flushed through all his politeness and splendid manner.

"My dear," said he, tapping the snuff-box, "are you not using strange terms?"

"Father, I am unskilled, as you say, in business. I'm sure that its morality is not always of a high order, and perhaps this transaction may possess no features worse than those that daily occur in Wall street. But, dear sir, there is no difficulty in understanding between right and wrong. And I ask you earnestly if Mr. Hoffman, and through him others, were deprived of fortune by that unhappy enterprise, if you, who secured results so brilliant, should not have done something magnanimous for them?"

"Now I see," said the major, "how impractical you are. Would not such a step have been an implied confession of guilt?"

"No matter what it would have been, sir, so long as it was just. Now let me tell you what strange things have grown up out of this unhappy story. We know the Ashbys, and what sufferings they have experienced as a consequence of that unfortunate speculation. And it now appears that the son of Mr. Hoffman is in love with Fanny, and his claim is rejected by the brother, because he is the son of the man who he supposes so bitterly wronged him."

"Why, this is a romance."

"Please think of it as a harsh fact."

"Well, and if I do—what then?"

"It so happens, sir, that Mr. Charles Ashby has honored me with a proposal of marriage."

"Of course! They all do, my dear. You are really a brilliant woman, although my daughter."

"It is a proposal," said Emily, with desperate coolness, "which, under favorable circumstances, I should accept."

"Ha!" The major forgot both his snuff and his composure.

"Because," said Emily, "it would be a union in which my judgment would sanction my feelings."

"Well, Emy," said the major, with resumed politeness, and playfully, "you have always had your own way. You are my only child. I promised you long ago not to attempt to control your affections, and I'm not sure but Charles Ashby, the famous artist, would be a brilliant match after all."

"It would certainly," said Emily, coldly, "secure him as your friend, which you have professed to desire. It would prevent, no doubt, his intrusive inquiries as to the disposition of his father's money."

The major muttered an execration, but still kept his temper.

"Then I suppose that you intend to accept his proposal?"

"No, sir."

"You surprise me. I venture to ask why?"

"He rejects Warren," said Emily, "as Fanny's lover, because he is the son of the man who wronged him. Shall I permit him to marry the daughter of—sir, you will pardon me if I do not complete the sentence."

The major rose, and his manner hardened. He tapped the box, and walked the floor.

"I must still ask," said he, "why you have introduced this subject?"

"For permission," replied Emily, steadily, "to exculpate Mr. Roderick Hoffman to Mr. Charles Ashby; to evince, by some liberal act of yours, that we are ready to restore what, to my unsophisticated morals, appears to have been ill-gained."

Where was the major's urbanity, smoothness, smiles? He turned upon his daughter with a look of such ferocious malignity that she instinctively shuddered. The sunshine was gone; only the hard, cold and angular rock upon his features, as they set into a stern and relentless expression.

"Emily, you are a fool!" Not a rag now of his former politeness! Not a smile! Only a look out of his eyes that almost terrified his daughter into a shriek. But she rose, and leaned against the mantel-shelf.

"And unless," said she, speaking slowly and with effort, "something is done to accomplish this by you, justice shall not at least be delayed when the power becomes mine to render it."

"You are a fool," again repeated the major, and with a curse that rang through the rooms, he threw open the door and strode out of his daughter's presence.

As he passed into the main hall, Charles entered, and they met. The face of each was flushed. Each looked black and lowering. And each intent upon himself scarcely observed the other. They passed with a half nod, the major ascending the stairs, and Charles entering the breakfast-room.

Emily stood by the mantel, grasping it hard, her face

pinched and pale. She stood up erect as Charles entered, and moved slowly and calmly forward to a chair.

"Mr. Ashby, I'm glad to see you."

"I thank you," said Charles, but he paced the floor and beat his hands.

"I perceive," said she, "that something has occurred to agitate you."

"I beg your pardon. I am agitated, and have good cause. I scarcely can believe that I am in my sane senses. I've received a terrible blow. My heart is almost broken."

"You astonish me, indeed. Will you explain?"

"Fanny abandons me—gives me up for a lover—turns from me, who have loved and cherished her so dearly, to an adventurer, to a villain, to a man I hate."

"Why do you hate him?"

"Have I not explained to you the reason why, before?"

"Yes. Yet I ask again, because I've something important to say on that subject, Charles. I do not consider your feelings toward Warren Hoffman just, nor your treatment of your sister kind. The reasons you give for opposing their union are not in my judgment adequate, and I know, Charles, that if you knew all that I know, and which I cannot now reveal, you would exculpate him and his father."

"You say this because you are generous."

"What I say now, Charles, is deliberate and earnest. So assured am I of the injustice of your conduct, that I am going to exact a condition of you."

"Well."

"We are betrothed, Charles."

"Yes."

"If justice were done, the reason that impels you to banish Warren from your affections would also banish me."

I cannot explain further ; but I require you as a condition of my love and hand, to consent to the union of Warren and Fanny."

"Emily."

"I am resolved. And I act not from caprice, but with justice. You must restore these young lovers, or say farewell to me."

"This is madness. You do not know all."

"Much more than you do. Charles, will you yield?"

"Madam," said Charles, with a bow, "you choose to offer your hand with a condition that compromises my honor. I am too proud to accept even your love, trammelled with stipulations of any kind. With your permission, I take my leave."

And our proud and impetuous young artist, with his head in the air, walked away.

Two hours later he was steaming to town, and that very night he entered and stood alone in the cold and cheerless attic-parlor

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

NOTWITHSTANDING Ashby's abrupt departure, he did not leave without sending a brief note to Fanny, with whom he had no serious intention of quarrelling. His note ran as follows :

"DEAR FANNY :

For the first time in our lives there has been anger between us. I do not now inquire into the cause, but it is more unfortunate and of wider effect than you suppose. I leave for town immediately, and suggest that you remain with your friend Mary for a week or two, and perhaps by that time we can discuss our unhappy differences more coolly. Meanwhile I try to bear up under a disaster of another kind, that has shattered my present peace, and perhaps my future happiness. Yours, still tenderly,

"CHARLES."

"What can it mean?" cried Fanny, as she read the lines, then saw in a moment what they meant. Charles and Emily had separated ! Was she the cause ? "It is plain enough that I am the cause," she exclaimed, "and I must go to him—I must see him—I must indeed give up Warren, if that is what separates him from Emily. Yet how could it do so?" There was no answer to the question. She could not link Warren with Charles' love for Emily Thelton, tax her ingenuity as she would. Perhaps he had gone angrily from her to Emily, and a quarrel for some slight cause, an untimely word from Emily perhaps, had unexpectedly sprung up between them. Little words are so often

the dragon's teeth from which spring up armed furies. No matter what the immediate cause, Fanny saw that she in some way was held responsible by her brother, and with the generous impulse of a quick and affectionate nature, was ready to atone, expiate, and lay down her own heart as a sacrifice.

She ran to Mary and read the letter to her, and asked her advice. "Tell me what to do, Mary; for if Charles loves Emily, I must not be the cause of their separation."

Mary had no advice to offer. It was so difficult to see any good reason for dissension anywhere, that her simple intelligence could suggest no remedy for a difficulty that only required common justice all around to adjust at once. Mary probably did not realize that the application of a theory as simple and comprehensive as this would bring the millennium upon us forthwith. When people innocently come together with the single desire of being right and doing right, the Temples of Justice may pass to the rats. There is no such thing as dissension, vex the subject with what complications you may, when both sides are earnest for peace and fairness.

Mary in her perplexity suggested Uncle Robert. Fanny looked up through the crystal water in her eyes, and laughed. That instant Uncle Robert entered. Mary motioned for Fanny to comply, but she put the letter in her bosom, and only smiled. Uncle Robert brightened up when he saw Fanny safe and right, and with an inimitable bob of the head, went out again. This was about the tenth time he had repeated the performance since breakfast. At that meal he was singularly ill at ease, rising several times and walking halfway around to Fanny's chair, and then with a pause, a shake of the head and a sigh, walked

back again. Then at brief intervals, since he had returned from his labors on the farm, looked in, mysteriously nodded his head to Fanny, and with revived cheerfulness went away. When Charles came, he saw him from a distance, and hurried to the house, walking the gravel before the cottage while the interview lasted. And when Charles broke blindly and with uncontrolled excitement down the garden walk, he hurried into Fanny's presence. She was weeping passionately on Mary's shoulder. Noiselessly and unobserved, he stepped backward from the room, and walked away with his eyes so intently fixed upon the ground, that he nearly overran his friend Varley.

"Ah, Varley," said he, "it's unfortunate. These young hearts are so tender!"

"Why do they fight?" was the retort.

"What do you mean?" said Heart, warming up. "They don't."

"They do. You know it," growled Liver, who was making amends for his temporary softening last evening by a bitterness more sharp and pungent than usual.

"Now, Nat," said Heart, "these people who love will have their little differences sometimes. Don't you see? It's because they like each other that they get wounded and hurt, and weeping, and so on."

"Pshaw! everybody quarrels."

"No, they don't," said Heart, who was almost disposed to be angry.

"They do."

"Confound it, Varley, if I wasn't the biggest man I'd be tempted almost to trip you up."

"So much for speaking truth. That's the world. That's the way it goes. That's what it's good for."

"Varley," said Uncle Robert, running his hands down into his pockets with the air of a man who had resolved on something desperate, and couldn't be driven from his purpose, "Varley, there are three things you want."

"Well, of course you want to name them. Why don't you?"

"First, a little charity."

"Everybody prescribes that to other people. That's because they hope to make by it."

"Second—a good temper."

"My temper suits me—that's enough."

"Third—a blue pill."

"The devil!" roared Varley, and Uncle Robert sat down to laugh at his ease.

Fanny made a confidant of Mary, but was unwilling to go further, so she slipped the letter in her bosom as we described, and when the good old Robert had backed out with his mysterious nod, which appeared to express in a complicated way that he was delighted that she was there, and was sorry for her, and that she might depend upon him, and that he knew a thing or two! When Uncle Robert had safely delivered himself of his compound nod, and the door was closed, Fanny seized Mary's hand, and said:

"Let us go down in the woods, and talk about it, dear. I think better and clearer out of doors. Don't you?"

They took their bonnets, and went hand-locked into the forest, and sat down under a favorite tree.

"It is very certain, Mary," said Fanny, "that there is estrangement between my brother and Miss Thelton, and that I am the cause. Of course I don't mean to let it remain so. Yet what shall I do?"

"It is so strange that you think you are the cause."

"Doesn't he say so in this letter? I don't know how it has come about, and I never ask questions, dear, that I cannot answer. Charles used to say I was one of those that can only see one fact at a time. And now I only see that in some way he is suffering through me; and that makes me forgive all that he said last night—all that he said this morning—all that he could say to me, no matter how harsh or unjust."

Mary, at Fanny's feet, broke a twig, and pulled it to pieces with her fingers.

"Fanny!"

"Well, Mary?"

"Why does your brother dislike Mr. James?"

"It's such a long story. Yet I ought to tell my only friend." And Fanny, with Mary's face on her knee, looking upward, told the story.

"But you love him," whispered Mary, and she drew up nearer to Fanny, and laid her lips almost next to her cheek.

The "Yes" that floated so low and tenderly upon the air was almost too delicate and musical for human utterance.

"And he?" whispered Mary, over whose cheeks there crept rich hues and dyes warm from the heart. Fanny for a moment was silent, as if rocked in the ecstasy of the theme, then with a little shake of the body and a laugh, exclaimed—

"You are an odd girl, Mary. How many times have you returned to that subject? My answers do not content you. And it is a theme, too, of which I am told girls should not speak at all—which I don't believe; for you

and I, Mary, who understand each other so well, have nothing hidden between us."

"No," whispered Mary, and turned away suddenly, pulling her bonnet over her face.

"Still my question is unanswered, Mary. What shall I do?"

"Nothing, not even your brother, ought to make you give up Warren."

"No, dear."

"Then I'm sure I cannot tell. Why not see Miss Thelton?"

"I will, Mary—I will;" and Fanny, jumped up with eagerness, then winding her arms around Mary, she said, "You will go with me?"

"Of course, if you ask it; but I had better not, I think. Emily would talk more plainly to you alone than if I were present."

"You are right, perhaps," replied Fanny, and sat down and mused. "I will see her," said she; "yet it is a task. How shall I speak to her on such a subject?"

Fanny did not hesitate long. An hour had scarcely elapsed ere she walked through the grand gateway of Wood Hill. She was still a guest of the Theltons, and entered the parlors without announcement. Emily was in a little favorite study that opened from the breakfast-room, a book upon her lap unopened, her face upon her hand, and her eyes wandering through the window into the branches of green that thickly interlaced a screen to the prospect.

"Why, Fanny," said she, cheerfully, and drew a chair, "you have forsaken us. But I do not wonder that you like Mary and Uncle Hall."

"My brother," said Fanny, "has desired me to remain their guest a little while."

"And defraud your friends here. That was not kind."

"He meant to be kind, perhaps," she added, as she thought of the interview that morning, and felt the tears speeding to her eyes.

"Perhaps?" inquired Emily, taking up Fanny's word meaningly.

"Oh, Miss Thelton, what does it mean?" burst out Fanny, and starting from her chair, stood white and weeping before Emily.

"Sit down, Fanny. I understand you. Sit down and we will talk calmly."

"I do not think you understand me, Miss Thelton. I am not thinking or speaking of myself. You—he, Charles"—

"We will think of each other," said Emily, and gently pressing her back to a chair, held her hand.

"I am here to plead for my brother," said Fanny. "If I am in any way the cause of estrangement, separation, misunderstanding, do not let it be so, Miss Thelton—do not let me be the cause of Charles's unhappiness!"

"Do you know why he left for town so abruptly yesterday?"

"No, but I partially guess. A few lines written as he went implies that I am in some way the cause. And I came now, to ask if this is so—and to ask, too, in what manner I can restore his peace again."

"You are thinking only of Charles, I see."

"Only of Charles—just now."

"And if I should tell you how you are the cause, and how Charles might come back here again, you would attempt the task so imposed?"

"Yes," said Fanny quickly.

"You do not reflect what it might be."

Fanny gasped and her lips quivered.

"If it should so strangely happen that Charles's affections could only prosper by the sacrifice of your own"—

"I would do it," burst out Fanny, and covered her face.

"And I should not permit it," said Emily. Fanny looked up quickly and curiously. "You are the cause, Fanny, of this estrangement just so far as I have required your brother to sanction your attachment to Mr. Hoffman before"—

"Is this possible, Miss Thelton? Recall that condition, I implore. My brother is too proud to"—

"And I am too proud," interrupted Emily with slight hauteur. "There is matter behind all this, Fanny, which you do not know, and which rendered my conduct imperative. Some day it may be explained to you. What we have to do now, is to see how our womanly wit can bring it all right again."

"Oh, if that could be so. How fond I should be of the day that I could call you sister."

"Without any great sacrifice, I suppose you mean."

"With almost any sacrifice, Emily, if one prove necessary."

"You are a noble girl, Fanny, and I do not intend to permit you to make any. At present I only ask you to do one little thing."

"And that is?"

"Send for Warren Hoffman."

"Warren?"

"Yes, Fanny. And keep a good heart. For I think I can say a word or two to Warren, which, through him,

will restore your brother's affection, and all the rest you wish for."

"And for yourself."

"Our destinies are now almost identical. If there are smiles in store for you, there is also sunshine for me."

She wound her arms around Fanny's neck and kissed her. And Fanny's heart leaped into her eyes, her lips, her cheeks.

"Oh," cried she with a burst of enthusiasm that rang through her accents, "you make me happy," and fled from the room.

Fanny had left Mary under the trees while going up to the mansion. Mary, alone, had first toyed with flowers and grasses, then sang low and pleasant snatches, but at last sank gradually into the tender pensiveness which had grown upon her since the day she began to look upon Warren as a far-off, bright, particular star. These pensive moods were almost too delicate and tender to be called sad. If there were sorrow in her heart it sung its wail in such low and gentle cadence it scarcely appeared a grief. Woe is essentially bitter; its elements are pain and suffering. The subtle shadow that lay upon Mary was not like this. There was a murmur in her heart like the low chafe of the smooth tide upon the beach; it was feeling stirred into melody; it was a tender, mellow, consciousness of how life is sometimes blessed, and to what rare fullness and beauty it can come. Mary's heart before had been like a white pebble in the pool, pure, still, and sparkling; now it was like a shell upon the sea-shore, into which the winds have entered, and there imprisoned make strange and plaintive melodies. She thought of Warren still, although forbidden by both modesty and conscience, because the new life in her shaped



itself that way. He became an abstraction rather than a fact, and represented her new ideal. She talked of him to Fanny, without a murmur, regret, pang, yet with an indescribable melancholy in which there was more pleasure than pain. There was also a secret desire to render him some service, and to express by a sacrifice or in a distant devotion, the power he held over her spirit. Warren shone down upon her like a prince; if their lives had been cast centuries back, and Warren some king girt with barbaric splendor, she would have crept up to his feet and kissing the hem of his garment, been content. Her thoughts were taking some such shape as this when a stir among the forest branches arrested her ear.

"There's the sprite! the fay!" cried a voice, and Mary saw the Historian attitudinizing on a rock not twenty feet distant.

"Oh, Mr. Hawley," said Mary, with that low, sparkling laugh natural to her. The Titan jumped from his rock and came tripping near.

"'Pon my word, Miss Mary, I've found that my talents have been misspent."

"How, sir?"

"What are Historians, and this learned literature? I was born Anacreon. I feel it in my veins. I should have piped songs to the loves, and deified beauty in dulcet strains. Ah, love is the real glory."

Mary wondered, laughed, and plainly asked him what he meant.

"But I was not insensible to the divine passion," said he, quite unconscious of Mary's question, and waving toward her two fingers that pierced through his glove, "even when absorbed in the severe labors of my History, I paid, amid the

affairs of states, the destinies of kings, the turmoils of factions, an eloquent tribute to the goddess. It is in my tenth volume. It runs, I think, this way."

The Historian threw his voice in his stomach, or perhaps in his gaiters, for it struggled up quite knocked out of all human recognition, in the form of a strangled guttural incomprehensible bass, and in this tone repeated his ornamented and astonishing sentences.

"My dear," said he, "there is a tribute worthy love and immortality."

"Yes," said Mary, "it sounds pretty."

"And now, my dear," exclaimed Hawley, drawing near and bending down close to her cheek, "what was then only an ideal, is before me in reality. Here is a gem in the forest—a flower in a desert—a beauty in the meadows! An Arcadian nymph! Diana in her groves!"

He whisked his glove; he smoothed his beard; his eyes shot eagerness and fire; his white teeth glistened through the sensual lips. Mary shook her head and said,

"Please, sir, do not jest. We country girls do not like to be mocked, ignorant as we are."

"This is beautiful!" cried the Titan. "I laugh at you—think of me on my knees instead. Do I not forego History, duty, my grand pursuits, the call of fame, and lay my life and genius here at the shrine of a woodland beauty?"

"Now I must leave you," said Mary. "You do not know me, sir; then why do you talk in this way?"

"I am Fanny's friend. If I need credentials, think of that. Yet I do know you, for, for three days I've lived in the woods on the thoughts of you."

"You are an odd man. I would be offended, but I think that you are not in earnest."

"Mary, what shall I say? You are coy but love is bold. Since I saw you I've been on fire."

He caught her hand, and Mary, startled at the eyes that glistened with such restless fire, slipped from his grasp, and stood a little way off, a watchful and puzzled listener.

The reader, no doubt, comprehends the nature of Hawley's passion for Fanny, and clearly sees through the character of this absurd masquerade before Mary. Even great Historians, this Titan was exemplifying, are swayed by the meaner and coarser passions; and intolerable conceit, enormous self-love, diseased vanity, did not prevent folly and baseness from acting their twin parts. Mr. Richard Hawley, Historian, Essayist, Poet, Scholar, Titan, thought of a mistress, and tickled his harlequin vanity with the hope of a conquest; schemed to pair a heart in which all the virtues had been eaten out by a rotten kind of self-worship, with one which beat with the white dreams of a virgin. We have seen pictured and are familiar with the thought of a white dove in the fangs of a snake; we symbolize by it, innocence in the power of evil; we think of it now as we see those sensual eyes and smiles upon Mary. Hawley, perhaps, was as unconsciously a villain as ever committed crime by the mere necessity of depravity. He would have pledged in any presence the honorable character of his intentions, and believed his oath firmly. His first great passion was himself; and a love affair of this kind was only a pleasant episode contributing to the serenity and happiness of the real object of his solicitude and affection. This corrupt deification of himself he never dreamed of being anything less than a virtue of the first water. But conceit, no matter how fantastic in form, or humorous

in its eccentricities, is still a poison which sucks out the honest blood, and saps the life of virtue.

He unmistakably admired Mary, or rather admired her beauty. He was alive to female charms, and transferred his allegiance from Fanny to Mary with so much alacrity, simply because the country maiden was the newer sensation. Learning had never extinguished the fire of his youthful blood; the vermeil tints of a pretty cheek caught his fancy even amid great histories, and the thunders of censorship. He stepped out of his big themes to sighs and woeful ballads with remarkable ease. In his youth he might have been an honest lover; but appreciation of women, in the growth of worldliness and self-love, had degenerated into a passion which had lost everything of its purity and nothing of its power. Mary's coyness and charms fascinated him; and in rural air love makes minutes hours. Opportunity pricked him, and he was eager for conquest. Again he caught Mary's hand and held it, drawing her near, and bending his bearded chin to her face. She felt his warm breath, and struggled.

"Mary," said he, passionately, "beautiful! Goddess of the wood! hear me!"

"Mr. Hawley! You hurt my wrist. You are so strange."

"Not strange, beautiful, only a lover!"

"You!" exclaimed Mary, and turning up a face still pale with apprehension, laughed gaily. "You! Why, Mr. Hawley! But please let me go."

"No!" said Hawley, and clasped her waist; "confess first that you will be mine. I am great—learned—a man of genius—but still can be a lover."

"Oh, what do you mean?"

"Be generous! be kind!" He released her suddenly "I declare," said he, "there is Miss Fanny."

But Fanny had seen it all, and came running up in hot haste, as fierce a little temper in her eyes as any man might wish to avoid. Hawley looked around desperately, but before he could conceive a plan for escape the wrath was upon him.

"Mr. Hawley," cried she, "you are a bad man. I saw you, sir. If ever you speak to Mary again, Uncle Robert shall tumble you into the river. I thought your presence here meant no good. Only last night I saw you prowling about the cottage. Now sir, I know what you are—you admit that—and I'll have you punished if you dare insult Mary or me again."

Hawley picked up his glove, which had fallen, and flourished it with a desperate effort at nonchalance.

"And now," said Fanny, "why don't you go?"

"Really, Miss Ashby,"—

"Please go, Mr. Hawley," said Mary, "and prevent an angry scene."

"Sprite and charmer," said the Titan, stepping back into an attitude, and lifting his hat, "I obey."

And with a bow and a smile and an absurd caper or two, which he meant for affecting pantomime, our historical lover tripped off through the woods.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WARREN and Philip took their breakfast in the inn parlor, and talked of their plans. Philip still advocated his own departure for the South, and Warren, while he wavered, did not yield.

"While you tickle the ear of Fanny, and smooth the ruffled feathers of Charles, it will be easy for me to plumb this story of the major's. And by the by, some day I must meet that gentleman; I like good artistes in all lines."

"A more affable and yet unimpressible gentleman cannot be found on the continent. He glitters, glistens, glows with smiles and sweetness—but put out your hand, it strikes flint."

"My dear boy," said Philip, "I should try my theory—like for like you recollect—and duck, and glide into such oiled sentences, that the fellow's self-possession would succumb to my superior coolness."

"Of course," said Warren; "I have a profound admiration for your theory. It is the most invulnerable bit of philosophy in the world."

"It can stand Warren Hoffman's sly arrows."

"Better than it can stand Lawrence Cone's hot temper."

"Holloa," cried Philip, "I hear your uncle or his ghost this moment in the hall."

"What does he want, I wonder?" said Warren.

"He smells thieves," exclaimed Philip, emptying his coffee-cup coolly. Warren flushed, turned uneasily in his chair,

just as the door was thrown open and Mr. Lawrence Cone came fiercely stamping into the room, followed by two others: one Billy, the servant, the other suspiciously like a constable.

"There they are," shouted Cone, "arrest them at once. They broke into my house. They robbed me of my papers. They're vagabonds and thieves."

"Ranter!" sneered Philip, scarcely looking up from his roll, which he was crumbling into small bits and coolly eating.

"I'm sorry, young gentlemen," said he who looked like a constable, and stepped toward the table.

"Neither young nor innocent," said Philip watching the fellow closely, "and know a sham. Fellow, you are not well made up; and you don't know your part."

The constable looked inquiringly at Cone, who broke by him, ran up to the table, and thumping it violently, shouted:

"I will hang you both!"

"I don't agree with you," said Philip.

"You are burglars."

"Even there we differ."

"You dared to steal into my house."

"I overlook these epithets," said Warren; "what are you here for?"

"I will be your ruin," shrieked the frenzied dyspeptic, and battered his hand upon the table.

"You denied me access to my own; I took forcible possession. That's the story, Uncle Cone. What can you make of it?"

"Theft."

"On which side?" said Philip, standing up.

"What do you mean?"

"You make an accusation. Who stole, the man who retained that which was not his, or"—

"Pshaw! That logic won't save you from punishment."

"What do you propose? I ask again," said Warren, also rising.

"You, Warren," said he, appearing to have no other aim than to rave and scold, "you, Warren, I put from my doors long ago. You dare to come back—the son of a dishonorable"—

"By Heaven!" shouted Warren, "I'll forget myself, and strike."

"Here's an uncle," said Philip; "here's a man, sent into the world by the devil, and not by Heaven. His veins are dry, his heart is rotten! He hates for the mere love of hating. He growls, fumes, roars, raves, spits fire and oaths, lashes himself into the fury of a fiend, and breaks out from head to toe in such a sweat of bad temper, that one feels disposed to crush him as if he were a reptile."

The dyspeptic stood still in the centre of the room, the fingers of one hand clenched into the palm of the other. His face was pallid, and his lips were beaded with a few drops of saliva. A scold with slight provocation, and frequently with none at all, passion appeared to be almost the normal condition of this man. But this present rage was peculiarly the result of his hatred, not only for Warren, but Warren's father. And the fact that his house had been surreptitiously entered, in defiance of his express commands, exasperated, stung, pricked him into fury, and added an ungovernable bitterness to his hatred. To Philip's tirade, however, he could not reply, but glared, and bit his lip. Philip saw, and advanced swiftly to the victory he desired.

"Why do you come here?" said he, "to roar, bellow, and to attempt to frighten us! Do you know me? My blood is hot as lava when up. You come with your sham constable to threaten and storm, and splutter."

"Daring to accuse my father," said Warren.

"Daring to impeach our honesty," said Philip.

"Insulting us with epithets," said Warren.

"Bellowing like a fool; roaring like an idiot; drunk with rage like a madman! Who are you? Why must we be disturbed with your insane paroxysms?"

"Answer that," said Warren.

"If you can," said Philip.

Mr. Lawrence Cone stood bewildered and silenced, glancing sharply from one to the other. Then suddenly tossing his arms in the air, he rushed to the door, exclaiming, "I'll get a justice!" The supposititious constable followed close, but Billy paused to turn a look of warning upon Warren.

"There!" roared Philip, as he dropped into his chair, "dare impeach my philosophy again! Was ever science and art so triumphant? 'The engineer is hoist with his own petard.'"

"Not yet," said Warren. "You've demonstrated the beauty of your theory; but hadn't we better trust for the rest to a little prudence? It is in this man's power to trouble us. I propose a retreat."

The door was opened hastily, and Billy put his head in.

"Look out, sir! He's terrible! You had better get out of this."

"You see I'm right," said Warren, as Billy disappeared. "We are poor, and without friends; he is influential, and

has some wealth. Philip, we had better take the first Train."

"There is time enough between this and the Train for him to work all the mischief he could devise," replied Philip, coolly. "But what can he do? Is it possible the law can find an actionable side to our little affair last night?"

"Decidedly probable," said Warren. "My conscience is not quite clear at the best, and I confess I dread the aspect the thing could be made to assume in the hands of a skillful lawyer."

"Would your uncle attempt anything so hostile and merciless?"

"Can't you understand him yet? He is naturally, I tell you, an utterly irascible man, and when threatened or opposed, he is fairly a Satan in the form of a man. He never did like me; his dislike is now the most deadly hatred."

"Do you think he suspects the nature of the paper we found?"

"I do. It is certain that with a full knowledge of its contents he never would have permitted me to obtain it, if for no other reason than because he hates me."

"He might have destroyed it," said Philip.

"It seems he did not, for his own good reasons, no doubt. But I wish we were out of his reach at present. There's no telling what cunning story he may brush up, and at the best I cannot tolerate the thought of detention even for a day. And there! Don't you see? Jove, we're caught!"

Warren had arisen and approached the window. Philip ran quickly at his summons. Matters looked threatening, indeed, for Mr. Lawrence Cone was approaching with an addition to his retinue.

"No sham this time, by the looks," said Philip. "A retreat, my boy! Now for generalship! Anybody, my good fellow, can walk up to a cannon; the deuce is, how to walk away from one. Come!"

Philip darted rapidly into the entry, and out of the rear door. Warren followed close, but first laid change for the reckoning on the breakfast-table. The door opened upon a stretch of green sward, at the further end of which was an orchard. The orchard was a slope descending to a marsh, through which coursed a little stream that emptied a few miles below into the Hudson. The marsh extended along the stream only a short distance, the banks being mainly rocky and wooded. The course of the fugitives was clear enough, and Philip shouting "Now for it!" ran swiftly along the sward, obliquely aiming at the nearest wooded point.

"I don't know," said Philip, as he sped with long, flying leaps, "what we are running from, and shrewdly suspect that we are as wise as the sheep that fled from their own shadows. It is a part, I confess, I do not like. The man who runs puts his manhood into his heels, and mine is more at home in the tongue."

They reached a wooded knoll, and stopped to breathe and survey.

"It is a chase," cried Warren; "there they are in full cry."

"Jupiter!" exclaimed Philip, as he saw a body of three persons swiftly crossing the green, "are we thieves in earnest?"

"Flight almost confesses it," said Warren.

"Then, of course we must not be taken. We are under cover, and can bother them, or the cunning of Philip Giles has grown rusty."

From their wooded cover there was a steep and rocky descent to the bed of the stream. The fugitives, in this semi-comical chase, sprung down the rocks with ease, catching the pendent branches and swinging down long spaces and steep rocky sides, plunging with bold steps over the rough and broken surface, still bending their direction obliquely. The river bed was reached several hundred feet below; and now encountering fewer obstructions their progress was both easy and swift. Nothing could be heard of the pursuers.—They were advancing through a narrow gorge, intent upon reaching the Hudson shore at the mouth of the rivulet, and from that point proceeding to the nearest station. But their speed gradually relaxed. They paused sometimes to listen and then to laugh. The flight, however necessary, with every moment's reflection appeared more comical.

"This is tragico-comico business," said Philip, "that will afford a laughable tale for Susan and the Todd."

"We have brought off the prize," said Warren, "the golden fleece guarded by the dragon. I laugh at the adventure, but I laugh because we win."

"But think of us like two bull-dogs, at one moment showing our teeth, and the next our tails."

"I only think that I've got my father's letter in my pocket. For which I would be ready to fight or run a dozen days to come."

They soon reached the river shore, and walking downward, keeping within cover as far as practicable, reached, two miles distant, a small way-station. "There's the train," said Warren, as the signal of approach was faintly heard northward.

"The hunt is up, then," said Philip. "For my part I'm

sorry to give the gentlemen trouble. I'm inclined to turn back, and prove that the lion's part was not all sham ; and show your sweet-tempered uncle that my roar is not, as he supposes, like Bottom's, as gentle as any sucking dove. You laugh, I see."

"Yes ; but I believe we are still pursued."

He pointed to three figures a quarter of a mile below, on the brow of a range of low hills bordering the track. They were tramping up and down the open space with apparent eagerness and excitement, pointing to the approaching train and the station.

"You are right," said Philip ; "and it is proper that we should salute them before we go."

He stepped out into view and deliberately waved his handkerchief. He was seen ; the pursuers stood still and with gestures indicated their knowledge of his identity. While the handkerchief still waved the train came rattling up ; and our adventurers stepped briskly in.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHARLES ASHBY returned to his studio, but not to his labors. His canvases stood turned to the wall ; his easel was empty ; dust gathered upon his unused pallet. Even the room itself for long hours remain unoccupied. And if at home, the artist in disordered apparel walked with impetuous strides through the cheerless rooms, from Fanny's parlor to the dull studio. He turned almost with disgust from the pictures upon his walls. His studio, his implements, the stained brushes, and fragments of dry pigments, filled him with repugnance and hatred. The very atmosphere of the room was oppressive. His tastes appeared to escape him ; his skill was like a dream ; he doubted his power to do, and the power by which he had done. Passion, bitterness, morbid gloom entered his heart and drove out that subtle genius which once had delighted in the beauties of nature—studying, seizing, reproducing them ; exulting in their spirit, aglow with their inspiration.

The great unrest was back upon his heart with multiplied force. Love had lulled it ; pleasure, ease, society, the quiet charms of woodland life, had subdued and bound it a charmed captive. But the sleep was passed, the chords were broken ; his ambition and desires were afloat more wildly and aimlessly than before.

"Now," exclaimed he as he paced the studio floor, "I will do some big thing. I'll paint no more pictures. All



is lost but hot ambition—love, happiness, content, even Fanny. I'll climb, creep, strain, battle, and win something, or fall to utter ruin. By Heaven, up or down! It must be one or the other."

But his ambition was all vagueness; it was born of discontent and not of power, and hence was entirely without an aim—fire without fuel. He dreamed rather than achieved. His aspirations were tumultuous and wild; they raved and tore through his brain like mobs of clamorous demons; his mind was an arena in which a thousand antagonisms of purpose and desire battled and tormented him.

Nothing came of all these passionate desires. He lost rather than gained in the struggle of life. His empty easel drove patrons from his rooms; and his bitter disquiet impelled him among hilarious companions. The ambition that reached so high could stoop so low! Idleness, passion, wild mirth, noisy oblivion, feverish gaiety, while they dulled the pain of that strange unrest, blunted his sensibilities, and thrust his mind into fresh disorders. His new life intensified those opposites of feeling always common to imaginative organizations, and daily hurled him from exultation to depression with a violence of contrast that almost shook the foundations of reason.

Most of these fine creative natures have the jovial element. Mirth underlies passion, and men whose imaginations are all compact, can experience a depth and breadth of rapturous mirth which the commonly gay nature can neither conceive nor measure. Charles was in that condition of mind when restraint was both undesired and unattempted. He gave his humors play, and was no less abandoned in his pleasures than reckless in his aims.

He tramped the streets long reaches, incoherently dreaming, rocking himself in ecstatic visions, or gloomily brooding over his fancied wrongs and real disappointments. Love was not the most absolute of his passions. In the full tide of success the estrangement from Emily would have been poignant and severe; now it entered into the bitterness of his feelings, but was either absorbed in the stronger passions, or insensibly assumed their character. His mind, however, was a compound of sensations, difficult to analyze, but all fused into a thirst for greatness—undisciplined, shadowy, but not altogether meaningless. For ambition is an appetite that grows upon what it feeds; is athirst with its own waters, famished with its own supply. It violates all the ordinary laws of nature, sinking into profounder depths and wider vacuums as the very consequence of what it gains and receives. Charles did not know that no man can reach high enough. He who aspires takes into his bosom an undying desire. With every new conquest comes a madness for more; with every fresh pean a restless fury at those whose cheers are still withheld. The world is not big enough for the growth of the passion, for even if subdued, the aspiring heart, like the Macedonian, would weep for new conquests.

At night around the roaring table there was none so free and gay as Charles. The punch, the song, the story, the pipe; the uproarious laugh, the rattling jests, the atmosphere of smoke—artists are gay and rollicking fellows, as all the world knows. That attic story was a nest of them, and not a night but a group was gathered, the punch was made, the pipes filled. When Fanny was in her little parlor, Charles had been a rare attendant upon these merry gatherings; now he was first and last; always wildly

gay; and sometimes, the historian must confess, he was led away almost helpless to his bed.

There was a new-comer among the artists of the attic—one young, pale, melancholy, and ever silent amid the boisterous humors of his companions. He had taken a room near to Ashby's; had put out his little sign; arranged his light, set his easel, and hopefully sat down to wait for patrons. Nothing came but hunger and want. During days spun by impatience and suffering into intolerable lengths, he had walked his little room, stood in the gush of sunlight that poured through his window, and watched with increasing despair his one unpurchased canvas. Charles had observed him at their gatherings, had looked pitifully into his pale face and sad eyes, but had not guessed how often the single biscuit of the evening was the sole supply of food for the day. But one night the youth was so remarkably pale and dejected, that Charles instinctively turned again and again to observe him. In the midst of a comic story their eyes met, and Charles, in a sudden gush of sympathy, forgot the humorous climax. From that moment he watched him with a strange interest. Yet while one was singing a roaring song, his attention was momentarily diverted, and when he looked again the youth was gone. Charles hastily followed. The expression in the young artist's eyes had seemed to indicate a desperate purpose. Charles ran rapidly to his room. The door was unlocked and he looked in. It was empty, but a bit of paper pinned on the canvas, glistened in the moonlight that came through the window. Ashby almost instantly divined its import. The light was just sufficient to decipher the words. Terrible words indeed! They were a farewell to life and the world—a confession of defeat—a revelation of such suffering and

despair that the artist trembled as he read them. And that very moment the youth was probably speeding to the execution of his purpose.

Charles flew down the stairs into the street, and utterly ignorant of the direction taken by this new Chatterton, ran into the nearest cross street that led down to the river, with rapid perception of the suicide's probable course. He was right. Scarcely two hundred feet down the street he overtook the artist leaning against a lamp-post.

"Mr. Doane," cried Charles, "thank God that I am in time."

"What?" said the youth, brushing back his locks from his brow, and turning his pale face up to Charles.

"Why have you attempted this desperate step?" exclaimed Ashby. "Had you no friends? Could you not believe that I, or some other, would aid you if we knew your distress?"

"I could easier teach myself to die than to beg," said Doane, sadly.

These words came upon Charles like a rush of waters. How well he recalled in his own early struggles, feelings, if not words, almost identical. His heart was touched to the very core. His whole early life sped before him like a panorama—he seemed to see in this forlorn, despairing, suffering artist, not another, but the image of his own youth.

"Was there no other alternative?" said Charles, speaking in a changed tone.

"None," replied the youth.

"Mr. Doane, you make me think of my own early sufferings."

"Could they have been as great as mine?"

"Yes; and this very incident appears an event in my career and not in yours. Ah, sir, it is the terrible necessity of all men to struggle!"

"And I," said the youth, "have been too weak for the battle."

"We are all weak sometimes. And it is the duty of each to aid, comfort and assist his fellows. Believe me, Mr. Doane, I've known suffering and privation, perhaps, as great as yours. And this experience gives me a right to counsel you—gives me a right to be your friend."

"Do your experiences not teach you," said Doane, "that my intentions are wise? Can you honestly assure me that any possibilities of the future render life desirable?"

"I must confess," said Charles, "that my own life is no example. All men are not so unwise as I have been. But you are so young, the most brilliant future may be yours."

"Mr. Ashby, you have watched me, and I you. And it has seemed to me that you, in the first flush of fame, with honors crowding thick upon you, have been as unhappy as the starved and neglected boy. I, in my scorned art, have not been so far from you, in the fullness of fame. This fact has shown me that I might step into success, but not into happiness; it has taught me that life is a cheat, and he is wise who refuses to bear it."

Charles was unable to speak. The emotions excited by these words are indescribable; too tumultuous, conflicting, revolutionary, for analysis. His whole life appeared to be mirrored in this youth; he saw his past; he saw the guilt and folly of his present.

"You have not dined to-day?" at last said he, with an effort at lightness.

"No," said Doane, who during the interview stood with his eyes fixed upon the pavement.

"Will you come and sup with me? Perhaps," and the artist smiled plaintively, "perhaps we may each prove a physician to the other. We will talk about the matter at least, and if at the conclusion life appears undesirable, let us lay it down together."

Doane complied in silence. Charles took his arm, and led him into a restaurant. They entered a box, and supper was ordered.

"It is a long while," said Doane, when Charles had drawn the shade, and they were private, "since I have eaten more than a few biscuits. Since I set up my easel and hung out my sign I have not sold a picture. Scarcely a step but mine has crossed my door-sill."

"Have you no family?"

"Yes, in a western city. But art was my choice, and not theirs. They predicted starvation, and refused aid. My only choice was to throw myself upon the world alone, or forego my cherished desire. I did not know what the world is, and had it not been for you, I should this moment float on the tide out to the sea."

"I know it all," said Charles; "your life reads like mine. How many a time did self-destruction seem the only escape! But I had a sister to support, which rendered life imperative. I was compelled to struggle and battle onward. At last day dawned; prosperity rose like the sun."

"Were you happy then?"

"For a little time. The first warm rays of fame fell upon me gloriously; I was in rapture; life dazzled me; the world seemed a play. I reached higher, struggled upward, panted for grander heights. Discontent, I can see

it now, gradually crept into my heart. I was impatient of homage refused ; it was exasperation to think that the very beggars did not know and recognize my greatness. I recollect reading an anecdote of Goldsmith, who was jealous because a crowd was in raptures at the antics of a monkey, and heedless of the man of genius standing by. I confess that I was as absurd and vain as the poet—was, perhaps am, unless the sight of your sorrows, the recollection of my own, prove an antidote to this burning disquiet, this disease of too much success. And I feel that they will. I look back and see myself in seeing you ; gratitude rushes upon me for what has been vouchsafed ; the old time floods me with tenderness—nor are my sensations, I hope, entirely selfish. This night makes me your friend."

"Sir ! Mr. Ashby !"

"Come ! We are not Romans but Christians. Life is not ours to take up or set down ; and courage, Edward Doane, always ends in victory."

"With me," said the youth, speaking tremulously and with water in his eyes, "it was merely a choice whether to die by inches or die suddenly."

"Did you not believe there was one man in the whole world who would put out his hand to you?"

"I looked around, and saw only you."

"And I, bloated with self, strutted in the blessed sun only to see my own shadow. All aspiration for myself, and not a thought for those that struggled behind me."

"There were whispers about of the sorrows you were experiencing. I did not dare intrude upon you, even if I could have taught my tongue how to frame a petition."

"And now, when I invite you to speak your wishes, what would you say?"

"I have nothing to say. I am dumb now, as I knew I would be. Yet life is still before me, for in gratitude to you I must live ; and what shall I do ; how can I learn to wait for success and recognition?"

"I think you paint very well," said Charles.

The youth brightened, flushed, looked into the eyes of Charles.

"Yes," said Charles, "your pictures have promise. Of course you want experience, and have a great deal to learn. But patrons come slowly to young artists."

"Ashby, I know it."

"My own easel has been empty for a month. I am not sure, when I attempt to step back to my old industry, of finding my reputation where I left it. Fame and the public are capricious things. As I have scorned and neglected them, it would be only justice for them now to turn the tables upon me. Still I shall attempt it. As you are young, would you be willing to work under my wing for a while?"

"Do I understand you?" almost gasped the youth, springing to his feet.

"It is not difficult. To-morrow I shall stretch a new canvas. There will be room in the same light for another easel."

"Your assistant?"

"My co-worker, welcome to any hints that I can give you ; to any value my indorsement can afford, and to a fair competition for the favor of my visitors."

"Sir ! I dream !"

"Shall we talk about it, then, to-morrow, when you awake?"

"I cannot speak," said the youth, and buried his face on

the table in his hands. Charles watched him through a mist in his eyes. Presently he looked up.

"Sir, you give me life and a career."

"I gain as much as I give," said Ashby. "I cannot trace the process, but to-night there has been a revolution within me. I feel new-made. There is a cloud dispersed. I see with my old eyes, feel as I once felt, and owe it to Edward Doane."

Neither spoke more, but clasped each other's hands.

## CHAPTER XL.

WARREN arrived in town, still adhering to his purpose of visiting the southern cities, when an unexpected offer from his literary employers, for the first time inclined him favorably to Philip's persistent importunities for permission to go in his stead. Warren's career so far had been neither very brilliant nor very profitable. But quiet courage was one of his fine virtues, and he had labored faithfully, with an earnest belief that time at last would reward and crown him—but not always, perhaps, without sighs of impatience and secret pangs at his unfulfilled dreams. Neither those sighs nor those pangs, however, weakened his resolution. On the contrary, they fired him with fresh courage; they nerved to exertion; they spurred him to fresh paces. He had evinced considerable tact in his profession. His head was cool, his mind rapid, his pen ready; he was quick to survey new themes and seize their saliences; his sentences bristled; and to these things he added the humble virtue of application. In fact there was a great deal of quiet strength in Warren's composition, and he pursued his purpose so steadily one would scarcely detect that he acted from anything more than natural volition. Yet he was one of those brave men whom Carlyle somewhere describes, who can valiantly do what is laid to their hand in their present sphere, and prepare themselves withal for doing other wider things, if such lie before them.

He was offered an active and responsible editorial position in a new literary journal; the salary was good, the labor pleasant, the position invaluable. Of course, to accept it he must abandon his proposed southern jaunt; but the singular and almost passionate nature of the motives which rendered the journey so nearly imperative, for a time fairly tempted him to forego the really brilliant advantage of the offer. Philip, however, heard of it, and now insisted that his proposal should be adopted.

"This is the flood tide in your affairs, my boy," said Philip. "To throw away this chance is to throw away your life; it's resolutely to pledge yourself to garrets and one meal a day; it's quietly to turn your back upon Fortune, when she stands ready to embrace you. And isn't the errand south a wild one at best? Or think of it as you may, why shouldn't I first beat the bush a little? When I fail, it will be time enough to think of the attempt yourself—for the present put your trust in Philip Giles."

"I do," said Warren, in reply to this speech, believing now, with Philip, that it was the wise and proper course. The arrangements were completed at once. Philip only stipulated that Warren should step in occasionally and say a cheerful word to the ancient Todd, and by all means to watch over his little Susan.

"That girl," said he, "has a heart nursed back to love and happiness by me—which is true, my boy, even if I do say it. At first, bless me! it was doubtful whether it hadn't been petrified in the cold hard life it led; but it warmed; it grew; and now, it heaves in the bosom, it peeps out of the eyes, it looks out of the cheek, you can feel it in her hand. If I have a sister anywhere, may Heaven have mercy upon her for Susan's sake.

Warren still held guarded possession of that statement from his father's pen, which was to exculpate his father and himself in the eyes of Charles Ashby, and restore the hopes and happiness of his love. But so exacting and important were the initiatory duties of his new position, that Philip had been gone a week ere he could seriously think of placing the statement before the artist and his sister. Learning, to his surprise, that Charles was in town, but that Fanny still remained in the country, he was just preparing to arrange his business for a short departure, with the intention of running out to Fanny, and first revealing the important discovery to her, when an unexpected letter reached him. It was from Fanny. "My dear Warren," it read, "can you come to me? for some strange things have occurred. Come to Mr. Hall's cottage, where I now stay. I have some reasons for making this request, which I cannot well explain in a letter; but please come, for I think it important."

This note prevented further delay. The next day he stepped into the train, and at noon reached the station. Uncle Robert's cottage was only half a mile distant. It was now far in September, and the first yellow autumn tints showed upon the forest boughs. Dead leaves began to gather in the paths, upon the green banks, and upon the surface of the river. Warren noted this change, and sometimes paused in his walk to watch a few leaves dropping in wide circles from their coronals on the tree-tops. The atmosphere was so calm, and solemnly hushed, that it filled the heart of the lover with a pensive peace. At the point of the road where on his previous visit he first saw Fanny, he could not refrain from diverging from the highway and walking to the river shore. He paused upon the rock

where they then seated themselves. The recollection of that happy hour filled him with impatience. He longed once more to see, hear, touch; and turning, ran rapidly forward.

As he came near, he saw Fanny in the garden. Mary was with her, but as his step was heard upon the road, she fled, without looking backward into the house. Fanny was at the gate as quick as he, and led him along the gravel walk into the cottage parlor. Lovers' meetings are no new thing. Do not let the reader expect me to delineate a scene which he can imagine without my aid. I will give him time to picture the thing in his mind's vision; he can watch the blush that deepens on Fanny's cheek, her maiden response to the impassioned lips of her lover; he can see that warmth and glow in her glance which never come to the eyes except when they look into those of lovers'.

Seated hand-locked, they fervently talked. Fanny told of Charles; not telling all, for she strove to screen the brother even to the lover. But when Warren spoke, what a theme was his to make her heart too big for her bosom—to send tears of rapture to her eyes. How the clouds dispersed, the night fled, the day dawned!

"Then we are to be happy once more," exclaimed she, trembling with excess of feeling.

"If your brother will forgive"—

"Forgive! After that confession—that wonderful paper! Charles is a little obstinate, sometimes; but he is honest and generous. Oh, I see it all! We shall be united once more—Charles, you and I in our attic parlor."

"United as friends, with one common enemy for all."

"Why any enemy?"

"Can I forgive Major Thelton?"

"You must, you must, or new difficulties will arise, and

that is why I wrote to you. Warren, Charles was betrothed to Miss Emily Thelton."

"This is strange! Fortune likes odd freaks. See how the matter stands: your brother disdains and hates me because I am the son of the man whom he supposed to have wronged him; and yet is in love with the daughter of the man who really did the wrong."

"No matter what is odd or strange. Don't think of what Charles has done; only forget, for all our sakes, that unhappy past; and go with me to see Miss Thelton."

"Not under Major Thelton's roof, Fanny."

"And you are going to be obstinate and ungenerous too! Then I am sorry you've come."

"It is easy to return," said Warren.

"Please hear my story, Warren, and let us bury all old hurts. You really must go and see Miss Thelton, because, notwithstanding this letter of your father's, very much depends on her. You did not seem to observe that I said Charles *was* betrothed to Emily."

"I did observe it."

"Emily was aware that Charles opposed our union; she believed that he acted with injustice; she suspected, I think, her father's connection with Mr. Hoffman, and so she made her hand a condition that Charles should consent to—to—that is, that he should be your friend once more."

"And Charles?"

"Anything that looks like a barter, anything that even remotely affects his independence, is sure to put Charles in as grand and pompous a fit of stubbornness as you could wish to see. I suppose that he thought the condition humiliating, for in two hours' time he was on his way to town."



"That indicates how deep his dislike is to me."

"It only indicates how absurd his pride is. You may not be able to see it in that light, but to me—and I know my brother so much better than you do—it is plainly a matter of pride and pique. Oh, I see him now, as he turned upon his heel, and snuffed the air!"

"Interpret it as you will. But I do not yet understand why I must see Miss Thelton."

"Then listen to me," said Fanny, and proceeded to relate the interview between herself and Emily. "Major Thelton has gone to town, and you will be sure of not meeting him. So, Warren, I insist; and if you refuse—shall I impose a condition like that of Emily's?"

"Do not, I implore you, for I should be weak enough to yield. I lack something of your brother's high blood; but if my pride is less than his, my love, I confidently declare, cannot be excelled."

"Now you assume so much! I can recollect when you frowned and stamped for less cause than Charles has."

"My love was too hot, not too cool," said Warren.

"It is your provoking nature to distort a fault into a virtue," replied Fanny, briskly.

"And succeed better with Fanny's than I do with my own."

"Have I any faults?"

"No; as you admit, I have construed them into virtues."

"What were they before they experienced your skill?"

"First, pertness—which I called wit."

"This is pleasant. Second"—

"Coldness—which I called modesty."

"Third," said Fanny, whose two hands lay upon War-

ren's shoulder, as he was turned partially toward her.

"Flippancy—which I called gaiety," replied Warren.

"Are there any more?" said Fanny. The lips and eyes of each looked mirth—that tender gaiety that marks swelling hearts.

"Yes," said Warren, "and for me a fatal error. I called idle caprice true love."

"You changed caprice into true love. You were the alchemist, Warren. You changed all these things into their new names."

In this warm gush of happiness these lovers were like sprites in the sunbeams; they danced and shook their merriment upon the air; their hearts in an abandonment of bliss ran into gay follies; there was briskness, caper, and the clash of light humors, which veiled, but did not conceal the stores of rich feeling within. But their gay freaks soon subsided, and reverting once more to the theme before them, it was determined to proceed at once to Miss Thelton. Fanny ran to get her bonnet, and they went together.

"You must understand," said Warren, "that this is a conciliation made to you. Nothing could lead me to Major Thelton's house but Fanny Ashby. Some day I may ask a price for it."

"You shall be paid, whenever I have anything to give which is not already yours."

"I shall remember."

Emily was not in the sitting parlor when they entered, but came in a very few moments, greeting them with pleasure, but some agitation. It was the first time she had seen Warren, and the nature of the subject which brought them together at first rendered the interview somewhat

embarrassing. But Emily had tact, and she glided insensibly into the theme.

"It is probably a misfortune," she remarked, "when a woman obtains an insight into commercial matters. Time and custom no doubt sanction many things, which to her inexperience appear unjust and indefensible."

Warren bowed and assented. Cautiously, delicately, skillfully she proceeded to record her knowledge of the transactions between her father and Roderick Hoffman. Her task required all the skill of the diplomat. She desired to place those facts in the possession of Warren which would enable him to clear his father in the judgment of Charles, and at the same time to preserve her own father's reputation unblemished. It was, therefore, necessary to expose and yet not impeach her father, to indicate in veiled words her own position to Ashby, and to lead Warren almost insensibly into a perception of the complications which embarrassed her. But she was soon startled to perceive the extent of Warren's information, which so much exceeded her own.

"Miss Thelton," said he, "I refrain from all accusation and all language which might wound you. Yet so deeply do I feel the injuries committed upon my father, that it seems almost an insult to his memory to sit under the roof of his enemy."

"Do not forget, I implore you," said Emily, "that there may be circumstances to extenuate his offences. You speak of a statement of your father's, recently discovered."

"It is with me now."

"Would it be proper for me to read it?"

"It would prove a severe trial; I doubt if you have the courage."

"I have gone so far, sir," said Emily, "that it is now necessary for me to know all."

Warren drew the sheets from his pocket and placed them before her. The hand that she placed upon them trembled, but she smiled and said,

"Mr. Hoffman, do you advise me to read these pages?"

"Madam, I do not."

"Will they enable me to remove any of the difficulties that embarrass us both?"

"It is possible."

"Then I proceed. May I beg your patience while I do so?"

Fanny, at the opening of the interview, perceiving that her presence increased the embarrassment of each, with the freedom of an old guest slipped from the room. This had been done so quietly that Warren did not detect her absence until Miss Thelton began the perusal of his father's statements. He, therefore, withdrew to a remote sofa, and endeavored to occupy himself with a book. The interval that ensued was long; but though he listened to the slowly turning pages he did not look up until a heavy sigh fell upon his ear.

"This is terrible!" said the lady, looking so white and ill that Warren was alarmed.

"And one circumstance not related there," said Warren, "adds to its startling character."

"Explain!" said Emily with great quickness.

"My father is supposed to be living."

"Great Heaven!"

"The rumor, Miss Thelton, reached me indirectly from your father. It would appear that, broken-hearted at his

losses and dishonor, he has crept into some obscurity, where, hidden from the world, he suffers in neglect and despair."

"Do not let us depict it worse than what we really know; the picture that you draw terrifies me."

She shaded her face with her hands and remained so many minutes.

"It is, of course, your intention," she said, partially removing her hands, "to place this paper before Mr. Ashby."

"Yes, madam."

"It renders all that I was about to propose useless."

"I must confess that it does."

"And so really noble is Mr. Ashby's nature, you may depend, sir, upon its linking you more closely to him than ever."

"That is unquestionably gratifying, Miss Thelton; yet I cannot escape the fact that it will also tend to widen the difference between you and Mr. Ashby."

Emily looked away musingly, and when she spoke again, there was less of that cautious reserve in her tones and manner which so far had marked the interview.

"Mr. Hoffman, I admit that my father greatly wronged yours; and I assure you that I shall use every exertion to induce him to make what reparation he can."

"It is almost too late."

"But I am his daughter," continued Emily, "and plead for him. I would say something to disarm your hatred; or if anything can be done in expiation which will content you, do it. I would remind you, Mr. Hoffman, that any blow struck at my father must reach back to you through the strange links which now unite us almost in a circle."

"I have no purpose of revenge, if that is what you mean. I only desire to vindicate my father's name."

"To whom?"

"To the world, if necessary. First to him most concerned, Mr. Ashby."

"Then, sir, I make a bold proposal. I knew that Charles condemned your father with some injustice, and felt that I could not be silent when he rejected the thought of his sister's marriage with the son of his supposed enemy, and yet was preparing an alliance for himself with the daughter of a man not less guilty than any other. I did not confess to him all that I knew—I could not—but I did attempt to prevent his injustice to you. I failed; and now wish to approach him in another way. When this document reaches him, Mr. Hoffman, you will be exculpated; but if its story goes to him from me, I have some hopes that his enmity will not be transferred to my father or to me."

"I only partly comprehend you, madam."

"Mr. Hoffman, I did not tell Charles the facts that I knew, because I believed it was my duty to sacrifice his happiness and my own rather than become the accuser of my father. But it is now clear that the accusation must go forth. Then, sir, let it come from me, that I may do something toward screening his reputation. Let me relate those facts to Charles Ashby, which shall remove every stain from Mr. Roderick Hoffman's honor—and at the same time save that of my father."

Warren walked the floor with agitation, and Emily continued:

"I am asking a generous thing of you, Mr. Hoffman. But I do not hesitate to ask and press it. For your magnanimity cannot fail to conduce to your own happiness. Let me hint that Fanny will be happier if her brother's friendships are not destroyed. I know the contents of this

letter; I will write to Charles its leading points. I pledge you to leave nothing unsaid which will tend to exculpate your father."

"I am only seeking justice, Miss Thelton, and not revenge; and yet two hours ago I was ready to publish Major Thelton in the public places. You have disarmed me, I confess; it would be unpardonable for me to refuse your request, when I recollect that you so generously advocated my cause with Charles."

"Mr. Hoffman," said Emily, "I have no power to undo the past, but henceforward you have an earnest friend where, perhaps, you only thought of enemies."

She came forward with brightening eye, and offered her hand. So uniformly cool and collected, she was now agitated with pleasure and gratitude; her cheek burned, her hand shook, and her voice came broken and tremulously.

"Sir, I thank you with simple words, but sincere feeling."

"I cannot doubt it, Miss Thelton."

"Let us hope," said Emily, "that bright days will bless us all;" and her hand still rested gratefully in that of Warren.

## CHAPTER XLI.

WARREN and Fanny, on their way back to the cottage, talked of the future. The theme is intoxicating to youth, and the imagination of the lover was on fire. He told of his new position and brilliant prospects; and as Fanny listened, hope grew rapturous, and ran into splendid dreams.

"I am not always going to be a mere journalist," said Warren. "Some day I shall write a book which will make me great. You shall stand by my side, Fanny, and hear the plaudits that reach me."

"Let me keep at your side, Warren, as high as you may get—I ask no more. But if fame should chill your heart"—

"Fame is expansion! It multiplies life! It will make me ten times more a lover than I am now."

"That I do not believe. It will divide your affections—it will be something to be jealous of. Warren, I know that your future will be brilliant; I will be proud of it; my heart swells now to think of it; but if your affections should deaden, and all your fame be only an oak that kills the flowers in its shade, then"—

"What, Fanny?"

"I should wish for an attic, poverty, low fate, and the love of Warren Hoffman."

"Why, I never dream that Fanny is not a part of the dream. I picture cottages on lake shores, embowered in cool shades, with flowers, music, pictures, books, and a bit

of human sunshine flitting among them called Fanny ; I think of splendid town-life, luxury, ease, gay crowds, social distinction, and gayest of the gay is Fanny ; I dream of walking out into the forests with Fanny, while the tree-tops sing in my ears, she is yours! she is yours ! I conceive of no success without foremost in my imagination is the thought of laying it before Fanny, and hearing first her word of congratulation. My dreams begin with her ; along the story she winds like a silver thread, and she is my only finale."

"That is a pretty picture of life," said Fanny.

"Is it no more?"

"Yes."

"Will you name it?"

"Warren Hoffman thinks it a pretty story of his love."

"And skeptical Fanny Ashby doubts the truth of her nearest friend."

"If her nearest friend spoke only in fine words she would be wise to do so. She trusts him because she knows him beneath these butterfly humors ; and therefore confesses that his bright sentences tingle pleasantly."

"What I am I seem, Fanny. Secretiveness is not my quality ; and it is because I am so happy that my feelings run into words, and my heart delights to disport itself. I am not a man to put a seal upon my lips, and shake my head when others speak, as if my silence covered truer affections than those that came into the speech of other men. Activity is the necessity of genuine life ; honest feeling leaps into the light eager to prove its courage and fidelity ; it is a law of its nature that it must act, speak, do."

"Are there not hearts deep and full who *live* their faith, and hide under calm words their real capacity of feeling?"

"The world is full of many natures ; but I do not believe in torpid love, hid like a gem in the dark. There are many, I know, of whom it is claimed that their hearts are more profound than they choose to evince. I do not see the advantage of waiting until one gets to Heaven before finding out how much he is loved."

"There you are right, Warren. Tender words and kind deeds are needed here."

"And possessed here, make the skies eternally blue, and life always summer."

"Now I see," said Fanny, "that your faith is noble."

"For me," continued Warren, "I am not content unless I speak. My heart is not big enough for all its happiness ; these light words are only that which overflows."

It was twilight. Our two lovers walked slowly through the mellow tints, sometimes pausing silently to look at the tender, yellow hues over the western hills, or to watch the stars come out in the blue of the eastern sky.

They had nearly reached the cottage, when they stopped abruptly at a cry which came from the woods that covered the narrow space between the road and the river.

"What can it be?" said Fanny, with suppressed apprehension.

"Let us listen."

A few seconds of perfect silence ensued, then the cry was repeated much nearer, and almost instantly a figure came fleeing through the trees, pursued by another.

"Mary!" exclaimed Fanny.

Warren, with a vehement exclamation, sprang forward to the rescue, but Mary was so swift she had already reached the road, and, with a cry of wild terror, staggered forward, almost falling at the feet of Warren, and exclaiming,

"Warren, save me! save me!"

As she fell, her passion-blinded pursuer was within three feet of her, and came to a sudden stop almost precipitated upon the person of Warren. It was Hawley, the Titan. He was bareheaded, and his long beard, and long locks that hung about his neck, were tossed in confusion, and heightened an expression of wild ferocity in his features. But as he encountered the eye of Warren, his form shrunk, his teeth glistened in an attempt to smile, and in lack of a glove, he twisted his beard with a finger.

But while Warren stood like a young gladiator, his arm thrown above Mary in protection, and clouds gathering upon his brow, there was another, with head uplifted and stern eye, more startled than any of the group. Mary's words and tones fell upon Fanny's ear with a meaning which the others did not detect—with a sudden light there was a revelation that almost made her heart stand still. In Mary's abandoned terror her secret stood revealed! Women are quick to understand women; the use of Warren's familiar name, the look in Mary's white, terrified face, the passionate and even tender feeling in her exclamations—these flashed the truth upon the mind of Fanny suddenly and overwhelmingly. But Fanny was a woman made up of impulses, generous, loving and hearty. With the revelation came a hundred recollections which exhibited Mary's secret in a just light; the first tide of feeling was anger, the second was a complete realization of that delicate, pure and even beautiful passion which filled and inspired the heart of Mary. And running to her side, she threw her arms around her, drew her up to her bosom, and with infinite tenderness and compassion, strove to console and protect her wounded modesty.

Hawley, meanwhile, stood fingering his beard, desperately attempting to regain his composure, and cowering under the rising indignation of Warren. As Fanny drew Mary to her arms, Warren changed from the defensive to the aggressive, and springing at the throat of Hawley, dragged him to his knees at his feet. The Historian's terror was now complete; he clasped his hands in supplication, and muttered incoherent words.

"You have dared to insult a woman!" said Warren, and grasped him tighter.

"I will never see her again!" cried the Titan, in accents the most pitiful.

"Spare him, Mr. Hoffman," exclaimed Mary, now recovering self-possession. "He's mad, I think."

"He is sane enough to be responsible," replied Warren.

"Let him go, Warren," said Fanny. "Make him promise to leave this place to-morrow, and let him go."

"I do," said the Titan, in tones the most abject.

Warren lifted him upon his feet.

"I know you," said he, "and let me advise you. You have some talent, but a bad heart. You are a type of many men to be found on the outskirts of literature, who infest the profession, and degrade it; notorious as sensualists, egotists, and idlers; as sponges mean enough to live upon what they can borrow or beg; whose hearts are eaten up with envy and intense self-worship, who think that wit and trickery make a man, who have abilities that fail them because they have neither honesty of heart nor dignity of character. If it is possible, step out of this class altogether, and live for some dignified and honorable purpose. But let me warn you. Never speak to either of these ladies again—never look upon them with your unholy eyes

—or I will teach you what to fear if you cannot be taught how to be honest.”

He released the Titan, and joining Fanny and Mary, walked on, leaving him in the highway. When they turned from the road into the garden path, he had disappeared.

Mary was still so much agitated at the adventure that Fanny guided her to her own room. And the moment the door was closed, Mary turned a burning face upon Fanny, and looked tenderly, beseechingly into her eyes. She had divined Fanny's discovery. That unusual tenderness, those more than common caresses, that pity in her voice and in the pressure of her hand—Mary trembled and knew what they meant. But Fanny bent her flushed face upon her shoulder, led her to a chair, knelt by her side, and in many little acts evinced that she trusted, loved, forgave her. Mary, overcome by this tenderness and feeling, buried her face in the pillow of the bed by which she sat, and wept. And Fanny, murmuring low consolation, smoothed her locks and held her hand.

Fanny's feeling toward the poor girl was one of unmixed sympathy. Not a jealous pang, not a reproach, not a harsh thought since the first impulse of the discovery. Nothing was changed except that she added to her affection a profound and tender compassion. Many things were now explained, and the recollections brought tears of pity and tenderness; her heart warmed to Mary as she thought of them. Warren had always been the favorite subject of their converse. Many times she had been struck by Mary's peculiarity of look and tone, and sometimes surprised to observe with what pertinacious fondness she would lead her again and again to the one fascinating theme. It was

now Fanny's desire to aid her in guarding her maiden secret—to cloister it from the world, to screen it from the eyes of mortals as if it were a hallowed thing. And at the same time, so to teach her to forget—to lead her heart to new pleasures—to fill it with new hopes—to expel or bury forever this unhappy passion. But even Fanny did not know what a pure, white essence was Mary's love for Warren Hoffman.

Later that evening Fanny drew Uncle Robert aside. “Uncle Robert, when I go to the city, Mary must go with me.”

“Bless me, young lady!”

“Must, Uncle Robert; she will be sad and unhappy here after being with young companions so long. Come, for Mary's sake.”

“What would the house be without Mary? Varley would be intolerable—the rooms would be like prisons—ch! Well, well,”—said he, observing Fanny's earnest look, “we must try to live under a cloud a little while, I suppose.”

“Now, I thank you.”

“Perhaps I can't stand it, though. I'm not so old but I might travel. If now it should be too dull here”——

“What, with your happy heart?”

“She makes it happy, Fanny. But if it should, you see, don't be astonished if I brush up my old coat, and drop down to the city myself, some day. Eh? Why not? If Mary can't stay with me, Fanny, then I must pack up and follow Mary.”

## CHAPTER XLII.

WARREN remained but one day in the country, and hastened back to duties which began to have a charm. That man is fortunate who can find in his customary avocations a source of happiness—whose heart runs into the labor of his hand—who, in the equal flow of ordinary life, extracts contributions to all his human needs. He who takes up his task reluctantly and lays it down with alacrity, will never be a great Doer, and voluntarily condemns a material portion of his existence to an irksome burden. It lies in the power of every man to so lift up his duties that they can become his pleasure and not his bane; to find in the harshest things some quality of interest; to render life more than tolerable by an active sympathy with the common things that lie in his path. Warren, since the night he stepped from the train into the great city, had lived with simple directness and labored with steadfast zeal. Grand dreams swelled in his imagination, but they bred no discontent. Aspirations sometimes burned like fire in his breast, but they never rendered his feet unsteady, or his hand unwilling. In his balanced judgment he saw life stretching before him a far vista; he was content to advance slowly, hopefully, happy in the life of each day, and never suffering the dreams of the future to usurp the action of the present. We will draw no parallels. Unhappy Charles fell into that slough where genius so often plunges, but we have reason to hope that the man is himself again.

Indeed, about a week after Warren's return to town, he received from the artist these few lines:

"MY DEAR WARREN:

I know your history—I have discovered all the injustice I have done you. I am impatient to make amends, and only postpone the hour when I can take your hand and claim your forgiveness, until Fanny arrives, whom I've sent for. For Fanny, my dear Warren, should be made happy by witnessing the restoration of our friendship. There is so much to say, that I can make no attempt in a letter, and postpone everything until we are all three together in the attic-parlor.

CHARLES."

Emily had been faithful to her promise, then—his friendships were reëstablished, and his love was placed, as he fondly hoped, above all vicissitudes. And now success and even labor became more glorious than ever, for his widening prospects entitled him to dream of a speedy hour when he and Fanny could stand together, and their two hearts thence flow into life as one.

Three days of rapture and impatience succeeded, and then the summons came. But the very hour the note from Charles was placed in his hand, he received this extraordinary and startling letter from Philip:

"My dear boy, when I undertook this my present mission, I had a secret view of the matter which I did not dare mention to you. I knew something of southern life, and something of human nature, and the peculiar circumstances indicated at once to me the probable life of your father. Ruined and disgraced, he was making desperate and secret efforts to recover fortune and restore his credit. In a southern city how could this be done? You did not see how, but I did, and hence my anxiety to undertake the search instead of you. And I was right? Must I still explain? Let me tell the story with method.



"I arrived in Mobile with the last dollar gone, and immediately had recourse to my old trade of printing. The stage did not suit my purpose, as it would occupy me during the very hours I desired for the search. Well, I began the hunt at once, and on the third night, upon entering—the truth must out—a gambling-room, I saw among the players an old man in whose physiognomy I traced your features. A bent, withered, trembling, wretched old man! I know you tremble, and the hot tears are in your eyes as you read. But I must go on—not without first relieving my mind, however, by a malediction upon Thelton. I find it necessary to relieve myself in that way about every ten minutes—although I confess a little admiration for the fellow. Such a genius! Is it not a tremendous pity that when mankind was divided between good and evil, Satan got all the smart ones for his share?"

"I will not pain you with relating all the details of the events that ensued. I learned from the frequenters of the place that this old man was a desperate but a wild player, and the gains of one night were sure to be the losses of the next. None knew his history, but it was whispered that he frantically desired money for the accomplishment of some revenge. It was evident even to them that he did not play for the passion of the game, although it is true that the honorable desire of recovering his lost wealth with which his operations begun, had become heated into a morbid form—a disease—a fierce, irregular, and almost aimless thirst for gold.

"That night I only watched him—the next I addressed him, not by his assumed, but his own name. When he heard the name, he sunk into a chair as if the word had struck into his heart. Then, Warren, began the real difficulties. I found it troublesome to fix his attention upon any theme—his mind continually wandered away to the games. He was alarmed, moreover, and seemed to apprehend that my errand was unfriendly. But gradually I secured his attention, awakened his interest, and brought forward facts one by one, in relation to the present condition of his affairs. And when I came to speak of his son, he clasped his hands and burst into tears. Keep a steady heart, Warren! I know that what I'm telling you brings your heart to your eyes, and it does to mine—but I relieve myself as before, with a fresh malediction on Thelton. As

you may have nothing handy for the purpose, I send you one. May Lucifer pocket him!

"It was three days before I got the whole story before your father. He was at first only impatient to get back to the gaming table, but at last his interest was as thoroughly aroused as his almost imbecile mind would admit. I succeeded in impressing upon him that his presence in New York was probably indispensable to his son's happiness. I assured him that with the explanations he had already written, confirmed by those particulars which it was in his power to relate, it only needed his appearance among you to establish his innocence with all concerned. 'Ashby,' said I, 'will forgive you when he learns your story; and he alone stands between Warren and his heart's desire. You will be enabled to bury the wrong by uniting your son to Fanny; and Warren, who has mourned you as dead, will now never rest until he can throw his arms around you.' His feelings were easily aroused, but his mind reverted so continually to his one absorbing pursuit, that it took fully the time I have mentioned to impress him with the truth of all I had to say. And even now I am compelled to watch him with care, to be guarded in my allusions and remarks, and I tremble lest I shall lose the hold thus obtained. He has consented to accompany me north; and if nothing unfortunate occurs, we shall sail into the harbor of the city not many days hence. So prepare to meet him, but prepare to find a wreck; he will need all your tenderness and exact all your courage.

"I can only add, my dear boy, that I sometimes feel it a strange thing that my search for your father should be rewarded, and my own poor sister still wanders upon the earth unclaimed. But go to Susan and the ancient Todd and say that I send them all the love I own. With a blessing upon yourself and one last malediction for Thelton, believe me now and ever,  
 PHILIP GILES."

Warren was almost stunned by the sensation excited by the intelligence conveyed in this letter. His heart was in a tumult, his brain wild, and he sunk down under the effect of facts so crowded with all that can awaken pity, grief and horror. As the whole strange story ran through his mind,

beginning back with the machinations of Thelton and ending in this pitiful discovery, he only refrained from uttering curses upon his father's betrayers, because language was utterly inadequate to the intensity of his feelings. At that moment he was capable of any fierce extremity, and had Thelton stood before him his fury would have exploded into some terrible deed. It is a fearful thing to be robbed of honor, friends, happiness and all the fair things of the world ; it is no light crime, let it be done with what politeness and urbanity you please, to strike green and hopeful life into sudden decay and death. While the smooth and respectable Thelton had moved with placidity through the world, gathering to his wide embrace riches, honors, power; his wretched victim, despoiled and contemned, had crept into corners, and there with disordered fury flung all that was left of life into a bitter struggle with chance and fate. To think of the subject at all, was to think with passion ; and Warren strove to divert his thoughts to the promised hour which was to restore his old friendly relation to Charles Ashby. He folded the letter, placed it in his pocket, and walked out in the direction of the artist's studio.

"It comes timely, at least," said he, "and will satisfy Ashby now, beyond any lingering doubt, that my father has been the real sufferer in this wretched history."

The attic-parlor had its old charm ; the studio its old look of prosperity. The artist was at his easel when Warren entered. He ran forward when he saw the comer, did not speak, but seized his hand and led him into the parlor. Fanny was there, and close by her side, clasping her hand, was Mary Hall.

"He has been your friend always, Fanny, and now he is mine" said the artist.

"Yours always, too, Charles," replied Warren.

"Well, my dear sir, I confess that the wrong was on my side. But see what amends I shall make. Look to find the most penitent man in the world. I will pay for my injustice in what coin you choose."

"Beware ! Some day I may ask a price so big you will refuse me."

"I know the price," said the artist, "and am resigned to pay it."

"I shall make no claim until I have Fanny's consent," said Warren, who had taken Fanny's hand.

"Mary," said Fanny, blushing, with a confusion that Warren thought delightful, "don't suppose these men of genius mean anything. How pleasant it would be to hear them talk good, simple English."

There were a hundred things to say, and a hundred congratulations to make. Warren had to express his delight at seeing Fanny in her little attic-paradise once more, and whisper to Mary his pleasure at her presence ; and Warren and Fanny momentarily by the window must press each other's hands, and look their happiness and gratitude. And Charles, unusually gleeful, talked with animation. For months his heart had not known such freedom from passion and care ; a weight was removed, and the reaction was elastic.

Altogether, it was a pleasant scene. Through the open door the pictures upon the walls showed pleasantly, and in the gush of light from the window worked the young artist, Edward Doane. Fanny and Warren sat side by side, and Mary a little way off, sitting by the window, and half-concealed by the curtains, sometimes looked with plaintive pleasure upon the scene, glad to witness the restored hap-

pininess of Fanny and Warren, yet with a fluttering about the heart that sometimes sent sudden moisture to her eyes. Charles walked the floor, gay, brisk, and rattled bright talk in the ears of his hearers.

But through all this peace and gaiety Warren sometimes looked dejected and sad.

"What can it mean?" said Fanny, as she observed him in a fit of clouded abstraction, and asked the question whisperingly in his ear.

"Fanny," said he, "my father is living."

"Oh, Warren!" cried Fanny, with mingled grief and pleasure. Charles heard the answer, and eagerly asked for explanation.

"The intelligence only reached me this day," said Warren, "and I desire to read to you, Charles, this letter. It will remove every shadow of doubt regarding my father's innocence."

Warren read Philip's letter, but omitted those portions that referred to Major Thelton. It repressed their gaiety, but did not weaken their happiness. Fanny drew nearer to Warren, as if she would utter some consolation, or say some wise thing to mitigate a grief so painful.

"This is a terrible history," said Charles; "it proves your father to have been a victim of infamous schemers. I shall not rest, Warren, until I can ask forgiveness for the accusations I have so freely uttered against him. Nor can I ever forget that this tremendous sacrifice of everything dear in life arose from a wild purpose to restore us our fortune."

"He lives," said Warren, "but the thought is one more of sorrow than pleasure. When I think of his fearful life for now full five years, I am subdued, stunned, bewildered

with many emotions. Sometimes I am almost wild with a thirst for revenge; but my better feelings show me that I have now only to shroud his remaining days with care and tenderness."

Warren's visit was prolonged into the evening. Fanny was as bright and merry as on that first evening when Warren was shot with the blind boy's shaft; there was the same little tea-table drawn out, and Fanny mistress of its duties no less charmingly than before. There was the same noble poet of the pencil, whose admiring eyes, scarcely less than those of the lover's, wandered frequently to the sunshine in Fanny's face; and the scene now was none the less pleasant because Mary was there, and the parallel rendered complete by Edward, the artist, watching the cheek of Mary with an expression not far from that with which Warren then looked on Fanny.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

IT was early evening, in the attic of the ancient Todd. Philip was there, standing with his hand upon the shoulder of Susan, his face turned toward the door, listening to the approach of a rapid step.

"We are here, my boy," said Philip, stepping forward to meet Warren as he entered.

"My father?" said Warren with an intensity and feverish anxiety almost painful.

"Be calm, Warren," said Philip. "If you go to him with your nerves unstrung in this way, the effect will be hurtful."

"I am ready," said Warren striking his breast as if thus to subdue his emotions.

Between Philip's room and that of Madam Todd, a door, formerly long in disuse and barricaded with many bars, had, since the growth of Philip's relations with the ancient dame and his protégée in her charge, been opened and restored to its original vocation. Philip led Warren to this door, and cautioning him again to be calm and courageous, opened it. Warren went in, and father and son were together.

Philip silently took a chair, and motioned Susan to his side. No sound came from the adjoining room, and with a painful apprehension the listeners sunk into perfect stillness. Madam Todd, who had been knitting by a faint light on the table, experienced a slumbering effect in the perfect hush, and dropped into a nodding sleep in her chair.

"Susan," whispered Philip after some seconds of this oppressive quiet.

"Sir," replied the girl very low.

"How old are you, my girl?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"In three years you will be eighteen," said Philip, but not immediately.

"Of course," said Susan with a smile.

"And eighteen is womanhood."

"Three years is a long time," replied Susan.

"Yes, to me," said Philip, and laying her little hand in his palm, patted it.

"Why to you?" said the girl.

"What will you do when you're a woman?" said Philip, without heeding Susan's question.

"I'm sure I do not know."

"All girls have their dreams—what are yours?"

"Mine! They used to be about good dinners, nice clothes, and warm fires. Now, sometimes they are what I shall do to be grateful to Philip Giles."

"Tell me the nature of those dreams."

"They are so odd!"

"How would you be grateful to him if you could?"

"Make him rich."

"Is that all?" said Philip.

"All?" said Susan, with open eyes.

"How quick riches come," said Philip, "when they become the highest desire! Say something else, Susan."

"I must think of your wishes first."

"Pshaw! Look around. Tell me what I need more than anything else in the world."

Susan paused, and then answered.

"I do not know."

"You are not a woman yet, I see," said Philip.

"Why no, sir."

"And that's the reason you cannot guess."

"Then how much I wish I were a woman."

"So do I, Susan. But I will try to wait. When three years are past I shall ask you these questions again."

"And if I cannot answer them?"

"I will explain, then," said Philip, rising, for Warren entered the room. His face looked fearfully white, even through the faint light of the room.

"Philip," said he, in accents broken and full of horror, "that was the most painful hour I ever passed."

"I knew how it would be," said Philip, and muttered a malediction upon Thelton.

"So shattered in body and mind!" exclaimed Warren with passionate grief.

"Did he recognize you?" asked Philip.

"Not for many minutes. And when he did, the horror was more intense than when he merely stared with a dull vacancy. He fell upon the floor at my feet—at my feet, Philip! he clasped his hands and moaned, he uttered such words of mad remorse—great Heaven! when I think of him I am capable of any desperate deed!"

"I can understand you, Warren."

"Then you understand what it is to have a heart on fire. I might stand at his grave and be contented, Philip. But this is worse than death—it is the destruction of the heart. So broken, prostrate, his mind so wandering and torpid—oh, Philip! there are crimes a hundred-fold worse than murder."

"Let us hope that ease and quiet will restore him," said Philip.

"That is my prayer, the only thought that mitigates the pain of finding him as he is. If I could secure for him a few years of peace and happiness there would be some amends—but I tremble, and fear the worst. The shock has been too great; there is no elastic power. Think of all that he has suffered, Philip—think, and do not wonder if I am maddened with despair and rage. If every hour of his remaining days prove utterly peaceful and happy, still there would be no compensation for all that he has undergone."

"It is pitiful every way," said Philip, quite at a loss what to say, and watching Warren, who paced the floor with uncontrolled grief, with a look of the most genuine concern and sympathy.

"Pitiful!" cried Warren. "A man has a right to live, a right to happiness—a right to friends, fortune, honor, and all the blessings that reward honest hearts and earnest labor! Which of these has blessed my father? Not one! Pitiful! my heart aches for a word that can express what it is. Oh, Philip! you do not see, cannot realize—no man can. My poor father's history can never be told, for there is no language which can tell it, no mind which can comprehend it. There is only one thing left—to avenge him."

"The man," said Philip, "who lets that ugly passion of revenge get into his heart, stings himself to death before he hurts his enemy. But I confess that for the privilege of tormenting your accomplished major, I would pledge any reasonable portion of my future peace."

"They shall come together," said Warren violently. "I will make no war upon any man. Deadly as the injury is

which Major Thelton has inflicted, I will pass him by with no thought of revenge—excepting this: The sight of my father shall sting him into remorse and shame, and compel him to reimburse Charles Ashby with the wealth lost by the means of his dishonesty. Further than this I will not go, however tempted, mainly because to strike at him is to wound the brother of Fanny.”

“How is that?” asked Philip, who did not understand the allusion. Warren explained.

“They must be brought together,” repeated Warren, “and you, Philip, perhaps can aid me.”

“It is the desire of my life to meet this master of roguery. Let us lay our plans at once.”

“I recollect,” said Warren, “that Charles told me that Miss Thelton is in town. I am indebted greatly to the lady, Philip; and strangely as it may appear to you, I think I may depend upon her assistance in accomplishing our purpose. I will see her immediately—to-night. What is the hour?”

“It is past eight,” answered Susan, who, with the ancient Lady, had been a silent but sympathetic observer of Warren’s grief and passion.

“I go at once,” said Warren.

“If you fail with Miss Thelton,” said Philip, “we’ll smuggle him—kidnap him, if nothing else will do.”

Warren set forth immediately for Mrs. Vanbert’s. The long walk and the cool air enabled him to present himself at the door in a state of tolerable self-control. It was so early in the evening no guests had yet appeared, and Warren was ushered into the unoccupied drawing-rooms. Emily responded to his card immediately, exclaiming as she entered:

“Mr. Hoffmann, you have news.”

“Of my father, Miss Thelton.”

Emily hurriedly took a chair, and then requested Warren to proceed. He told his story briefly.

“But you will spare my father,” cried Emily, “I ask for your mercy, not your justice!”

“I intend no injury to Major Thelton,” said Warren, “but I cannot forget the sufferings he has caused. I am not a revengeful man under any circumstances; but I owe you a debt, Miss Thelton, and I cannot forget that the happiness of my friends is identified with yours. But I have one demand to make, one reparation to exact. The debt due to Charles Ashby is unpaid; the amount, I will not say how, went to swell the wealth of your father. It is just that he, through my father, should restore it.”

“It is. I assure you, sir, I have already labored to accomplish it, and it pains me to say, was unsuccessful.”

“There is but one argument that can move Major Thelton. It is the sight of my poor father. If that cannot subdue him he is too obdurate for mercy, and you cannot expect any tenderness from me.”

“What do you desire, Mr. Hoffman?”

“I ask your coöperation in bringing them together.”

“That you shall have—indeed I promise you to accomplish it.”

The means to effect this was now discussed, and a plan was agreed upon. Emily was to represent to her father the destitute condition of an old friend, whose name she was pledged not to reveal, and to beg his company to visit him.

“I have some influence with my father,” said Emily, “and I do not apprehend that he will refuse me. He is not insensible to claims of this kind.”

"I consider it a fortunate circumstance, Miss Thelton, that you will accompany him. I cannot believe that after seeing my father, he will refuse a demand from you so just."

"If my father," replied Emily with emotion, "will be brought to perceive that mercantile estimates of what is honorable are not so pure as the highest justice demands, I shall bless the means. I know my father, Mr. Hoffman, better than you, and I hope to convince you that his judgment has been only warped by the reckless morality of trade."

"If Mr. Thelton responds to my expectations," replied Warren, "I shall endeavor to look upon the past with all the forgetfulness possible."

The details of their little plan being fully arranged, Warren withdrew, not, however, escaping the notice of Mrs. Vanbert, who was descending to the drawing-room.

"My dear," said the brilliant relict of Christopher Vanbert, "who is your friend?"

Emily explained.

"Mr. Hoffman," said the lady; "why, he is a man of consideration. His talents are spoken of. Invite him, my dear, before our next."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

ACCORDING to the plan arranged, Philip received, and bowed Major Thelton and Emily into the attic of Madam Todd. The room was empty.

"This is an extraordinary place, my dear," said the major, hunting for his snuff-box, "and you have thrown so charming a bit of mystery around the matter that it is a pleasing adventure, very."

"The only mystery is, that we wish to test your recollections a little."

The major helped himself to snuff, and looked suspiciously into the eyes of his daughter. Emily withstood the searching glance.

"The gentleman you wish to see," said Philip, "is in the adjoining room. Will you pardon me?" He reached out his fingers and took from the major's box a pinch of snuff. The major turned a cold eye but smiling lip upon the actor.

"You will pardon me," said he, eyeing Philip from top to toe, "but I did not expect to meet—a gentleman."

"Gentlemen," said Philip, coolly, "sometimes live nearer to heaven than the world approves of. If they were better strategists, they would drop into any depths you please. Wealth, sir, often lies low."

The major, smilingly, but with his eyes sharply glancing from beneath his pursed eyebrows, took three pinches of snuff before he spoke.

"Nor did I expect, sir, to meet a philosopher."

"Philosophers," replied Philip, and again put his fingers in the major's box, "have the attic salt nowhere else. But we welcome to our high atmosphere a gentleman so distinguished among the substantial men of the world. It is so admirable to be rich that we purseless fellows are not surprised that gold is bought with strange prices."

"Am I brought here," said the major, and his face began to harden, "to listen to this fellow's quips and jests?"

"No," said Philip, interrupting Emily, who was about to speak, "but how could I refuse an admiration I have bottled up so long? If Major Thelton will walk this way he will find no jests!"

Philip stepped toward the door, and stood waiting for the major to pass before him.

"The person we came to see is in that room," said Emily.

With undisguised suspicion the major walked to the door, and paused to glance back at both Philip and his daughter. He seemed to find some assurance, in the presence of Emily, that no plot was on foot to his injury, and with a last precautionary pinch of snuff, he opened the door and went in.

Instantly with his disappearance Warren came into the room. Emily stood tremblingly leaning upon a chair, but was enabled to speak with moderate calmness.

"Had not this matter, Mr. Hoffman, better be completed by us alone?" She looked toward Philip significantly.

"I make haste," said Philip, "to obey Miss Thelton's hint."

"Now I tremble with apprehension," said Emily, as Philip withdrew; "the only thing gained may prove to be my father's anger."

A sudden cry was heard. Emily started as if it were a blade piercing her heart. There was a stamp, a rush, the door was thrown open, and Major Thelton, all disordered and fearfully white, burst into the room. As he saw Warren, he came to an abrupt pause, and stood, his body slightly swinging to and fro, and his fingers desperately searching for his snuff. But the box had been dropped in his agitation; and now, deprived of this old and unfailing support, which had carried him successfully over so many dangerous breakers, he desperately strove to regain his self-possession, but failed. He was like a man utterly disarmed; he might have cried in the bottom of his heart, "a kingdom for my snuff." His fingers wandered nervously up and down, his familiar smile escaped him, and he stood glaring at Warren and his daughter.

"Father, forgive me!" cried Emily, "I did it for the best."

The voice of his daughter was something tangible; it was a hold by which he could get back to his old self-command.

"Why am I here?" said he, venturing to speak.

"You knew my father," said Warren.

"You are Warren Hoffman," said the major, slowly, and with each word gliding back to that self-mastery which so often had won the admiration alike of his friends and his enemies.

"You have seen your work," said Warren passionately.

"This is very sad," replied he, "you have my hearty condolence, sir. The appearance of your father quite unnerved me."

The old smile flitted back upon his lips again; but the hardness, the granite under the smile, did not return.



"What he has suffered is very terrible," said Warren, "and as a son who loves him, I cannot forget the cause."

"We must all deplore the cause," said the major, and muttered a curse upon his treacherous snuff-box.

"There is some reparation to be made," said Warren.

"For what?"

"For wrongs, crimes, deadly and cruel," thundered Warren. "Sir, my patience stands only balanced. It will require but a word to render me as merciless as you were once."

"Father," cried Emily, "be just, and grant all that we ask."

The major's hands had wandered into his waistcoat pockets, and there fixed, seemed to afford him a substitute for his lost snuff.

"Please favor me," said he, "with what you require."

"I ask no money for me or mine," said Warren, "but my father's present state is mainly caused by a misuse of means brought about by your misrepresentations. I ask you to restore to me, for payment to Charles Ashby and his sister, the full sum of which they were wronged. This debt paid, I ask no further."

"This is not a new proposal to me," said Thelton, looking at his daughter.

"I implore you," said Emily, "to reconsider your decision then. That debt paid, which, from your ample wealth, can be so readily spared, all this history becomes a sealed book. Mr. Hoffman has pledged me to persecute you no further."

"I will not dwell," replied Thelton, slowly, "upon the great pain I experience in finding my own daughter conspiring against me. Yet I endeavor to look favorably upon

this proposal, but without acknowledging the justice of the claim. The property of his wards Mr. Hoffman invested in a speculation, subject to all the risks and dangers of a hazardous fortune. Property of that character it is usual to invest only in the most reliable securities."

At this moment there was a movement and a voice from the adjoining room. Thelton winced and even turned pale. He glanced furtively back at the door, and again that splendid self-possession forsook him.

"Let us go," said he, in a voice that shook in spite of every effort, and moved toward the door.

"Your answer first, father," said Emily.

The major again slipped his fingers into his waistcoat pockets, and struggled to regain the old mastery. But the rock was shattered; the sight of Roderick Hoffman, a ruin and a wreck, had cut down to the core of his hard adamant nature, awakening remorse and horror. Had one arisen from the dead his nature could not have been more startled and shaken—indeed, as he stood before Warren and Emily, slightly rocking forward and backward, his eyes dilated, and glancing startingly back over his shoulder, his face deadly pale, he looked like one terrified at the sight of a Ghost. No ghost could have been more terrible to Mr. Robert Thelton. Nothing could have tempted him voluntarily to have encountered Roderick Hoffman—no confidence in his coolness and steadiness of nerve would have rendered him brave enough for such a trial. To be precipitated upon him, therefore, unprepared, to see him at an unlooked-for moment start up before his face, a pitiful and heart-rending wreck—the rock was struck as if by a thunderbolt—the blood curdled, the hair stood on end! For a moment he thought he saw a supernatural being—every ves-

tige of self-possession forsook him—he fled with horror and fear. In the presence of Warren and Emily he glided back to something of his old balance and self-control, but the adamant was broken—fitful sunshine broke upon his face by the effort and influence of old habit, but the rock, the reliant, determined, broad basis of the man's nature which so long had defied man and heaven, was gone. He stood before the conspirators, weak, trembling, conquered.

"Father," said Emily, "let me implore you to yield to us—all will be well if you will do this."

"I take pity," said the major to Warren, slowly and with difficulty—"I take pity on your father, and for the sake of his misfortunes, yield to a request that at the same time I must call extraordinary."

He bowed and tried to smile.

"I will not discuss the issues that you raise," said Warren, "but repeat to you the pledge I made to Miss Thelton. When this money is paid I cease to hold you responsible."

"I am sure I thank you," replied the major, and offered his arm to Emily. He appeared eager to escape from the attic, and Warren only bowed as he held the door open for him to depart.

Neither father nor daughter spoke until they reached the street. Once in the air the major was almost himself again.

"Charles Ashby is your betrothed, I believe," said he as he handed Emily into the carriage that stood by the door.

"Yes, sir, with your sanction."

"The money, then, mainly comes back again. Let me congratulate you upon gaining a husband at the very

moment when you have forfeited the affection of a father."

And bowing he walked away. Emily fell back in the carriage stunned and breathless by this unexpected turn of affairs.

## CHAPTER XLV.

AS the major and Emily left the attic, Philip came hurrying in, eager for the news. Warren's tale was short.

"A fine matter for Charley," said Philip. "As I have not seen the artist nor the delicious Fanny since my return, I propose to go with you, and bear the news. It will be worth while seeing their delight, and I like to be first to offer congratulations."

"Let us go at once," said Warren; "but first one word with my father."

Madam Todd and Susan now came in, and Philip briefly related the intelligence. When Warren rejoined them, the ancient Lady began with a formal congratulation; but scarcely half through her sentences than she wandered off to that inevitable close of every theme—her lost Richard—the dead husband alive in her heart and her memory.

"I am two-thirds on the way to an important conclusion," said Philip, as he took Warren's arm on their walk to the Ashbys'.

"I listen," said Warren.

"To give up the stage, and turn artist heartily. I begin to discover that my pictures are more salable than the best comedy I can invent."

"You never thoroughly labored before."

"No! I was an ass, and thought that proficiency came by desiring it. It was not until pinched into the need of

more money that I discovered what application could do—the fingers get oiled in the hinges, and the brain elastic by mere use. Humph! some day I shall measure heights with Charley."

"But why does not good acting come in that way?"

"It often does, of course, but there are grains in my composition unsuited to the Thespian art. I conceive splendidly, but the thought never gets into good shape before auditors. And, to be frank, it is humiliating for a man who believes himself intellectually a fair match for most men, to be thrust beneath fellows who have the advantage of a pretty leg, or a tripping manner, or a barber's face, but are as brainless as cabbages."

"And small acting is a poor thing."

"There must be root as well as stem. If it were naturally in my composition to perform these lowly duties, I would accept subordination as my just destiny. Some men have vocation; mine is vagabondism and philosophy, and the stage seemed at first their natural vent. I was wrong. Henceforward I shall paint pictures, until I astound you some day with some philosophy for the corner of your journal."

"For your sake and for Susan's I wish you success."

"Susan is only fifteen," said Philip, quickly.

"I did not say how old she is."

"Oh!" said Philip, hastily. "Well, when she's a woman there will be time to think about it; that is, if I am not too old."

"Oh!" said Warren, in turn, and smiled.

By this time they had reached the studio door. They entered, and saw only the young artist, Doane, who appeared to be explaining to Mary Hall, whose back was to-

ward them, some mystery in a picture upon his easel. Voices from the attic-parlor indicated the presence of Charles and Fanny, and knocking, they entered upon invitation.

It was an astounding piece of intelligence that Warren brought, and the artist and his sister stood staring in amazement as the story was unfolded. Then their bewildering delight, which we peep at under our Invisible caps, is a hundred times better than any play. Fanny was wild with joy, but mainly for her brother's sake; she ran and shook his hands, and shook Warren's hands, blushing at a word he whispered in her ear; and shaking Philip's hands no less heartily than the rest, he retains her a moment, and says:

"You owe me thanks for a boon which you do not acknowledge."

"What boon?" was Fanny's query.

"A bird," said he, "came fluttering upon my finger, and I tossed him into your window."

Fanny pretended not to understand.

"There must be no speaking by the card, I see. Had it not been for the vagabond Philip, the youth Warren"—

"Pshaw!" said Fanny, and clipped Philip's sentence short by a look of such mirth and mischief that Philip only laughed and pressed her hand.

But there was much to explain to Charles, whom it was now necessary to admit into a knowledge of Thelton's connection with Hoffman's affairs. Warren avoided all accusing words, and the fact of the reparation now made went far to mitigate the artist's judgment of him.

"My injustice to Warren," said he, "is more manifest

every day. It seems that I was almost identically in the same position I supposed Fanny to be. Emily Thelton was the person I should have condemned, not Warren Hoffman."

"Neither, Charles," said Fanny.

"It is clear, though," replied Charles, "that I should, in strict justice, exact the same sacrifice of myself which I once required of Fanny."

"Mary," cried Fanny, through the door, "we have good news. Will you hear it?"

Mary came with a light step into the room.

"My God!"

The exclamation was from Philip. His eyes were fixed wildly on Mary.

"My mother's face!" cried he, with an agitation so intense that his accents were barely audible.

There was a cry from every lip, bewilderment in every look. Warren alone, of all the observers, guessed the secret. Philip stood motionless in the centre of the room, with his hands extended toward Mary, and she, in surprise and fear, ran to Fanny and clasped her waist.

"You are the daughter of Mary Giles," said Philip to Mary, after a pause.

"Mary Giles was once my mother's name," said Mary, "but my name is Mary Beach."

"Your mother married twice. Her first husband was Edmund Giles. She had a son, became a widow, and married your father."

"Yes," said Mary.

"Do you recollect your half brother?"

"I was too young," said Mary, now trembling with excitement, "but I've heard my dear mother speak of him often."

"And you know his history then. Your father did not love him. He was proud and reckless. He ran from home, and nothing more was heard of him."

"Yes," said Mary, earnestly.

"But he did not forget his mother, nor that little cherub half-sister, whose baby pranks had been his delight. He loved and thought of them always. He roamed into remote places, and after many years came back to his home, which was far southward. There was no home. His mother was gone—he knew not where. The few traces that he could find he followed up; he learned that her husband carried her from place to place, was cruel to her, had abandoned her, and died away from her side. And then she disappeared from that boy's search—was dead he believed, for a rumor to that effect reached him through one who knew her in the South."

"She died," said Mary in a low tone, "at her brother's home."

"There had been estrangement between her and her family; her first marriage had been in opposition to her father's wishes—and she lived a thousand miles from the home of her youth. Hence the boy never knew anything of her family—had no clue whereby to search for her."

Mary, still holding Fanny's hand, stepped a little way toward him.

"And he," resumed Philip, "believing that somewhere his half-sister lived, perhaps an outcast and a sufferer—the only being to whom he was related, has cherished to this day the fond hope of finding her somewhere ere he died."

Philip spoke in low earnest tones, and every listener was hushed into almost motionless silence by the profound interest of this strange scene.

"And now," continued he, "that boy, cherishing always his mother's looks, sees them in you. Mary, do you believe my story?"

Not one who saw him doubted it. His noble hope was rewarded at last. As her face rested upon his breast, as his hands smoothed her locks, the faith flooded into his soul that on that night when he took the homeless wanderer to protect and cherish, with the hope that his sister somewhere would be blessed with a like tenderness, Heaven willed this consummation of his heart's desire.

All joy in the recovery of lost wealth was forgotten in this greater happiness.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

THE charming little attic-parlor is no more, and I am sorry for it. Such changes, that I have scarcely the heart to tell them! The familiar places have slipped out of the story, and it is hard to think of Fanny and the rest in their new surroundings.

There is a cottage on the upper part of the island, where wedded Warren and Fanny live. It is a pleasant place, but I will trouble you with no descriptions in the last pages of the story. They do not live alone, for Fanny was not willing to give up Mary; and Philip, as we might suppose, became intensely fond of her. So Philip and Mary and Susan—who is not yet eighteen—live in this pleasant cottage. The Ancient Lady has gone into the most ancient of all houses, into the arms of Ancient Death.

They are a happy group in the cottage, and have those elements of harmony that render life fresh and glad. Sometimes there is a visitor who has long talks with Mary—on with your Invisible cap and peep in his eyes. It is Edward Doane, the young artist. And he looks like a lover. Well, Mary will love him none the less because her heart sent up that pure and beautiful worship to Warren. It was only the first pulse of womanhood—the movement of a heart that was beginning to grow. Uncle Robert is dejected under his loss; he makes frequent visits to the cottage—and one day Mary blushing whispers in his ear a word

that delights him. There is to be a cottage near Fanny's for Mrs. Edward Doane, and Mary agrees for long interchanging visits with the hearty old philosopher.

But there is one about the cottage we have not yet described. An old man, whose white hair hangs like a shock about his shoulders! He is prematurely old, as you learn when his age is told, but his history makes that no surprise. He is bent, his limbs totter, and by the tender way he is watched and guarded you fear that his mind is not so steady and strong as it was in his youth. Better than it was, much better, Warren will tell you—only a little wandering now—occasional relapses. He appears happy in the little duties which he creates for himself—the garden to tend, the hedges to trim, the hundred little things which can occupy even great minds. Suddenly, yet not unlooked for, there is a new pleasure, a joy that almost brings the old man back to his youth and vigor. He kisses the little face as they lay it upon his arm and ask him for a name. He wonders why not "Warren." But Warren tenderly suggests "Roderick," and the old man's eyes dance with delight. And so Roderick it is, and the pale Fanny, as she listens half laughing and half crying, kisses it, and hopes that its life will not be so sad. We hope so too.

Charles and Emily are also married, and live in town. Charles' fame is spread still wider, and he is named among the first of the artists. He is fond of society, and his brilliant parts make him sought for. There is but little of the old discontent left, although occasionally some of his grand dreams come back and for a moment stagger him. But mainly his heart and hopes are with his art, which, as his power strengthens, appears capable of grander expression than he has hitherto supposed. The strong things that

are in him must come out ; he will paint a picture some day that the world will talk about.

Major Thelton is dead. The accomplished strategist appeared to lose his power after the shock of his interview with Roderick Hoffman. His hand became unsteady, his judgment unbalanced ; and a vast enterprise which he was then at the head of, from that day seemed to oppress him. The details staggered him, and he failed to grasp it with his former power. He made false moves, fatal mistakes, and suddenly there was a crash. He was in the parlor with his daughter, with whom he had become reconciled, when intelligence was brought of overwhelming losses. He then threw up his arms in the air as he heard it, staggered, and sunk down to die. His heart had yielded to the terrible strain.

Warren's career widens into greater prosperity. We find him chief editor of a literary periodical, and laboring upon a work which he hopes will endure. Journalism is no primrose path of dalliance ; its labors are harsh and its rewards rarely magnificent. But Warren has taught himself content and patience ; and as his sun rises into higher altitudes, there comes with power and success a courage and philosophy that, while they are capable of enduring prosperity, would encounter with equal steadfastness the sharpest gales of adversity.

Among Warren's subordinate workers is Richard Hawley. Warren had found him in the street in a condition the most pitiful it is possible to conceive. His clothes were blotted with stains, either tattered or seedy to a frailness that yielded to almost every breath ; his face cadaverous, pinched and starved ; gloves upon his hands so torn that every finger penetrated into the air ; an enormous yellow

handkerchief in his hands with which he appeared to be stanching his eyes ; his shoes almost soleless, his hat battered and beaten—his whole appearance utterly forlorn, ragged, soiled and wretched. Warren could not refuse him his pity, took him up, found him a desk in his office, and put his really good abilities to practical service.

Warren is only now advancing into the great expanses of life. His sails spread broadly to the wind, courage and judgment are at the helm ; and as we watch him float upon the sea whose further shore is eternity, we trust that prosperous gales will waft him steadily and smoothly into that broader Life which is still Before Him.

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